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**Generations of Gender:  
Past, present, potential**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**March 2006**

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother

Nora Alice Berghan

June 1922 – August 2003

## Abstract

This thesis locates 'gender' as a recent historical concept that emerged from studies of hermaphrodites or intersex persons during the 1950s. One of the key aims of the thesis is to demonstrate that gender is among the great conceptual devices of the late twentieth century and to analyse how it came to be so. Central to this project is the work of sexologist John Money whose influence on contemporary understandings of sexed subjectivity remains, by and large, underinterrogated *and* underestimated. Drawing on a genealogical approach based on textual analysis and interviews, I situate gender as the most recent historical apparatus to contain 'the body' within a political economy of sexual difference.

The thesis deploys two (non-binary) lines of analysis. First I offer a detailed account of Money's theories of gender. I show how his theorising of sexuality shaped (and constrained) what was possible in 'gender'. I explore also the interventions of other theoretical and political projects invested in the concept such as feminism, in order to situate them as specific episodes within a much larger narrative of 'gender'. Second I argue and demonstrate that hermaphrodites are everywhere implicated in gender since they have historically provided the sexual sciences with an evidence base for the apparent ubiquity of dimorphic sex. This thesis contends that the concept of gender has repeatedly been constituted by an assumption of two sexes and as a consequence, *all* conceptions of 'gender' to date have consolidated the debasement of hermaphrodites.

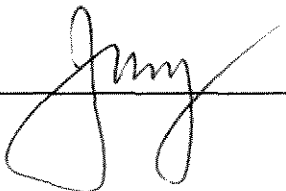
Finally I propose that Money's theories of gender remain ripe with potential, precisely because they presuppose an interactive relation between cells, environment and experience. Unharnessed from the tyranny of sexual dimorphism, opportunities abound to reinvigorate Money's theories in ways that open spaces to think differently about what it means to be a sexual subject.

# Declaration

This is to certify that:

1. This thesis is an original work produced by Jennifer Elizabeth Germon for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy – Department of Gender Studies, University of Sydney;
2. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used;
3. The fieldwork for this research has been conducted in accordance with the ethical approval granted by the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee on 26 March 2001;
4. The total word count, excluding footnotes and Reference list, is 83,142.

Signed



Date

31-3-06

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## ***Abbreviations***

AIS	Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome
CAH	Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
G I/R	Gender Identity/Role
IFAS	International Foundation for Androgynous Studies
ICM	Intersex case management
IPDX	Intersex Initiative (Portland, Oregon)
ISNA	Intersex Society of North America
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transsexual
OII	Organisation Intersex International
PRU	Psycho-Hormonal Research Unit
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles

# Chapter 1

*“It is a handicap in the study of sexually dimorphic behaviour that, for all the millennia in which men and women have existed, no one yet has an exhaustive list of what to look for.”*

*John Money (1972:9)*

# Circumnavigating ‘planet gender’<sup>1</sup>

## *Introduction*

The concept of ‘gender’ is so thoroughly naturalised and universalised in the English language that today it is generally assumed to have always been available. Its seeming indispensability at both an ontological and an epistemological level serves to obscure its specific and recent history. To fully comprehend the interpretive work of ‘gender’, the historical specificity of the concept and the context in which it was first made available in English must be acknowledged. This thesis offers a genealogical account of ‘gender’ that proceeds along two interconnected trajectories. The first situates the production of the concept of gender in its historical context while the second explores the intricate relation that hermaphrodites or intersex persons had and have to it.

The story begins in the late 1940s, when a young John Money undertook his doctoral research on human hermaphroditism at Harvard University. Less than two years after graduating Money offered the term ‘gender’ as part of a framework for understanding hermaphroditism, as a rationale for clinical practices and as a conceptual device for understanding human subjectivity. In light of this, the thesis commences with a close reading of Money’s earliest articulations of gender theory and the cultural and technological context in which he developed them and then traces the refinement of his theories over time. I then examine the ways in which gender has been put to work for a range of other theoretical and political purposes over the past fifty years.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase comes from Adkins (1999).

Money's ideas have come to have a profound effect on how people in English-speaking contexts understand sexed subjectivity as masculine and feminine. This is because he extended his theories of 'gender' from hermaphrodites to the wider population in order to account for how everybody acquired their gender. That extension is representative of a common turn in the biological and medical sciences where phenomena that deviate from a norm are used to demonstrate the course of normal development (Braidotti, 1994).

The second trajectory of the thesis provides an historical account of the ongoing relation that hermaphrodites have to the construction of the concept 'gender'. While that relation may not be at once obvious, the links are, as I demonstrate, inextricable. That is to say, if it were not for sexology's fascination with those of us who are 'otherly sexed', the concept of gender as we understand it today, may well not exist. Hermaphrodites have historically provided medical science with the means to generate particular truths about what it is to be human and what it means to be a sexual subject. Thus they can rightfully claim to be the ground for many of our ideas about what is considered 'normal' with respect to bodily sex but more importantly, in the context of my research, hermaphrodites are the ground for what is considered normal in 'gender'.

Since the early 1990s, both Money and his work have come under increasing scrutiny and have been attacked from a range of quarters. He has been accused of callous self-interest, of privileging 'nurture' over 'nature', and of concealing the truth regarding the outcome of his most well publicised 'experiment' which he used to evidence the

efficacy of his theories of gender acquisition (see for example, Colapinto, 2000; Diamond & Sigmundson, 1997).<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, his work has been roundly dismissed by detractors outside of sexology and by rivals from within the field, as if his ideas were of no value.<sup>3</sup> Such outright dismissal constitutes (in the vernacular) ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’. That is because - ironically - many of the counterclaims of Money’s critics and detractors are saturated with the elements of his theories that have become axiomatic over the past 50 years.

This all, I suggest, adds considerable weight to my claim that Money’s influence on how and what we know about gender is today seriously underestimated. Against his detractors I propose that Money’s ‘gender’ offers a ‘third-wave’ of productive potential, one that differs from the second,<sup>4</sup> precisely because his theories presuppose an interactive relation of cells to environment and to experience(s). To make such a claim is not to elide the problematic aspects of his ideas, however this in itself does not diminish their overall usefulness. Unharnessed from the tyranny of dimorphism, Money’s theories of sex-gender<sup>5</sup> and sexuality are among the most sophisticated we have available and for that reason, opportunities abound to critically reinvigorate Money’s gender.

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<sup>2</sup> I refer here to the late David Reimer whom Money recommended be reassigned and reared as a girl following the loss of his penis after a botched circumcision when he was an infant.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the most public of those attacks is that of *Rolling Stone* journalist John Colapinto (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Refer to para. two of the following section.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to "Notes on terminology and definitions" section for an explanation of the hyphenation used here.

## ***Thesis Outline***

Tracing the history of the concept of gender requires a mapping ‘forward’ in a temporal sense, yet also backwards at times. In Chapter two, I begin mapping the concept of ‘gender’ through a close reading of the early work of John Money. In 1955 Money, along with colleagues Joan and John Hampson, presented their research at international paediatric conferences and published their findings in a series of articles that effectively extended the ideas contained within Money’s doctoral research. In those articles, Money and colleagues described their hermaphrodite research; laid out their theories of gender acquisition; promoted a set of guidelines for the clinical mediation of hermaphrodite bodies; and offered a measurement tool for assessing the degree of a person’s adaptation to a gender. Effectively, Money provided a complete package that included a theory that served as a rationale for a set of clinical practices and a means of measuring not the efficacy of those practices but rather, the efficacy of a person’s capacity to *be* the gender in which they were assigned and reared.

The analysis in Chapter two extends beyond Money’s earliest theorising of gender to examine the various ways in which he refined his ideas after extrapolating them to the wider population. Money’s work serves as an exemplar of the way that medical science turns to biological variation in order to demarcate ‘normality’. Elaborating Money’s theories of gender acquisition and the assumptions that underpin them offers the opportunity to explore the implications that they carry, not just for hermaphrodites but indeed for the population at large.

Chapter three moves further forward in time in order to engage with the ideas of Robert Stoller, who was the first to intervene in ‘gender’ in the mid-1960s following

Money's introduction of the concept a decade earlier. To engage with Stoller's work is to engage with the consequences of his various interventions. Stoller made what was for him a relatively benign conceptual turn by divesting 'gender' of its interactive relation to 'sex'. In a metaphorical sense, Stoller placed that relation in a state of suspended animation so that he could get on with the (seemingly) not so messy business of developing a theory to explain male to female transsexualism. Stoller placed everything that he was not going to be concerned with under the rubric of 'sex', which he interpellated as the natural, the material and the carnal. The things that Stoller was interested in became 'gender', that is, the psychical or psychological elements of sexed subjectivity.<sup>6</sup> This conceptual turn effectively sanitised 'gender' by removing from it, any association to body lust and the 'dirty business' of sex.

The sex/gender split offered a contemporary expression of the age-old mind/body distinction. Cartesian dualist logic demands, of course, that 'gender' not merely be contrasted to 'sex', but framed in opposition to it. Stoller's conceptual bracketing left the production of knowledge about 'sex' above or beyond analysis. The effects of that theoretical suspension were soon made manifest. Yielding to the compelling simplicity of either/or propositions, the sex/gender distinction began to assume a life of its own and before long became thoroughly institutionalised in sexological, medical and social scientific discourses.<sup>7</sup> It is unlikely that Stoller would or could have predicted that what was for him a convenient conceptual bracketing would lead to the institutionalisation of a desexualised 'gender'. So desexualised in fact, that 'gender'

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<sup>6</sup> Stoller left the socio-cultural components of sexed subjectivity to the social sciences and the physical aspects to the natural sciences.

<sup>7</sup> That process was aided in no small part by feminism's adoption of the distinction.

would transform into something akin to that orifice-free space between the legs of the otherwise highly sexualised figures of Ken and Barbie dolls (Money, 1985; 1995; Bockting, 1997).

Chapter four takes as its focus 'gender' as it related to the feminist project of the late twentieth century. Gender was appropriated from the sexual sciences by a number of early academic feminists and put to work to argue against women's inferior social political and economic standing. Yet for the most part, that appropriation happened with little clear or critical analysis of the assumptions that underpinned the concept, nor where those assumptions had taken sexological theory and practice. Today, gender has an assumed ahistorical status as if it has always been available as a descriptive and a conceptual tool. The significant and powerful interventions into gender by feminism over the past thirty years have contributed much to augment gender's axiomatic status.

The scope of Chapter four is limited to material produced in North America and the United Kingdom during the 1970s for two reasons. The first is entirely pragmatic given the huge corpus of literature and the multiple nodes of analytical and political strategies generated by the feminist project. Secondly, and more importantly as I demonstrate, gender - feminism's central organising concept - took an entire decade to bed down into that lexicon. Gender was not embraced by many of the earliest and most influential feminist theorists of the day and indeed there was considerable debate about its conceptual merits throughout the 1970s. That finding guided my exploration of gender's history in this particular context since little recognition is given in the feminist literature of the 1980s and 1990s to the fact that gender took so long to settle

into that domain. In light of this, I offer a detailed examination of when and how gender was first used in English-speaking feminism and the key issues around which the 'terminological debates' centred.<sup>8</sup>

Chapter four also continues the parallel task of mapping the ongoing relation of hermaphrodites to gender. Within the feminist scholarship of 1970s there is considerable evidence of an early engagement by feminists with hermaphrodite research. And it was to the work of John Money and Robert Stoller that they turned (See for example, Greer, 1970; Millet, 1971; Oakley, 1972). As mentioned, Money and Stoller's work was for the most part taken up uncritically by those feminists who found utility in gender (or perhaps more correctly, in the sex/gender distinction). With two exceptions (Fausto-Sterling, 1985; Kaplan, 1980) feminists ceased to engage with hermaphrodite research - and with hermaphrodites - during the 1980s, despite androgyny being promoted as an idealised state in that domain during the same time period.

In Chapter five I turn to John Money's theories of sexuality and desire. This chapter draws primarily on his 1988 text *Gay Straight and Inbetween*, since in it Money elaborated his theories of sexuality through gender. The date of this text might suggest a continuation of the temporal trajectory of earlier chapters, yet it does so only at the most superficial level. Money has been developing and elaborating his sexual theories for five decades now so the discussion of his work moves across and within a

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<sup>8</sup> The feminist literature of the 1980s and 1990s is not included in this discussion except to evidence the curious although not uncommon claim that gender was a feminist 'invention'. See for example, Haraway (1991), Hawkesworth (1997), Scott (1999), Spender (1980).

particular timeframe (1952 - 2003). In order to place Money's ideas regarding the sexual into context, I explore in detail five methodological hallmarks and four key suppositions that are ubiquitous to sexology and have been so since the discipline's inception in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. That provides the context for the examination of Money's theories of sexuality and desire and at the same time allows for an exploration of precisely how those themes and methodologies play out in his work. Moreover, it allows for an examination of the consequences of his ideas not just for hermaphrodites, but for all sexual subjects.

Chapter six turns on the articulations of contemporary hermaphrodites themselves and offers an analysis of the official discourses of intersex advocacy groups and with the narrative accounts of individuals who took part in the fieldwork for this research. This chapter is therefore concerned with a different type of expertise on gender. The discursive formations of contemporary hermaphrodites/intersexuals are examined in order to explore the ways in which gender is understood and negotiated by those from whom the concept was originally derived. Of central concern are the various ways in which adult intersexuals/hermaphrodites engage in making sense of the relation between their experiences as differently embodied and their ways of being in the world. Among the ideas generated by this material are those of an ontological hermaphroditism and a form of erotics that exceeds the uni-dimensional constructs of sexuality that rely upon 'gender' as their reference points and homosexuality and heterosexuality as their end points.

In the concluding chapter I offer the outline of a framework upon which to develop nuanced and responsive models that further enrich our understandings of sex-gender

and sexuality. The quest to comprehend what it means to be sexual, social and corporeal (in other words, what it means to be human) continues unabated and will do so with or without responsive models. Therefore those of us who take issue with what is currently available surely have a responsibility, if not an obligation to contribute towards the development of frameworks that build upon the very best of that which has come before.<sup>9</sup>

### ***In conversation(s)***

My research is in conversation with other histories of the concept of gender. Most accounts of that history are to be found in John Money's own corpus of work<sup>10</sup> and in the feminist literature. While gender's origins are vaguely acknowledged in some feminist accounts, its intimate relation to hermaphrodites/intersex people, and to intersex case management practices is not.<sup>11</sup> While linguistics is identified (correctly) as the original 'home' of gender in English, many feminist accounts remain blind to the precise context in which gender was transformed from language tool to human attribute.<sup>12</sup> Feminist genealogies of gender that emerged from the poststructuralist moment of the 1980s drew on the poststructuralist emphasis on language, particularly in the work of Foucault, Derrida and Barthes. They focused their attention on the

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<sup>9</sup> I take seriously Money's argument that the project of deconstructionism is limited by its seeming incapacity to offer alternatives to that which it so eagerly tears asunder (Money, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Money (1985a; Money, 1985b, 1986a, 1995, 1998, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Money on the other hand has acknowledged - however disapprovingly - the ways in which feminism impacted on his theories of gender.

<sup>12</sup> This is not to suggest gender ceased to be a language tool but rather that its conceptual load increased exponentially when it became the signifier of characters, behaviours and identities as masculine or feminine.

semantic differences between 'grammatical gender' in the Romance and Germanic languages and 'natural gender',<sup>13</sup> a classification unique to the English language (See especially, de Lauretis, 1987).<sup>14</sup> However in doing so, such accounts have privileged the linguistic significance of 'gender' over its epistemological and ontological bearing.

Over the past two and half decades, the origins of 'gender' in sexology have, almost without exception, been elided. While Bernice Hausman (1995) provides a detailed account of the centrality of Money and of hermaphrodites to the production of the concept 'gender', the inattention paid to historical accuracy in most feminist accounts has resulted in gender being variously framed as the invention of sociology (Curthoys, 2000, 1998); of Robert Stoller (Gatens, 1983; Haraway, 1991);<sup>15</sup> as the legacy of Simone de Beauvoir (Braidotti, 1994; Butler, 1989, 1990, 1993); and as the invention (through its appropriation from linguistics) of feminism (Andermahr, Wolkowitz, & Lovell, 1997; Haraway, 1991; Hawkesworth, 1997; Penelope, 1990; Scott, 1999; Seidman & Nicholson, 1995; Spender, 1980).<sup>16</sup> It seems that from the

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<sup>13</sup> Natural gender, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is a feature of modern English where "nouns are masculine, feminine or neuter according as the objects they denote are male, female, or of neither sex; and the gender of a noun has no other syntactical effect than that of determining the pronoun that must be used in referring to it" ([http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50093521?query\\_type=word&queryword=gender](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50093521?query_type=word&queryword=gender), s.v. GENDER *n.* 2. Last accessed 11 March, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> See also, Spender (1980) and Penelope (1990).

<sup>15</sup> Donna Haraway correctly attributes the introduction of the term 'gender *identity*' to Stoller (c.1963) but incorrectly situates Money's project as successive to that of Stoller's. See Haraway (1991:413).

<sup>16</sup> Hausman's exacting reading of the early work of Money serves as a foundation for some of the key arguments I make in chapters two and three regarding Money's and Stoller's work

moment that 'gender' settled into the feminist lexicon, the idea that it was a feminist invention spread rapidly to become part of feminist folklore. The fact that this idea became a received wisdom may be explained in part by the way that knowledge has traditionally circulated within feminism. It might also be an effect of the efficacy of the concept both as an analytical and an explanatory tool. That the history of such a recent conceptual device should elude so many of those with so much invested in it, seems extraordinary.

This thesis seeks to reintroduce the work of Money and in doing so, disrupt previous feminist genealogies of gender. I contend that the occlusion of Money's work has had a number of consequences. First it has allowed such analyses to remain firmly fixed on the discursive rather than the material production of sex since it sustains the idea that gender is little more than a category of signification constituted through discourse. Second it serves to thoroughly ahistoricise 'gender' as if, as a concept, it has always been available. Third it supports and sustains an epistemological investment in sexual difference - to the order of two. Fourth it serves to entrench feminism firmly into a series of binary logics (sex/gender, male/female, man/woman, gay/straight). Fifth it contributes, however unwittingly, to the ongoing status of hermaphrodites as abject: as the impossible 'Other'. Given that my project is a genealogy of gender, one of the central aims of this research is to demonstrate that hermaphrodites/intersexuals have always had an intricate relation to it and were there at the beginning.

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respectively (see especially, pp. 72-109). Hausman's project analyses transsexuality as a form of subjectivity unique to the late twentieth century, one that is contingent upon the same technologies that are used in intersex case management.

Since 1990 growing numbers of predominantly feminist cultural critics<sup>17</sup> have turned the spotlight on intersex case management (ICM) in order to examine the ethics and efficacy of the clinical practices used to mediate the ‘troublesome’ births of intersex/hermaphrodite infants.<sup>18</sup> This burgeoning body of literature is one that my own work is very much in conversation with because the production of the concept of gender is intricately linked to intersex/hermaphrodite research and clinical practices. The modes of analysis employed in these critical approaches varies considerably: from historical (Dreger, 1995, 1997a, 1998b; Epstein, 1990, 1995); to ethical (Dreger, 1997b, 1998a, 1998c, 2000; Elliot, 1998); ‘insider’ critiques (Fausto-Sterling, 1985, 2000b, 2000c);<sup>19</sup> ethnomethodological and rhetorical (Kessler, 1990, 1998; Turner, 1999); philosophical (Crasnow, 2001; Warnke, 2001); as well sociological, semiotic and cultural analyses (Alexander, 1997; Findlay, 1995; Hausman, 1995; Morland, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Preves, 2000, 2002).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Many of cultural critiques of intersex case management assume the sex/gender distinction although there are those who draw attention to the theoretical dangers of doing so. When sex is relegated to nature as the ‘real’ and gender to culture as the ‘constructed’, the material construction of ‘sex’ as realised through the reconfiguration and/or removal of body parts becomes obscured (Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Hausman, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> See for example, Adkins (1999); Chase (1996/1998); Dreger (1995; 1997a; 1997b; 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 2000); Epstein (1990; 1995); Fausto-Sterling (1993; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c); Findlay (1995); Frader et al (2004) Haynes and McKenna (2001); Holmes (1995; 1998; 2002); Kessler (1990; 1998); Morland (2001; 2005a; 2005b); Preves (2000; 2002); Roen (2004); Turner (Turner, 1999) Warnke (2001).

<sup>19</sup> Anne Fausto-Sterling is ‘by trade’ a molecular biologist. She is also a feminist activist and scholar.

<sup>20</sup> It must be noted that many of these critiques straddle disciplinary boundaries offering for instance, historical, semiotic and cultural studies readings within a single text. For examples see, (Hausman, 1995; Morland, 2005a, 2005b).

The historical accounts offer fascinating insights into the various means by which medical and biological investigators have sought to stabilise sex in and on the body - both materially and discursively (Dreger, 1995, 1997a, 1998b; Epstein, 1990, 1995; Findlay, 1995; Hausman, 1995). This is in part, what my own project is concerned with. Some also explore the relation that medicine has to the law. While the links between medical and legal perceptions of sexual ambiguity are said to extend back centuries, critics point out that former constitutes sex quite differently from the latter. While medical science has long understood that the complexity of sexual development in-utero produces a dazzling array of human bodily forms, the law assumes a straightforward oppositional relation between two sexes. Thus critics argue that medical technologies permit the maintenance of a “legal fiction of binary gender as an absolute” (Epstein, 1990:128-9).

A considerable number of the critiques tackle the issue of medical ethics. Of central concern is the continued implementation of a treatment model designed well before the implementation of contemporary ethical standards in medical care. Intersex case management procedures are seen by some as a throwback to the 19<sup>th</sup> century project of teratology.<sup>21</sup> While individuals are today permitted to live,<sup>22</sup> their particular forms of somatic difference are rendered invisible because intersex ‘conditions’ are considered by physicians as “social stigmata to be excised in the operating room”

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<sup>21</sup> Teratology emerged as a field in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century: its concern was the study of monstrosities (Dreger 1998b:33-35).

<sup>22</sup> Eighteenth century physician James Parsons’ (1741) treatise on hermaphroditism included a review of historical cultural and religious responses to the ‘otherly sexed, many of which involved ritual sacrifice.

(Epstein, 1990:116).<sup>23</sup> Critics roundly condemn (and rightly so), doctors' recommendations to parents that their intersex children be kept in the dark about their medical histories. Also critiqued is the widespread practice of withholding diagnostic information from adult intersexuals.

After 15 years of intellectual and political engagement with the medical practices of ICM, this burgeoning body of knowledge has certain lines of argument that weave through the literature. Some of which have gained hegemonic status within the field. The first critiques of ICM that appeared during the late 1980s and early 1990s laid the ground for a second and third generation, some of which are produced by academics who are activists who are intersexed.<sup>24</sup> The most dominant of these discourses have gained significant currency outside the field as evidenced by numerous other sites (theoretical and political) that are increasingly inflected with considerations and explorations of intersexuality.<sup>25</sup>

Five key arguments serve as points of departure for my own analysis. It is my intention to complicate and disrupt some of hegemonic ideas of the field. In the following discussion I describe and then problematise each of these in turn. The first point of departure turns on the ahistoricising of gender. The second is the idea that ICM represents a disciplinary practice designed to enforce a heteronormative social order. The third is a derivative of the second and concerns the degree of agency ICM

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<sup>23</sup> See also Dreger (1998b); Kessler (1998); Morland (2005a).

<sup>24</sup> See for example, Brown (1995; 2005); Chase (1996/1998; 1999); Holmes (1994; 1995; 1998; 2002), Morland (2001; 2005a; 2005b). This material I explore in depth in Chapter six.

<sup>25</sup> Here I am referring to LGBT organizations and queer theorising, in particular.

clinicians are ascribed by their critics.<sup>26</sup> The fourth position I seek to complicate is what I call the ‘erasure analysis’ where the eradication of intersexuals/hermaphrodites is something already achieved. Finally, I seek to disrupt the idea that the intact bodies of hermaphrodites and intersexuals don’t matter.

### ***Ahistoricising gender***

There is a tendency in this critical literature on ICM to ahistoricise gender as if it had always been available in the way that it is today. Presentism, as discussed in the methodological section of this chapter, serves to universalise the concept of gender and so homogenises both the meaning and experiences of being a sexed subject across time and place. As many of these accounts reveal, even as Money’s relation to ICM is writ large, his role as ‘creator’ of ontological gender is often elided (see for example, Adkins, 1999; Dreger, 1998, 1999; Fausto-Sterling 1985, 1989; Preves, 2002).

Historical accounts that deal with the more recent past also overlook the concept’s intricate relation to ICM. Deborah Findlay (1995) for example, offers an analysis of the way that Canadian physicians mapped their understandings of dichotomous sex onto the bodies of hermaphrodites/intersexuals during the 1950s. While she acknowledges in her introduction that Canadian medical theory and practice was influenced by the international literature, nowhere in her account is the work of Money mentioned. Given the prestige and wide circulation of medical journals such as the *Bulletin of Johns Hopkins* and *Pediatrics* in which Money published, this oversight has a decontextualising effect on the overall study.

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<sup>26</sup> Many of these critiques are inflected with conspiratorial air, even those that caution against such practices. See especially Elliot (1998) and Findlay (2001).

Even when gender's historical specificity is acknowledged, the term is often used liberally to reference prior historical periods (see for example, Adkins, 1999; Dreger, 1998b; Epstein, 1990; Kessler, 1998). As a result all 'sex' becomes 'gender' and so analyses of how perceptions of sex difference came to be understood precisely as 'gender' remain un(der)interrogated (Hausman, 1995). Gender is also ahistoricised when employed as a referent for both the social and the biological aspects of 'sex' (Epstein, 1990; Kessler, 1990; 1998). Such an approach is intended to highlight the constructedness of all aspects of maleness and femaleness and while it has a theoretical utility, it nonetheless qualifies as what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985) might call a significant but expensive leap. This leap is expensive precisely because the specificity of 'gender's' history is obscured and opportunities to explore the production of the concept of 'gender' foreclosed. When all sex is gender, the fact that physicians quite literally work with the material signifiers of sex gets subsumed within larger debates about ideology (Hausman, 1995). Privileging ideology over technological considerations overdetermines the former and diminishes the body's resistance "to ideological captation" (Hausman, 1995:70).<sup>27</sup>

### ***Compulsory heterosexuality***

Perhaps the line of argument that has most achieved hegemonic proportions within these critical discourses is the idea that ICM is a disciplinary practice used to enforce a heteronormative social order. Physicians by this account, actively engage in enforcing heterosexuality. This image of doctors is evident in a multitude of critiques

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<sup>27</sup> Similarly, medical technologies become overdetermined when read as patriarchal tools of exploitation and degradation since the degree of bodily resistance to captation by those technologies is overlooked.

that offer variations of the same idea (Adkins, 1999; Dreger, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000; Findlay, 1995; Holmes, 1995; Hausman, 1995; Kessler, 1990, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Preves, 2002; Turner, 1999). Doctors are represented as the metaphorical princes of darkness charged with upholding the status quo by violent, coercive and deceptive means.<sup>28</sup>

For some critics the medical practices of the last fifty years have accomplished what the legal system sought to do in previous centuries: that is, eradicate all forms of embodied sex that fail to conform to a male-female heterosexual standard (Epstein, 1990, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 1993, 2000c; Hausman, 1995; Kessler, 1990, 1998). Sexual ambiguity threatens the ‘certainty’ of oppositional relations between males and females and so threatens the hegemony of sexual difference. Surgical and hormonal technologies then, permit the maintenance of a “legal fiction of binary gender as an absolute” (Epstein, 1990:128-9).

Heteronormative analyses tend to slide into an explanatory mode even as they are invoked for their analytical power (a tendency it surely shares with the concept of ‘gender’). The application of a heteronormative analysis to ICM represents what might be called a ‘soft’ analysis that has, I contend, some rather expensive consequences. By soft I mean the relative ease with which it is possible to find evidence to support the argument; expensive because it serves to obscure more than it

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<sup>28</sup> The heteronormativity argument works in tandem with what Elizabeth Wilson (2004) identifies as one of the conventionalisms of contemporary feminist studies of the sciences. This conventionalism “manifests as the orthodoxy that the biological sciences are politically and conceptually inept, and that the goal of feminist analysis of the sciences is to correct ideological error, rather than to learn from the data that have been produced” (p.285).

renders visible. As an explanation, heteronormativity is compelling precisely because of the wealth of evidence that exists to support such the claim. Yet there is something disquieting about this analysis.

Heteronormativity is surely as monolithic a concept as 'patriarchy'. By purporting to explain everything, it forecloses investigations of what intersexuality means for *all* sexual identities. A political economy of sexual difference has a broad-based constituency since those who are invested in gay and lesbian identities have a particularly keen interest in being able to demarcate between male and female bodies. As Dreger (1998b) wryly notes "if you don't know who is a male and who is a female, how will you know if what you have is a case of heterosexuality or homosexuality?" (p.9). For that reason, I argue that today intersexuals/hermaphrodites raise not only the spectre of homosexuality, they also the spectre of heterosexuality.

Borrowing from Teresa de Lauretis (1987) but reversing the terms of her argument, I propose that 'gender' operates as a technology of sexual difference. This allows us to see that the normative order at issue is that of sexuality rather than just heterosexuality. In other words, ICM supports and upholds a normative *monosexual* order. From this angle the spectrum of interest groups invested in binary gender are brought into focus. Gender then, can be read as the most recent historical apparatus to legitimate *all* social and sexual practices that rely on a distinction between two sexes.

### ***A matter of agency***

Analyses of heteronormativity ascribe to clinicians and doctors an agency that they do not for the most part possess. It is questionable whether today doctors working in

overstretched and under-resourced public health systems (the site of most births in Western liberal democracies)<sup>29</sup> have the level of agency attributed to them in these accounts.<sup>30</sup> As Elliot (1998) so rightly reminds us, doctors are not in a position to consciously act as defenders of the cultural order since they too are trapped by that order, “imprisoned in a cell with only one window on the world” (p.40). Doctors and clinicians bring their own experience as gendered subjects to their work along with a complex amalgam of medical and lay understandings about sex-gender. Undoubtedly those understandings turn on the idea of sexual dimorphism and have a profound effect on how differently formed bodies are interpreted and upon the decisions physicians make regarding how best to medically ‘manage’ hermaphrodite/intersex persons. Yet it is important to recognise that medical scientists and clinicians are not alone in having a world-view bifurcated by binary logic. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge that ICM happens because we *all* understand human subjectivity on the basis of two. Hermaphrodites and intersexuals do not fit into this way of seeing the world and that is why and that is how they are a ‘problem’ (Elliot, 1998).

### ***Erasing all trace***

A number of the cultural critiques argue that over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century medical professionals have completed what the legal system had originally set out to

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<sup>29</sup> While a number of specialist ICM facilities exist around the world, they are in fact few and far between. This means that most doctors are reliant on the literature to guide their practices when confronted with the birth of intersex/hermaphrodite newborns. In the Southern Hemisphere for example, there is just one such facility in Melbourne, Australia and none at all in New Zealand.

<sup>30</sup> This is not to suggest that doctors do not engage in trying to engineer binary gender, but rather that they are not in a position to engineer *heterosexuality*.

do: that is, to completely erase of any form of somatic sex that does not conform to a binary (hetero)sexual model (Epstein, 1990, 1995; Fausto-Sterling, 1993:23). This idea is made manifest in Epstein's assertion that "suppression achieves its perfect form in 'excision', and the Other's potential for subversive social arrangements is eradicated altogether" (1990:130). In medical discourses, surgical and hormonal interventions serve to relieve the hermaphrodite patient of their 'condition' making them no longer intersexed. This makes possible the argument that discursively, hermaphrodites are subject to a form of erasure since they cease to exist in their own right in the present. At a material level, ICM practices have certainly rendered hermaphrodites/intersexuals practically invisible outside of the medical literature because their bodies are reconfigured to resemble male and female. The idea that ICM represents a return to medicine's teratological roots frames eradication as something already achieved, yet even if this hypothesis were 'proveable', it tells only part of the story.

In Chapters two and five I make the case that it was not in fact Money's 'gender' or ICM that fully apprehended the hermaphrodite subject. As I demonstrate, that work had already been accomplished by psychologist Albert Ellis when, in the mid-1940s he categorised hermaphrodites' eroto-sexual status as heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. In apprehending hermaphrodites' sexuality in this way the figure of a third or differently sexed 'Other' was instantly made redundant. The idea of a third sex which had loomed large in early sexual scientific thought disappeared in a flash, since

within the logic of a normative bipolar eroto-sexual order there is no place for a third or 'Other' sex.<sup>31</sup>

Another complicating factor in the erasure claim is writ large in the dominant agenda of intersex politics in English-speaking world. As I discuss in detail in Chapter six, intersex advocacy groups and many individuals seek an end to mandatory genital surgery on newborns. For some activists taking this agenda to its logical end, the achievement of that goal would see intersex identities become obsolete. From this particular perspective intersexuality is a product of surgery rather than an effect of a politic. Canadian activist and scholar, Morgan Holmes has been quoted as saying the intersex movement is a "utopian project which can envision its own obsolescence" (cited in Kessler, 1998:90).<sup>32</sup> By this account, bringing mandatory surgery to an end would render intersex identities moot, leaving in its wake men and women with penises and clitorises of differing sizes. In other words, genitalia would represent "phenotypes with no particular clinical meaning" (Kessler, 1998:90). It is my argument that this too represents a form of erasure because it reinforces the supposed naturalness of existing binary categories by privileging maleness and femaleness and in so doing so relegates hermaphrodites once more to the realms of the mythical.

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<sup>31</sup> I suggest that it might also be useful to think about how gender and ICM have served to extend the ways in which it is possible - in theory if not in practice - to be(come) a rational unified subject through being singularly sexed.

<sup>32</sup> Kessler suggests this is a more radical articulation than the demand for the legitimation of an ontological status as hermaphrodite (1998:90). In an earlier work, Kessler (1990) claimed that so-called 'true hermaphrodites' - those who possessed both gonads either separately or combined as an ovotestes - were extremely rare and further that most people with "ambigenitals" are not really intersex at all (p. 5). This claim, in its own way constitutes yet another form of erasure.

### ***These bodies don't matter?***

Another line of argument draws on the analysis Judith Butler put forward in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) where she suggested that bodies had to be sexed in order to matter (See for example, Adkins, 1999; Dreger, 1997a, 1998b; Morland, 2005a; Turner, 1999). For Butler the materiality of the body does not exist *a priori*, or prediscursively but rather is coextensive with its degree of culturally intelligibility - as gender. By this account intersex bodies only matter *after* they have been sexed and after receipt of what Morland (2005) refers to as the “idealised” and “authorised version” of genitals (p.337). Epstein (1990) asserts that “armed with the heaviest artillery available medical science attempts to enforce a binary sex differentiation that is known not to exist in biomedicine” (p.130). Certainly the birth of an intersex infant elicits what can only be described as an extreme response by clinicians. This suggests that these bodies do indeed matter – very much. Intersex/hermaphrodite bodies are seen to require mediation precisely because they are excessive at a somatic level and because they exceed culturally intelligible. There is a strong case to be made that intersex/hermaphrodite bodies actually matter *more* than non-intersex bodies in the same way that their capacity to be a gender matters.

### ***Theoretical framework***

Thomas Kuhn (1970) was one of the first to highlight the way that scientific observations are never ‘pure,’ since they are always shaped by concepts. In other words, our vision is limited by the reach of our ideas such that we are unable to see that which we have no words or ideas for. In this sense then, there are no ‘facts’ that operate independently from the ideas available to describe them since concepts shape

perception. I begin this research from the premise that the conceptual framework of sexual dimorphism represents an interpretation of ‘natural properties’ rather than ‘facts’ of ‘nature’ (Warnke, 2001). Having just two legitimate sex (and two gender) categories prevents us from seeing the variety of ‘types’ that a different conceptualisation would reveal, as the 18<sup>th</sup> century physician James Parsons noted over two and a half centuries ago.

If there was not so absolute a Law, with respect to the being of only one Sex in one Body, we might then, indeed, expect to find every Day many preposterous digressions from our present Standard (Parsons, 1741:6-7).

Over the past fifty years gender has become *the* interpretive framework for making sense of human bodies and subjectivities<sup>33</sup> such that “one begins with the activities and presumptions about gender and works backwards as it were, toward the body” (Warnke, 2001:130). To recognise that contemporary understandings of ourselves as sexed subjects involves the interpretation of bodies, identities and behaviours through gender provides opportunities to examine what kinds of understandings it allows, what it refuses and what it serves to obscure.

Georges Canguilhem’s (1978) analysis of the relation between physiology (the science of living organisms) and pathology (the science of disease) provides a useful way of shedding light on the processes involved in medical science’s bounding of ‘the

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<sup>33</sup> There is also a substantive literature from the biological sciences that uses gender as an interpretive framework for understanding the behaviour of animals, birds and reptiles, a practice known as anthropomorphisation. For some recent examples, see Bagemihl (1999), Roughgarden (2004).

normal'. Nowhere is this bounding more salient it would seem than with respect to what is normal in sex. An anomaly according to Canguilhem only becomes pathological at the point that it begins to stimulate scientific study since neither diversity nor anomaly are, in and of themselves, disorders or diseases. By exploring the "relations between the determination of statistical norms and the evaluation of the degree of normality or abnormality" of any particular divergence, Canguilhem demonstrated that the concept of a norm was not so much a judgement of reality but rather one of value (p.77). John Money said as much in his own research.<sup>34</sup> Once the etiology of an anomaly is identified, the anomalous becomes pathological and from that point on, the pathological serves to substantiate that which is deemed to be normal. As I demonstrate, contemporary understandings of so-called normal (or unremarkable) foetal development derived directly from studies of hermaphrodites as did Money's theories of gender acquisition.

At a semantic level, the term 'abnormal' follows from the definition of 'normal' in that it functions as its logical negation (Canguilhem, 1978). It was Canguilhem's view that because the relation between the normal and the abnormal is always one of exclusion it is not paradoxical to claim that "the abnormal, while logically second, is existentially first" (p.149). Normality is that which goes unmarked precisely because its boundaries are delineated by what it is not. 'The normal', even when understood in terms of a continuum, remains a rudimentary "conception of a lack of difference, of conformity, of the capacity to blend in invisibly" (Epstein, 1995:11). What this effectively means is that normality is unable to be apprehended on its own terms. By extending the concept of gender beyond the context of hermaphrodite research,

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<sup>34</sup> See for example, Money (1988:51-2,76-7).

Money was able to use it to substantiate 'normal' development: in this case the development of masculine and feminine identities.

Hermaphrodites once fell under the rubric of teratology - the study of monsters. Within the logic of that field,<sup>35</sup> characteristics deemed 'monstrous' are explained as the products of faulty embryological development and so take on the significance of disease. This is precisely the process by which hermaphroditism came to be rendered pathological. The concept of monsters has traditionally involved all kinds of duplication of the human form, or its component parts. Excessiveness at the level of the body seems to generate both curiosity and anxiety in medical science. Grosz (1996) has noted that an excess of bodily parts seem somehow more "discomforting than a shortage or diminution of limbs or organs" (p.64). The anxiety of which I speak is invoked by the spectre of a monstrous chimera, a creature capable of transcending species boundaries. In this way the 'monstrous hermaphrodite Other' stands as "both liminal and structurally central" to what we perceive as normal human subjectivity (Braidotti, 1996:141). Yet that structural centrality does not merely delineate between normal and abnormal since,

Without the monstrous body to demarcate the borders of the generic, [...] and without the pathological to give form to the normal, the taxonomies of bodily value that underlie political, social, and economic arrangements would collapse (Thomson, 1997:20).

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<sup>35</sup> The scientific study and classification of monstrosities was coined teratology during the early nineteenth century however, it should be noted that hermaphrodites had been classified as monsters in some contexts for centuries prior. It is also noteworthy that teratology was the precursor of the field of embryology.

At the same time that medical science turns to natural biological variation to define normality, it also attempts to mediate that variation into neutrality (Fausto-Sterling, 1997, 2000). As I demonstrate in Chapters Two and Three, the work of John Money and Robert Stoller falls squarely within that tradition.

According to Rosemarie Garland Thomson (1997), the project of modernity has “effected a standardisation of everyday life that saturates the entire social fabric producing and reinforcing the concept of the unmarked normative, level body as the dominant subject of democracy” (p. 12). Modernity is characterised by “[m]echanised practices such as standardisation, mass production, and interchangeable parts” (p. 11). Thus the autonomous subject of modernity is grounded in a body that is required to be consistent in both form and in function. That is why biomedicine as a form of modernist scientific discourse valorises regularity and uniformity as the supposed objective grounds for its epistemological claims (Price & Shildrick, 1998). The conventions of health care insist on constituting all bodies - including those marked by radical difference - as stable and predictable. It is precisely that reliance on predictability that compels scientific discourses to depreciate and/or diminish particularity. As a result any variation from an idealised standardised body requires corrective intervention(s). “Peculiarity in whatever configuration threatens to disturb the paradigms of sameness and difference on which western epistemology, ontology and ethics are founded, and must therefore be managed into neutrality” (Price & Shildrick, 1998:232).

The idea that hermaphrodites require medical intervention tends to go without question,<sup>36</sup> indeed medical mediation is 'sold' on the grounds that hermaphrodite individuals are doomed to a life of misery and dejection without it. The underlying premise of Money's research assumes that hermaphroditic individuals would have been born as 'normal' males or 'normal' females if something hadn't gone wrong. Situating hermaphrodites as 'unfinished' has two effects: not only does it justify the role of medical science in managing or 'correcting' disorderly or deviant bodies, it also serves to uphold the apparent 'truth' of dimorphic sex. Humans really do, after all, consist of just two sexes. But understandings of bodies are of course, always representations.

Scientific and popular modes of representing bodies are never innocent because they always tie bodies into larger systems of knowledge production (Urla & Terry, 1995). John Money's production of gender is exemplary in this regard for two reasons. Working under the transdisciplinary umbrella of sexology, Money's work drew upon bodies of knowledge that extended far beyond the medical sciences, for example zoology, linguistics and anthropology. At the same time it fed back into those institutionalised bodies of knowledge by informing and shaping subsequent concepts generated by them. Money's concepts also informed other bodies of knowledge such as feminism and what might be called everyday understandings (or local cultural knowledges) of what it means to be a gendered or sexed subject.

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<sup>36</sup> In almost all of the medical literature written prior to the late-1990s, the debates centred around what form interventions should take, never whether interventions should be taken. It is only in the past five or six years that the issue of non-intervention has entered into the discussion.

The hegemonic 'truths' of gender and of sex (sex-gender) are, like all dominant discourses, inherently unstable. Many poststructuralist analyses have noted that gender is produced discursively through a constant reiteration and by a continual referencing to its own 'essential-ness' (Adkins, 1999; Burkitt, 1998; Butler, 1990, 1993). These are the conditions under which a sense of stability is bestowed upon gender in such accounts. However gender does not just function on a discursive level, it also functions relationally as sociologist Erving Goffman<sup>37</sup> and others have noted.<sup>38</sup>

While Goffman did not offer a direct critique of the work of Money, his analysis speaks well to many aspects of the latter's project. In *The Arrangement Between the Sexes* (1977/1998), Goffman offered a two-fold analysis of gender relations that in many respects echoed the ideas of Money, as will become apparent in the chapters that follow.<sup>39</sup> Goffman's analysis functioned at two levels: the micro and the macro. At a micro level, his analysis offered a particularly nuanced account of the processes by which sex-specific modes of appearances, behaviours and emotions come to be assimilated into embodied and psychic experience.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Goffman is recognised as one of the major contributors to symbolic interactionism although this is not where he understood his own project to lie. Symbolic interactionism is concerned with the ways that people construct (and present) a sense of self and how meanings are created through interaction, thus it resonates with aspects of poststructuralism. For an analysis of some of the parallels between the two perspectives, see Dunn (1997).

<sup>38</sup> See also Nancy Chodorow (1974; 1978; 1979/1998) for an analysis of gender as relational.

<sup>39</sup> See especially Chapters two and five. Both Money and Goffman offered accounts of the ways that sex differences come to be elaborated personally and socially but of course did so for very different ends.

<sup>40</sup> Goffman's analysis of gender as a mode of social and personal organisation pre-empted poststructuralist critiques of the concept. Since 1990, Judith Butler has become known as the

For the purposes of my research it is the macro component of Goffman's analysis that most assists my own investigation into the concept of gender. Goffman's refusal of the body as the (*a priori*) natural ground for gender allowed him to analyse gendered social arrangements as power relations.<sup>41</sup> Gender, by his account, was nothing less than "a remarkable organisational device" for arranging humans into one of two sex classes from birth onwards, despite its often tenuous relation to the body. He believed it paradoxical that something so inherently unstable was able to function as such an effective "opiate of the masses" (1977/1998:653). In Goffman's view, to speak of 'the sexes' or of the 'other sex' in oppositional terms as Money does, was a "dangerous economy" precisely because it so neatly tied into cultural stereotypes (p. 644). He argued strongly, and persuasively, that 'sex' should only ever be regarded as the property of organisms and not as a class.

Moreover, Goffman stressed the importance (as do I) of bringing into focus the various means by which medico-scientific understandings of gender shape and substantiate normative understandings and local cultural knowledges. By Goffman's account, normative understandings of gender come to be empowered by medico-scientific beliefs about sexual difference. Thus empowered, normative understandings have a self-fulfilling effect on gendered behaviour. In other words, Goffman's analysis understood gender to operate tautologically.

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proponent of the 'new' idea that gender is performative however, Goffman's analysis preceded Butler's by some 13 years.

<sup>41</sup> Goffman also complicated his analysis of gender by examining the way that it intersected with, and through class, race and ethnicity.

### ***Methodological notes***

This thesis approaches its subject matter - gender – by drawing on aspects of a genealogical method, in the Foucauldian sense. Such an approach seeks not to discover any ‘truth’ in gender, but rather to unsettle and disrupt assumptions that there is a continuity of meaning. Similarly it seeks to disrupt the idea of fixed essences. A genealogy aims to reveal that what appears to be the ‘truth’ is but an interpretation or series of interpretations of, in this context, bodies and subjectivities which each have their own historical specificity (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983; Foucault, 1998; Rabinow, 1997).

As I demonstrate throughout the following chapters, gender is a particularly dynamic concept that has undergone a series of transformations since first being offered as an ontological category just 50 years ago. A genealogical approach provides a means of accessing the present through an exploration of the conditions under which each of the following were made possible: first gender’s transformation from grammatical tool to human attribute; second the routinised surgical mediation of hermaphrodites; third, the conceptual split between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’; and fourth, how ‘gender’ came to be the central organising concept of feminism. Finally an historical analysis of gender as a history of the present allows for an examination of how the most recent political domain to be concerned with gender, the intersex political movement, was made possible.

My research employs a mixed method that combines textual analyses of different bodies of knowledge and qualitative face-to-face interviews. A critical textual analysis of the published sexological literature was selected as the most appropriate method for

exploring the early work of Money and that of Robert Stoller. My research on Money is exhaustive from his doctoral thesis (1952) to his latest publications (2003a), while that of Stoller covers his published material from 1964 to 1985. A critical textual analysis was also the method of choice for examining the published feminist literature of the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>42</sup> These published works form the basis of many ideas about gender that are in public circulation.

The primary historical material with which I engage is the work of Money, Stoller and the feminist literature of the 1970s. In the first instance, these materials serve as my objects of analysis, since there are a number of levels at which I critique them. Yet that critique does not in and of itself, negate or diminish the theoretical contributions they offer at other levels. It is for that reason that some of the primary texts also function in this research as tools of analysis. They do so because as theoretical texts they offer concepts that are particularly useful to my project. This is especially the case with the work of Money.

The material around which Chapter six is organised comes from two primary sources. The first of these include organisational texts produced by intersex advocacy groups that are publically available on websites on the World Wide Web; published first person accounts by intersex activists; and a range of journal articles and essays by activist scholars (Chase, 1996/1998; Dreger, 1998b, 2000; Fausto-Sterling, 2000c;

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<sup>42</sup> Sexological texts were sourced through the University of Sydney's Fisher and Medical libraries and interloan facilities; the Universities of Auckland and Waikato (N.Z.); and the Kinsey Institute for Sex Gender and Reproduction archive. Feminist texts were also sourced from libraries at the Universities of Sydney, Auckland and Waikato, from the personal collections of colleagues and from opportune finds in second-hand bookshops.

Holmes, 1994, 1995, 1998; Kaldera, 1998; Kessler, 1998). Those texts are juxtaposed with material generated from face to face interviews conducted with hermaphrodite/intersex individuals residing in various locations in Australia, New Zealand, India and North America between December 2001 and February 2002.

Respondents were recruited by two means: firstly by word of mouth and secondly, by posting a brief description of the research aims and objectives and a call for expressions of interest on a web-based listserv managed by the Perth-based International Foundation for Androgynous Studies (IFAS). A total of six interviews were conducted for this research,<sup>43</sup> each of two to three hours duration and follow up interviews were conducted with three of the original participants.<sup>44</sup>

It was my intention to facilitate an environment conducive to eliciting the kind of rich information that often manifests after recording devices are switched off at the conclusion of an interview. In keeping with that aim, I downplayed the formal nature

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<sup>43</sup> The interview transcripts are not included as appendices to this thesis since they contain information of a highly sensitive and personal nature. The *Subject Information Sheet* provided to potential interviewees clearly states that "all aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential" and that only I, as the researcher, will have access to the information. See Appendix I.

<sup>44</sup> All participants were invited to engage in further dialogue via email, whether to ask questions about the research or expand on issues they raised during the interview. Further correspondence was conducted with four participants. Each interview was recorded by two discretely placed audio recorders. The interviews were conducted in accordance with the conditions of ethical approval granted for this research by the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee. Each participant was offered anonymity and given the opportunity to select their own pseudonym if they did not wish their own (first) names to be used in the thesis.

of the interview by setting a conversational tone. Food and hospitality played a central role in creating that environment as each interview was conducted over a meal, or at the very least, over coffee. In three instances, hospitality was extended to me in respondents' homes and in other instances the hospitality was extended by me.

The interview schedule chosen for this research was an informal semi-structured type as opposed to a formal structured kind. That choice was made in an endeavour to equalise (as much as is possible) the research relationship, and to avoid the articulations of my respondents being constrained by a rigid framework of questions. The interview schedule was based around three general themes: gender, desire and sexual orientation. Sexuality and desire were offered separately in recognition that the current framework that we have available for making sense of the erotic – sexuality – might well be inadequate to the task of accounting for the desires and sexual practices of my respondents. Participants were advised of the themes at least two weeks prior to the date of the interview in order to give each person time to reflect upon them.

The research questions themselves were concerned with 'how' rather than with 'why' because the latter demand causal explanations and justifications, ideally ones that can be summarised succinctly. According to Becker (1998) 'why' questions also require that the answers be 'good' ones: that is, they require answers that make sense and can be defended. By contrast, 'how' questions invite the kinds of responses the speaker believes best suited to the accounts they are articulating. In other words, 'how' questions invite respondents to identify the elements that are most central to their own narrative accounts in a context in which there are no right or wrong answers (p. 59).

The fieldwork for this project was motivated in no small part by the question of what might constitute an intersex or hermaphrodite *subjectivity* as opposed to an intersexed 'condition'. In the sexological, biological and medical literature<sup>45</sup> the adjectives 'intersexed' and 'hermaphroditic' refer to particular types of bodies rather than particular types of subjectivities.

### ***Notes on terminology and definitions***

Against convention, I have chosen not to offer a fixed, delimited definition of the central organising principle of my research: 'gender'. To do so would in fact defeat one of the primary objectives of this thesis: to make plain the dynamic nature of the concept. I contend that it is that dynamism that gives 'gender' its power. At the same time, I remain cognisant that rigorous scholarship requires an elucidation of the key concepts of any research. Therefore I draw on John Money's original conceptualisation of gender in favour of more recent alternatives that assume a distinction between sex and gender.

Money's version of gender is most useful for this project precisely because of his refusal of the sex/gender distinction. My point of divergence from Money's concept turns on the notion of gendering as a process. For Money it is the interaction between the corporeal, the sensorial and the social that produces a person's gender. In other words, it is through this interactive relation that we *become* gendered. While I have no argument with those elements or with the idea that their interaction is necessary to the process, I want to suspend the notion of 'becoming' and replace it instead with the

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<sup>45</sup> As I demonstrate in Chapters four and six these are not the only sites in which this notion is reproduced.

idea that Money's account provides us with a way of understanding how we *learn to be gendered*.<sup>46</sup> While this distinction is a subtle one it is I believe important, since it grants a dynamism to ontological experience and remains cognisant of the fact that our concepts of what it means to be a gender are not static across different historical moments.

Throughout this thesis I refuse the sex/gender distinction. Where such a distinction appears in the text, it is in the context of elaborating others' ideas about gender and/or sexuality. In order to signify that refusal I use a hyphenated form of the terms that appear on the page as 'sex-gender'. For Money, gender was not separate to or distinct from sex, since he devised the former as an overarching term that included the erotic. Moreover he assumed a fully interactive relation between physiologies and psyches and experience,<sup>47</sup> a relation mediated through the central nervous system. Money's refusal can be said to be *a priori* to the making of the distinction between sex and gender in the mid-1960s, since his first published book offered a strong critique of Cartesian Dualism, the foundational principle upon which that distinction is based.<sup>48</sup>

The random (and ill-considered) use of historically specific terminology constitutes what Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) refer to as a form of "presentism" which they describe as the projection of contemporary meanings onto earlier historical periods so as to locate and identify parallel meanings (p.118). This has the effect of ahistoricising terms and concepts that would have made no sense in the time periods to which they

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<sup>46</sup> See also Rubin (1975:204).

<sup>47</sup> At other points during the thesis I frame this same interaction as one between cells, environment and experience.

<sup>48</sup> Refer to Money (1957).

are applied. Prior to the introduction of 'gender' into discourse the term 'sex' encoded both biological *and* social categories. This is not to suggest that what we today know as 'gender' was any less operative in social relations but rather, that "it went unmarked as a separate [component] of being a sex" (Hausman, 1995:75). Since one of the central aims of this research is to provide an account of gender's historical specificity, I refrain from using 'gender' when referring to historical periods that predate its introduction into the English language (as a human attribute). Instead I use the term 'sex' and/or its derivatives. The term intersex is treated similarly.

Intersex is a relatively recent term that entered the medical diagnostic lexicon during the early twentieth century (Hausman, 1995).<sup>49</sup> The term 'hermaphrodite' can be traced back to classical antiquity and so predates medical scientific thought by centuries. In much of the contemporary medical literature hermaphrodite and intersex continue to be used interchangeably, the former generally modified with the terms 'true' and 'pseudo' and with the qualifiers 'male' and 'female'. When discussing historical periods prior to the introduction of intersex (1920s), the term hermaphrodite is used exclusively. By contrast, the two terms are used interchangeably or appear side-by-side following the introduction of the term 'intersex', for the reasons cited above.

At many points throughout this thesis I privilege the term hermaphrodite over that intersex. I do so in order to honour the historical persistence of hermaphrodite subjects, an existence that long preceded their medicalisation. Debates rage within the contemporary intersex (IS) political movement regarding appropriate and acceptable

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<sup>49</sup> Refer to *The Mechanism and Physiology of Sex Determination* (Goldschmidt, 1923).

terminology. For many activists the term hermaphrodite is stigmatising and misleading since it is believed to imply the existence of duplicate sexual organs, and because it carries with it mythical connotations. There are others for whom the term intersex is equally problematic because of its inextricable link to medical pathology on the one hand, and because of its literal meaning - *between* sexes - on the other. This latter objection is particularly salient for those who claim an ontological status *as* hermaphrodite. When discussing the articulations of those who prefer intersex over hermaphrodite, I respectfully use their term of preference and vice versa for those whose preference is hermaphrodite.

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This research represents a necessary historical project that contextualises the production and reproduction of ‘gender’ in order to bring to light the power and the efficacy of simple six-letter word. What we will see in the chapters that follow is the extraordinary contribution that John Money has made to academic and lay understandings (in English-speaking contexts) of what it means to be a sexed subject. By offering ‘gender’ as a new conceptual realm of sex, Money provided medicine and the sexual sciences with a rationale for a particular set of clinical practices. But more than this, he provided feminism and the social sciences with a vehicle through which to articulate a range of theoretical and political projects. Concepts by their very nature must generate ideas that are useful and in this regard, ‘gender’ has proved to be exemplary. The thesis continues to draw on, and use, Money’s theories of gender in order to offer a new framework for understanding what it is to be human.

## Chapter 2

*“Stereotypic roles have a history of having been constructed arbitrarily and inconsistently rather than logically and systematically. Thus, on the criterion of sex, today’s stereotypic roles for males and females are biased toward insufficient attention to the similarities between the sexes and exaggeration of the differences.”*

*John Money (1995:51)*

# Money and Gender

## ***Introduction***

Gender is a lens through which we have come to understand and organise our social worlds. Yet it has been just 50 years since the concept ‘gender’ came to signify an aspect of human subjectivity in the English language. One of the central aims of this thesis is to demonstrate that gender is one the greatest conceptual devices of the late twentieth century and analyse how it came to be so. To construct such an argument it is necessary to trace the career and theorising of John Money who initially offered the term gender during the mid-1950s as part of a framework for understanding the phenomenon of human hermaphroditism and as a rationale for clinical practices designed to facilitate their habilitation as boys/men or girls/women. The discussion and analysis in this chapter is concerned with the multiple interventions of Money in offering gender as a philosophical and conceptual tool. There can be little argument that the concept of gender has become indispensable to the way that English speakers understand what it is to be a sexed subject. Thus one of the driving questions behind my own research is: what made Money’s gender theory (originally designed to account for a relatively small segment of the population), so compelling an explanation of identity formation for the general population?

This chapter maps the trajectory of Money’s career by focusing on the development and refinement of his theories of how masculine and feminine identities come to be acquired and how they are constituted. That necessarily requires an exploration of the

ways in which hermaphrodites provide medical science with particular ‘truths’ about human subjectivity: ‘truths’ for which they themselves pay a very high price. The first section traces Money’s earliest academic training and discusses the professional context in which he first became interested in the subject of hermaphroditism and which led to the focus of his doctoral research. The discussion points to some of the key theoretical influences on his work in order to situate his research within a long tradition in sexology and the medical sciences. I then examine the primary research questions of Money’s doctoral project: questions that concerned the psychological adaptation of people whose morphologies were at odds with their psychosocial identities. It is my intention to highlight certain assumptions that underpinned those questions - particularly those that Money’s data failed to support.

The discussion then turns to Money’s early career under the tutelage of renowned paediatric endocrinologist, Lawson Wilkins. Following the completion of his doctoral studies, Money took up a position as co-director of a newly created research unit at Johns Hopkins. Under the auspices of that unit Money continued his hermaphrodite research, gathering increasing numbers of case reports and data with which to evidence his claims. It was in that context that he identified a need for a single overarching term that would enable him to discuss the masculinity and femininity of his patients. The term he eventually settled on was ‘gender’.

As part of his broader project, Money recodified ‘sex’ by adding psychosocial signifiers to the already recognised corporeal markers. While five physiological signifiers had long been recognised in medical science, Money’s innovation led to a profound shift in medical approaches to hermaphroditic bodies. No longer were

clinicians compelled to discover a person's 'true' sex, now their job involved determining a 'best' sex for each of their patients. This innovation had specific material and epistemological consequences for those in whose name 'gender' was initially put to work.

The second section offers a critical engagement with the first series of journal articles in which Money offered the concept of gender. He and his colleagues had presented their research findings at paediatric conferences in the United States and in Europe prior to publishing their work in the *John Hopkins University Bulletin* (hereafter referred to as *The Bulletin*) and other medical journals between 1955 and 1957. Their choice of publications ensured the dissemination of his ideas to a broader medical audience. The articles provided a vehicle for Money to elaborate the theories he had begun to formulate in his doctoral research and they mark the beginning of Money's ascent as the leading authority on hermaphroditism during the second half of the twentieth century.

Money and his colleagues argued forcefully that the long-recognised biological markers of sex were thoroughly unreliable as determinants of a person's psychosocial or psychosexual orientation. This allowed them to accord primacy to the social signifiers and provided a philosophical basis for a treatment regime designed to ensure that future generations of hermaphrodite infants developed unambiguous identities as masculine *or* feminine. The analysis I offer in this section turns on the specific ways in which Money et al discredited the physiological signifiers; the prescription they offered for training parents as gender 'managers'; their programme for training hermaphrodite individuals into their assigned gender; and their own

analyses of the implications of radical surgical procedures such as clitoridectomy. I also examine the authors' "key performance indicators" for determining whether a person had successfully habituated into a gender. Finally, I explore a number of ways in which the authors' own data contradicted the ideas they promoted.

Section three is concerned with the wider application of Money's theories of gender. In the tradition of the great meta-theoretical projects of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries,<sup>50</sup> Money extended his ideas beyond the hermaphrodite population to explain how *everybody* acquired an identity as masculine or feminine. Many of those ideas have achieved axiomatic status over the past fifty years in spite of the rather shaky foundations on which some rest. Money continued to refine and elaborate his theory of gender after he extrapolated his ideas to the general population. I explore those elaborations and look at the way in which they demonstrate that the proof of a hermaphrodite's successful adaptation requires what can only be described as excessive performances of masculinity or femininity.

## ***SECTION I***

### ***Academic and professional history***

John Money graduated from Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, during the mid-1940s with a double Masters degree (psychology/philosophy<sup>51</sup> and

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<sup>50</sup> Here I am thinking of Marx, Freud, Parsons and others' rather ambitious efforts to narrate and analyse social phenomenon across time and across space by using singular comprehensive principles to explain complex social phenomena.

<sup>51</sup> At that time, psychology was a programme within the Philosophy Department of Victoria University.

education), and a teaching qualification, before heading to the United States in 1947. In the late 1940s, it was not possible to undertake a PhD in psychology in New Zealand so Money had to go offshore in order to pursue postgraduate studies in that field. While many of his contemporaries chose to pursue postgraduate education in the United Kingdom, Money's choice was determined by a number of factors. Money cites his engagement with the scholarly material coming out of North America and one of his teachers at Victoria University, social anthropologist Ernest Beaglehole as key influences on that decision (Money, 1986a:5). Beaglehole had spent time at Yale University during the 1930s working with Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict and other founders of psychological anthropology while on a Commonwealth Fellowship (Ritchie & Ritchie, 2000).<sup>52</sup> Once in the United States, Money secured a place in the Psychological Clinic and Department of Social Relations graduate program at Harvard University (Money, 1986a). Among his teachers at Harvard were such eminent social theorists as Talcott Parsons whose 'role theory' dominated the social sciences throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

Money writes of his attendance at a presentation by faculty member George Gardner in 1949 as somewhat serendipitous. Gardner presented a case study of a hermaphrodite individual who had been reared male and identified as such, despite possessing a phallus that more resembled a clitoris than a penis and despite having developed female secondary sex characteristics at puberty (1986:6). At the time Money was working on a review of psychosexual theory from pre-Freud through to

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<sup>52</sup> Money has often drawn on anthropological research (his own and the work of others) to support his theories of gender and of sexuality, See Money et al (1970).

the (then) present day, for a term paper.<sup>53</sup> Realising the enormity of the task he had set himself, Money reconfigured the project into a more workable assignment and wrote instead, a critique of the Freud's first essay on sexuality. The revised project was directly inspired by Gardner's presentation (Money, 1986a:6).

Money realised fully the significance that hermaphrodites, living as men and as women, held for psychosexual theories of instinct and drive. Like Freud some fifty years prior, Money turned to hermaphrodites to argue his case. In addition to a review of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century medical literature on the psychology of hermaphroditism,<sup>54</sup> Money's paper offered 4 detailed case reports to support his argument that there was no instinctual basis for masculinity and femininity. For Freud, an individual's sexual outlook (as masculine or feminine) and the direction and goal of the libido were directly related to unlearned determinants and were thus in his view, constitutional or instinctive elements of subjectivity (Freud, 1905/1953). Money strongly refuted that idea, arguing that hermaphrodites who identified as men or women provided clear evidence that,

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<sup>53</sup> Unpublished. This information comes from the first chapter of *Venuses Penuses*, entitled "Professional Biography" (Money, 1986a). Reference is also made to this paper in later publications, but I have been unable to locate the original. While it may be held as part of the John Money Collection at The Kinsey Institute in Bloomington, Indiana, the paper was not available during my visit to the Institute in 2002.

<sup>54</sup> This turn of phrase would suggest some recognition of the possibility of a specifically hermaphroditic ontology. However as will be discussed in this and in chapter five, medical and sexological discourses of hermaphroditism render such an ontology so intolerable as to be seemingly impossible.

Psychosexual orientation bears a very strong relationship to teaching and the lessons of experience and should be conceived as a psychological phenomenon (Money, 1952:5).

That someone who was neither male nor female could establish an identity as a man or a woman provided substantial weight to Money's claims. His innovation was not to deny that masculinity and femininity were grounded in the psyche, but rather how it happened and when.

That essay proved foundational to his entire career and laid the ground for his ascent as *the* leading authority on human hermaphroditism. The paper formed the basis for a doctoral thesis that involved a comparative study of case reports from the medical literature written between 1895 and 1951. Money's review turned up 248 reports written in English which he supplemented with 10 detailed case studies of his own. Money gained access to his informants through their physicians and conducted interviews and performed a range of psychological tests on each of them (Money, 1952). From the data, Money ordered each 'case' into a range of categories on the basis of their morphological and physiological status (Table 1 below).

At the time that the earliest case studies in Money's review were written, the dominant theory in medical circles about sex and particularly about hermaphrodites centred on Theodor Klebs' notion that the 'truth' of sex was to be found in the

gonads.<sup>55</sup> Improvements in anaesthesia and medical hygiene during the late 1800s had made laparotomy<sup>56</sup> a viable technique for examining the internal gonadal tissue (or 'sex glands') of living patients where previously such examinations had only been possible post-mortem. It was in this context that Klebs had been able to make a distinction between so-called true- and pseudo-hermaphrodites (Hausman, 1995:78). According to Klebs' schema, a true hermaphrodite was someone who possessed both testicular and ovarian gonadal tissue – either in the form of an "ovary and testis and/or an ovotestes" (Adams et al, 2003; von Neugebauer, 1903). A diagnosis of pseudo-hermaphroditism took one of two forms: male psuedo-hermaphroditism was the diagnostic category accorded to those who possessed two gonadal testes, whereas female pseudo-hermaphroditism was the diagnosis given to individuals with two ovaries who displayed male secondary sex characters at puberty (*Dorland's Medical Dictionary*, 2000).

Mining the historical record has a long tradition in medical and biological research. Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, a number of clinicians who worked with 'sexually ambiguous' subjects turned to the historical medical literature. According to Dreger (1995; 1998b), this type of historical review was conducted for comparative purposes throughout the 1800s, however from 1890 on, such reviews were increasingly used to *re-classify* forms of hermaphroditism. Von Neugebauer (1903), for example collected over 900 case reports of hermaphroditism (including 38

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<sup>55</sup> The author has been unable to locate an English translation of Klebs' *Handbuch der Pathologischen Anatomie* (1876) and so has relied on secondary sources. See for example, Dreger (1995) and Zucker (1999).

<sup>56</sup> Laparotomy involves making an incision in the abdominal cavity in order to conduct an examination of the internal organs.

of his own) and on the basis of his analysis, determined that there was no such thing as true-hermaphroditism. That an individual could possess both an ovary and a testicular gonad, was in his view an impossibility despite noting microscopically-proven instances of ovotestes in the literature. Von Neugebauer insisted that *all* hermaphroditic individuals were in fact pseudo-hermaphrodites: thus for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes that was the only category worth considering (1903:226)

By contrast, Money's nomenclature expanded rather than reduced the number of categories and sub-categories of hermaphroditism. Yet both Money and von Neugebauer's schemata share to some degree, a common language. Klebs' discursive legacy remained evident in Money's schema and indeed in much of the medical literature produced on the subject to this day (see for example, Aartsen et al, 1994; Adams et al, 2003; Batanian et al, 2001; Fernandez-Cancio et al, 2004; Mayer, Homoki, & Ranke, 1999). Money's earliest hermaphrodite nomenclature is represented in tabular form below (Table 1). I draw the reader's attention to the category of '*male pseudohermaphrodite ... simulant female*', which refers to persons of female-like physical appearance who possess testicular gonads. Money retained the criteria of gonadal sex as the cornerstone of his classificatory system for some time, even as he dismissed its relevance for diagnostic purposes. The rationale he offered for retaining the terminology of gonadal criteria was one of "convenience for medical classification and discussion" (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1956:44).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Money would later drop the prefix 'pseudo-' in an attempt to lay to rest the idea that the gonads *would* or *could* reveal the truth of a person's sex and because in his view, it did not allow for individuals who possessed undifferentiated gonadal tissue (see Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:5).

1. Female pseudohermaphrodites with the adrenogenital syndrome, characterized by precocious virile development.
2. Female pseudohermaphrodites with oögenesis and without postnatal virilization.
3. True hermaphrodites with ovarian and testicular structures.
4. Male pseudohermaphrodites with müllerian organs differentiated and developed.
5. Male pseudohermaphrodites with atrophic, undescended testes, but simulant females in their morphology.
6. Pseudohermaphroditic males with hypospadias and breasts, resembling Klinefelter's syndrome.
7. Pseudohermaphroditic males with penoscrotal or perineal hypospadias.
8. Miscellaneous cases, unclassifiable owing to insufficient data.

Table 1: John Money's earliest hermaphroditic typology.<sup>58</sup>

Once Money had organised each of the case reports into these categories, he set about answering two primary research questions. The first concerned how people were able to adapt to their sex of rearing when anatomically and physiologically they were neither male nor female (Money, 1952). This generated a second set of questions, among them: what were the relative influences of physiological functioning and socialisation (vis à vis nature versus nurture) and, which had the most enduring

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<sup>58</sup> Reproduced from *Hermaphroditism: An inquiry into the nature of a human paradox* (1952:2-3).

impact? The second primary question related to the mental health of his sample population. He asked:

Do they, with such manifest sexual problems to contend with, break down under the strain, as psychiatric theory may lead one to believe; or do they make an adequate adjustment to the demands of life? (1952:3).

In order to answer these questions, Money scrutinised all his data sources (case reports, interview data and test results) for the following information:

1. Sex of rearing (including any subsequent change in sex assignment);
2. Non-libidinal orientation and demeanour (including congruity or lack of, with sex of rearing);
3. Libidinal orientation (again with respect to congruity or lack of, with sex of rearing); and finally,
4. Psychological adjustment.<sup>59</sup>

Items three and four of this list are particularly relevant to a genealogy of gender. With respect to libidinal orientation, it is clear that Money's investigation of the data was underpinned by an assumption that 'congruency' equated to a heterosexual orientation. Money declared his intention to scrutinise the data for possible links between a re-assignment of sex after infancy and the relative incidence of a "bisexual inclination" (1999:4) in the total sample. This apparently straightforward and

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<sup>59</sup> This list is re-presented (rather than reproduced) from Money's doctoral thesis (Money, 1952:4).

unproblematic link between masculinity, femininity and normative desire would remain at the heart of Money's subsequent theorising of gender and sexuality despite the increasingly radical tone of much of his later work on sexuality.<sup>60</sup>

As to the fourth variable on Money's list - 'psychological adjustment' - a further assumption is evident, one that must surely have influenced Money's interpretation of the data. Money characterised the various types of psychological adjustment he was seeking by the following three-point scale:

1. Adequate;
2. Disheartened and/or guardedly reticent;
3. Manifesting symptoms of psychopathology – psychoneurosis, organic and nonorganic psychosis.<sup>61</sup>

Notable by its absence was any point on the scale approximating to psychological health. From the outset, the best that Money could envisage was an 'adequate' form of adjustment. It appears to have been inconceivable to him that a person born hermaphrodite would, or indeed could, be well adjusted psychologically. Such ideas did not of course, develop in a vacuum: rather they were ideas promoted and disseminated by his mentors and teachers and reflect a longstanding tradition in the medical and sexological literature regarding clinical concepts of normality and abnormality. What is noteworthy is that the findings of his research did not actually support such an analysis. In his doctorate Money wrote that "the incidence of so-

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<sup>60</sup> Refer Chapter five which analyses in detail, Money's theorising of sexuality.

<sup>61</sup> This list is also re-presented from Money's doctoral thesis (1952:4).

called functional psychoses in [even] the most ambisexual of the hermaphrodites was extraordinarily low” (1952:6). This led him to conclude that “apparently, therefore, sexual conflicts and problems [were] not in themselves sufficient to induce psychosis or neurosis” (p.6). In other words, the findings of Money’s research challenged rather than supported the assumptions that underpinned the three-point scale he used to measure psychological adjustment. Despite this, Money maintained the view that medical interventions were necessary to enable hermaphrodite individuals to function as ‘normal’ individuals.

Money’s doctoral thesis was significant for bringing together a sizeable body of work into a single text but more importantly it offered four distinct innovations: a new and expanded codification of hermaphroditic types based on body morphology; data which challenged the foundational theories of psychology and psychiatry that explained masculinity and femininity in terms of instinct and drive; compelling evidence against the idea that an individual’s erotic preferences bore any relationship to unlearned determinants; and finally, an (alternative) theory of acquisition, although initially without the concept ‘gender’. While Money refined and elaborated certain elements of his gender acquisition theory over the years, the essence of it remains true to the ideas he presented in his doctoral thesis.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Toward authority***

The post-World War II period in North America tends to be seen today as an era of moral and political conservatism that venerated a cult of domesticity (for women), and

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<sup>62</sup> I write here in the present tense, because Money has continued to publish during the writing of this thesis. Refer Money (2002; 2003a; 2003b).

reinforced a rigid sexual division of labour and social roles for both men and women. It was an era haunted by the double perils of communism and homosexuality, yet at the same time it proved to be a particularly fruitful period for sex researchers as evidenced by Alfred Kinsey's groundbreaking works, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1953), Evelyn Hooker's studies of homosexual men (1956; 1957; 1958), and Masters and Johnson's research that led to the publication of *Human Sexual Response* (1966), in the mid-1960s.<sup>63</sup> Sex research flourished in this climate despite the enormous pressure exerted on funding agencies by politicians and conservative lobbyists who demanded that financial support be withdrawn from projects they believed threatening to the moral fibre of the nation.<sup>64</sup> It is significant that much of the sex research produced during that time was carried out under the umbrella of medicine and the biological sciences for this provided an element of safety in authority, a point not lost on Money (Money, 1986a:8).<sup>65</sup>

Money's interest in the phenomenon of hermaphroditism provided him with opportunities to develop close working relationships with urologists, paediatricians, gynaecologists, endocrinologists and other medical specialists involved in the diagnosis and treatment of hermaphroditism. Indeed Money began his career working

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<sup>63</sup> Although not published until the mid-1960s, Masters and Johnson began their research during the period under discussion.

<sup>64</sup> For an analysis of sex research in the United States during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century see especially, Irvine (1990) and Simon (1996). See also Heidenry (1997).

<sup>65</sup> As William Simon (1996) has noted, the scientific method provided sex researchers with both protection and legitimacy, its language, postures and costumes serving as "conceptual rubber gloves" with which to examine the 'dirty' business of sex (p.23).

under the aegis of luminaries such as paediatric endocrinologist Lawson Wilkins whose own research was concerned with the role of hormones in foetal development.<sup>66</sup> Their first meeting took place at a paediatric seminar in Boston where Money asked to visit the paediatric endocrine clinic at Johns Hopkins University Hospital (JHUH) established by Wilkins a few years prior. That request was met favourably and provided Money with access to unpublished case studies of Wilkins' patients and the archival material of urologist Hugh Hampton Young. Money was able to add to the quota of case studies for his doctoral research by interviewing "two or three" of Wilkins patients (Money, 1986a:8; 1993:94-5). Money's association with Wilkins led to an offer of a position at JHUH in 1951 following the completion of his doctoral studies. Wilkins teamed Money up with a young psychiatrist Joan Hampson in a collaborative enterprise at the newly established Psycho-Hormonal Research Institute (PRU) and appointed the pair as Co-Directors (Bullough, 2003; King, 1998; Money, 1986a). That collaboration yielded a series of articles published in consecutive issues of *The Bulletin* during 1955 to 1957.

While the *Bulletin* was the primary text through which Money and his colleagues presented their early work, they also published in other medical, psychological and sexological journals ensuring wide dissemination of their ideas throughout medical

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<sup>66</sup> Wilkins and associates at Johns Hopkins and a research team at Massachusetts General Hospital are jointly credited with discovering that the (then) newly synthesised hormone cortisol was effective in regulating adrenal androgens in a form of hermaphroditism known as congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH). Wilkins' team were the first to publish their findings. Infants born CAH suffer from a loss of electrolytes, a condition that was fatal prior to this discovery (Grumbach, 1998).

and scientific circles.<sup>67</sup> Whether the choice of journals helped secure their position as authorities on hermaphroditism is debateable. However, there is no doubting the assured and authoritative tone of their work. The incorporation of embryological and endocrinological concepts added gravity to their claims, as did the authors' association with the highly respected Wilkins. In fact Wilkins lent considerable support to the young researchers by reiterating Money et al's theory of gender acquisition in an article published in the journal *Pediatrics* (Wilkins et al, 1955).

The need to find an umbrella term had become increasingly clear to Money during the early years at the PRU when he was writing about the 'manliness' or 'womanliness' of people who had been born with indeterminate genitals.<sup>68</sup> At that time the only readily available term was 'sex', which Money found unsatisfactory because of its conceptual overload. Sex referred not only to morphological status (of the *female/male sex*), it also referred to erotic acts and behaviours (to *have sex*), a person's psychological status as masculine or feminine (*sexual identity*)<sup>69</sup> and (after Parsons), to patterns of social and intimate behaviours deemed appropriate to men and to women (*sex roles*).<sup>70</sup> Money later wrote of his frustration at having to use statements such as "a male sex role except that his sex role with the sex organs was

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<sup>67</sup> These included journals such as the *AMA Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology* and *Psychosomatic Medicine*.

<sup>68</sup> I use the word 'indeterminate' tentatively. The dominant discourses on hermaphroditism have for centuries now, framed hermaphroditism in terms of ambiguity, unfinished-ness, lack or excess.

<sup>69</sup> The use of the term sexual identity as a referent of erotic orientation as homo- hetero- or bisexual (understood today as *sexuality*) does not appear to have entered the English lexicon until much later.

<sup>70</sup> See also Money (1985b:281).

not male, and his genetic sex was female” (Money, 1988:53). After some deliberation, Money found the term he was looking for. He borrowed ‘gender’ from the field of linguistics (philology) where its historical usage denoted the status of nouns and pronouns as masculine, feminine, common or neuter.<sup>71</sup>

So while ‘gender’ was not itself new to the English language, Money’s innovation was to take an existing term and apply it in a new context (as human attribute), while maintaining its traditional denotations. Thus gender provided a conceptual tool to discuss the masculinity or femininity (including the erotic lives) of those who were neither male nor female. In the first of articles discussed in detail below, Money defined gender as a referent for a person’s “outlook, demeanour, and orientation” (1955:258). He also used the term *gender role*, alternately with gender. Of the two terms, it was gender role that was accorded the more elaborate definition in the first article. Gender role signified:

All those things that a person does or says to disclose himself as having the status of a boy or man, girl or woman, respectively. It includes, but is not restricted to sexuality in the sense of eroticism (Money, 1955:254).

Money’s use of the term ‘role’ is worthy of scrutiny. At Harvard, he had studied under Talcott Parsons<sup>72</sup> – the sociologist often referred to as the founding father of

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<sup>71</sup> Examples of *common* nouns include terms such as teacher, neighbour, friend, child whereas *neuter* nouns most generally refer to inanimate objects.

<sup>72</sup> Parsons established the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University where Money conducted his doctoral research (Gerhardt, 2002).

functionalism in the United States. Parsons' role theory had dominated the social sciences from the 1940s through to the early 1970s, effectively setting the parameters for sociological theorising in the United States during that period. In sociological functionalism, the social life of people is framed holistically as a "functional unity" (Szacki, 1979:503). Sociological functionalism assumes and seeks to explain the interconnectedness of all forms of human activity and so lends itself well to biological and organicist analogies. Indeed, the most well used heuristic device in functionalist theory is the organic analogy that draws comparisons between the social body and human bodies. By this account, the body contains a number of different organs that perform specific tasks which contribute towards the maintenance of a homeostasis or equilibrium. Analogously, social institutions perform particular functions that serve to sustain the larger whole. The family is, in functionalist terms, the primary site for the socialisation of children since human personality is not something that individuals are born with but rather, something to be *made*. Parsons himself referred to the family as "factories which produce human personalities" (Parsons & Bales, 1955:16).<sup>73</sup>

The relation between functionalism and medicine extends far beyond the relative abstractions of social theory since a functionalist paradigm fully saturates biomedical understandings of the body - particularly with respect to the external genitalia (as indicated by the common referent, reproductive organs). A functionalist model of sexual medicine privileges a "state of order, equilibrium, or homeostatis" (Szacki, p. 506). The dominance of functionalist paradigms in both the social and medical sciences does I believe, account for Money's use of the term 'gender role' in his early articulations, despite his academic background in psychology with its emphasis on

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<sup>73</sup> Parsons believed the other key role of the family was to stabilised adult personality (1955).

personality and identity. In Money's original formulation, gender and gender role were referents of a unitary concept that was understood to incorporate an individual's sense of self as masculine or feminine (identity), along with the public manifestations of that identity (social role).

### ***Recodifying 'sex'***

In addition to offering the concept 'gender', Money was also responsible for codifying seven signifiers of sex. Five of these were grounded in the body and had long been recognised in medical circles while the remaining two were of psychological and social origin. The five physiological signifiers included: chromosomes of the X and Y variety, gonads (ovaries and testes), hormones (relative levels of androgenic and estrogenic substances), internal accessory structures (uterus and prostate) and external genitals (penis/scrotum and clitoris/vulva). To these Money added the psychosocial signifiers of one's sex of assignment and rearing and an individual's adaptation to their assigned sex. These last two indicators represent what is now commonly referred to as gender. The significance of this intervention should not be underestimated.

During the previous century, the internal gonads had been privileged as the definitive marker of sex in both sexological and medical discourse. However, technological advances during the twentieth century seemed to offer more and more uncertainty with respect to sex. It became increasingly clear that the various *physiological* markers of sex were not unilateral as was once assumed, nor could a person's somatic sex be relied upon as an absolute (Hausman, 1995). The central developments in medicine that contributed to that uncertainty included: the emergence of embryology as a branch of medicine, the discovery and isolation of estrogen, testosterone and

other hormones through the field of endocrinology and the consolidation of genetics as a field of biology.<sup>74</sup> Together these developments – along with the refinement of plastic surgical techniques originally used to treat soldiers who sustained serious burns during WWII - increased the capacity of physicians to mediate hermaphroditism with hormonal and surgical treatment regimes.<sup>75</sup>

The ability of physicians to produce simulant male or female bodies from hermaphroditic ones went hand in hand with a growing concern for the psychological wellbeing of their patients. Hausman (1995), identifies a hesitation running through the medical literature between the 1920s and 1940s regarding which sex to assign hermaphroditic individuals, particularly those given a diagnosis of ‘true hermaphroditism’. Assigning a sex on purely physiological grounds became increasingly harder to justify when the body offered little certainty of revealing a single ‘true’ sex. Thus physicians and clinicians began to rely more and more on psychosocial factors, that is, a person’s social and sexual orientation as masculine or feminine, as the primary grounds for (re)assigning a sex - particularly in older subjects.<sup>76</sup> It is worth mentioning that before the 1950s, it was not routine for hermaphrodite individuals to be surgically mediated in the way they are today.

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<sup>74</sup> At the time that Money and colleagues began publishing their work, sex chromatin testing by skin biopsy was still in its infancy.

<sup>75</sup> As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this section of the analysis is indebted to Hausman’s (1995) account of 20<sup>th</sup> century medical responses to hermaphroditism, particularly her analysis of the contribution of Money and his colleagues.

<sup>76</sup> This perspective did not go uncontested within the field of hermaphroditic research at that time and nor does it today.

Psychologist Albert Ellis (1945)<sup>77</sup> for example, conducted a review of the literature on hermaphroditism in order to determine if, “the physiological factors which disturbed the soma of the hermaphrodite so drastically [could] equally affect his or her psyche” (p.109). Foreshadowing Money, Ellis concluded that biological or “constitutional factors [were] not decisive in determining the psychosexual masculinity or femininity” of either so-called true- or pseudo-hermaphrodites (p. 118). Rather it was his view that a person’s sex-role was more likely to be a consequence of their upbringing as either masculine or feminine. Ellis was particularly interested in the erotic inclinations and orientations of those he studied because he believed eroticism to be an indivisible component of a person’s psychosexual masculinity and femininity. Ellis concurred that,

While the *power* of the human sex drive may possibly be largely dependent on physiological factors [...] the *direction* of this drive does not seem to be directly dependent on constitutional elements (1945:119).

This, suggested Ellis, held true for all hermaphrodites whether their libidinal orientations were ‘normal’ (eg heterosexual), or ‘deviate’ (eg homosexual or bisexual).<sup>78</sup> That Money’s work is saturated by Ellis’ ideas is without question, as

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<sup>77</sup> Ellis is most well known for creating a therapeutic model known as Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET). He has also written a range of texts on sexuality including *Sex Beliefs and Customs* (1952) and *The Encyclopaedia of Sexual Behaviour* (1961).

<sup>78</sup> Note: heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality were accorded these subjects on the basis of their sex of rearing.

evident in the former's own conceptualisations of desire, a point taken up further in chapter five.<sup>79</sup>

Ellis' research reveals that many of the conceptual frameworks that Money was working with in his doctoral thesis - and in his later work - were by no means original but had an established history and reflected an existing train in sexological thought. Nonetheless, Money contributed to the field with a concept that allowed him to make a number of important interventions. In the context of the current discussion the innovation of 'gender' was significant on two levels: at the level of the symbolic and of the (doubly) pragmatic.

The addition of two psychosocial signifiers of sex to the already-recognised physiological ones had huge symbolic value. Codifying the former with the latter increased the status of the non-corporeal markers of sex amongst medical professionals who worked primarily with flesh and blood. Money was not only instrumental in securing an increased legitimacy for social and environmental factors in sex assignment decisions, he was instrumental in them attaining primacy *over* the physiological markers.

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<sup>79</sup> A note handwritten by Money and attached to a draft manuscript in the Money Archive at the Kinsey Institute confirms this claim: "I had completely forgotten that I wrote the review of Albert Ellis's paper. In fact, many years ago when I found a bibliographic reference to the Ellis paper, I did not recall ever having seen it, and was vexed that I had not used it as a reference in my 1955 hermaphroditic papers!" (Money, n.d.).

Hausman's (1995) analysis of Money's work is concerned to demonstrate the double efficacy of his conceptual contribution. Not only was gender significant at a theoretical level, it also provided a pragmatic solution to the growing uncertainty of any absolute somatic sex. Gender served to stabilise what advances in medical technology had rendered more and more unstable. It was no longer important that the somatic signifiers of sex failed to align, instead what increasingly mattered in determining an appropriate sex assignment for hermaphrodite individuals were the psychosocial and cultural signifiers of masculinity and femininity. Where once clinicians sought to discover a 'true' sex hidden within an ambiguous body, now it was a matter of determining a 'best sex' for any given individual. That is, whichever sex seemed most appropriate or advantageous in light of the person's genital morphology and social environment (Hausman, 1995). Thus 'gender' offered a pragmatic solution to an unintended consequence of technological advancement and it also offered a solution to the 'problem' of sexual ambiguity (Germon, 1998).

Money not only provided a conceptual tool for thinking and talking about masculinity and femininity, his theory of gender also codified a set of variables by which to measure a person's adaptation as masculine or feminine at a time when there were few uniform or coherent measuring tools available. Perhaps the most well known and widely employed scale prior to Money's intervention was that devised by Lewis Terman and Catherine Miles during the 1930s. The Terman/Miles test consisted of a written questionnaire designed to measure "mental masculinity and femininity" (Terman & Miles, 1936/1968:6) and was designed to allow clinicians to make:

Quantitative estimat[es] of the amount and direction of a subject's deviation from the mean of his or her sex, and to permit quantitative comparisons of groups across a range of variables (1936/1968:6).

However, Money's interest extended beyond the psychological or 'mental', since he wanted to be able to measure how individuals *performed* their masculinity and femininity. Thus Terman and Miles' test like the others available at that time, was unable to do the work that Money et al required. It was for this reason that he and colleagues developed their own set of measurements.

## ***SECTION II***

### ***Spreading the Word***

The series of articles published in the *Bulletin* during the mid 1950s laid out the theories developed by Money and Hampson under the auspices of the PRU. Their early research focused exclusively on hermaphrodites although that focus would later broaden to include a diverse range of individuals diagnosed with what later became known as 'gender dysphoria'.<sup>80</sup> The first two articles in the series were written by Money and Hampson respectively, and were offered as companion papers, each reinforcing the arguments contained in the other. The second two articles were penned

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<sup>80</sup> The term 'gender dysphoric' - otherwise known as 'gender identity disorder' (GID) - is the official classification of the American Psychological Association accorded to persons whose identity as male or female is discordant with their morphological status. Until 1973, homosexuals, lesbians and bisexuals were deemed dysphoric with respect to their gender along with transsexuals, transvestites and individuals with unusual sexual proclivities or paraphilias. For an example of the contemporary debates in psychiatric circles about whether GID constitutes a mental illness see K. Hausman (2003).

by Money, Hampson and the latter's husband and fellow psychiatrist, John and consolidated further the ideas set forth in the earlier pair. It was in the 8very first article that Money articulated the concept 'gender'. In what would appear to have been a well planned and carefully executed campaign that struck at the very foundations of psychological theory, these articles mark the beginning of Money's consolidation as a world authority on hermaphroditism, and (for a time at least) *the* authority on 'gender'.

In the first of the articles under discussion, Money offered the findings of a three-year study of 60 individuals aged from newborn to fifty years (1955).<sup>81</sup> Drawing on the typology of hermaphroditic conditions he had devised as part of his doctoral research (Table 1), Money compared the three dominant corporeal markers of 'sex', that is internal gonads, hormones and chromosomes to sex of assignment and rearing to see how reliable each was as a predictor of a person's 'gender' - that is the person's outlook, demeanour, and orientation as male or female (p.258). The purpose of those comparisons was to test (or rather prove) Money's hypothesis that assigned sex would stand up as the most consistent predictor of a person's gender.

In order to make his case, Money's split the sample population into subsets. The first subset consisted of individuals whose gonadal sex (ovaries or testes) contradicted their sex of assignment and rearing (as male and female respectively). Of this group all but three were said to have "disclosed themselves in the gender role fully concordant with their rearing" (1955:254). Since the alignment with assigned sex and

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<sup>81</sup> By the time a fifth article was published in the Bulletin the following year (1956), that number had risen to ninety-four (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1956:43).

identification matched for approximately 80% of this group, gonadal sex was deemed by Money to be an unreliable indicator of a person's gender. The 'discordant' trio – each of whom possessed gonadal testes and were reared as female - consisted of one individual who had 'changed sex' during their teens and two who had been reared as female and revealed some degree of erotic attraction towards women.

The second subset consisted of 27 persons whose hormonal functioning contradicted their sex of assignment and rearing. Money was at pains to point out that hormonal sex needed to be distinguished from the structure of the gonads or sex glands because the testes of some hermaphrodites produced not androgens (designated male sex hormone), but estrogens (designated female hormone). He was also at pains to point out that the possession of ovaries offered no guarantee of estrogen production.<sup>82</sup> Of this subset, all but 4 were reported to be fully adapted to the gender role they were assigned. Hence Money categorically dismissed the significance of hormones on a person's orientation as masculine or feminine. It is noteworthy that in making this claim, Money was not contesting the role of hormones with respect to embryonic sexual differentiation, to secondary sex characteristics, and/or to eroticism. What he was contesting was the role of hormones with respect to gender. Money used the findings of 23 of this group to substantiate his claims and attended to the four 'discordant' individuals by offering a full-page profile of each of them in turn. All four had been reared as girls and while tomboyish behaviour was noted in each, this in itself was not enough to warrant discordance with respect to their gender roles. With the exception of one individual who had sought a 'change' of sex at sixteen years of

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<sup>82</sup> For an excellent discussion of the 'misplacement' of the so-called male and female sex hormones, see Fausto-Sterling (2000c).

age, the discordance was again registered at the level of same-sex desire and behaviour (Money, 1955:256-7).<sup>83</sup>

With respect to chromosomes, Money acknowledged that tests to determine chromosomal makeup had not been routinely undertaken across the sample.<sup>84</sup> Despite this, he maintained that “preliminary evidence *clearly* indicates that chromosomes bear as little relationship to sexual orientation as do gonads” (Money, 1955:254, emphasis added). To support his assertion, Money pointed to the then recent discovery that people diagnosed with gonadal (ovarian) agenesis possessed a Y chromosome.<sup>85</sup> The femininity of such individuals Money argued, was “indisputable” since it had never been questioned by any of the medical professionals who had had dealings with the 23 individuals under discussion (p.254).

Money used this evidence to drive home two points. In the first instance, to substantiate his claim that the sex of assignment and rearing was *the* most salient predictor of a hermaphroditic person’s ‘gender’. In the second instance, he used it to discredit the reliability of biological markers in determining a person’s gender. On the surface this might seem to indicate that Money was committed to the view that nurture was more important than nature in gender acquisition, as many of his critics

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<sup>83</sup> The concluding comments in this article reveal that the total number of individuals in Money’s entire sample who were identified as discordant was four. Thus, the trio in the first subset were the same people who featured in the second.

<sup>84</sup> Chromatin testing was still in its infancy at that time.

<sup>85</sup> Agenesis is the medical term for the failure of a body part to develop. In the context of this discussion, ovaries are the body part in question (Walker, 1991).

have claimed.<sup>86</sup> However my reading suggests that the framework he offered was infinitely more complex than any simplistic nurture *versus* nature (vis à vis constructionist versus essentialist) argument can possibly sustain.

From the outset Money had articulated an enormous frustration with the Cartesian dualism inherent in the nature/nurture debates. The approach Money has consistently employed throughout his career is known as 'interactionism', a theoretical position that attempts to bridge the divide between the nature/culture debates without reifying either. Acutely aware of the complex interactive relation between mind and body, Money has stressed repeatedly that, "at every stage of development, nothing is purely nature and nothing is purely nurture. There is always a collaboration between the two" (Money, 1995:95).

It is significant that Money began the first article of the series by stating that the phenomenon of human hermaphroditism provided 'illuminating evidence concerning the determinants and concomitants of sexual outlook and orientation' (Money 1955:253).<sup>87</sup> This can be read as an early indicator of his intention to extend his theory of gender acquisition beyond the hermaphroditic population to account for how *everybody* acquired an identity as male or female. I return to this issue in the third section of this chapter where I examine the various ways in which Money elaborated his theories of gender after extrapolating them to the wider population.

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<sup>86</sup> See for example, Diamond and Sigmundson (1997). See also Fausto-Sterling (2000).

<sup>87</sup> Here Money is referring to gender, rather than sexuality (as in sexual orientation).

The second and third articles in the series address similar issues and so will be examined together before the discussion turns to the fourth article in which Money situated his ideas regarding the origins of masculine and feminine identities in their intellectual context. The second in the series (Hampson, 1955), was authored by Money's associate at the PRU, Joan Hampson, while the third was a collaborative offering by Money and both Joan and John Hampson (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a). Both of these articles reiterated Money's assertions that the clinical evidence failed to support the historic assumption that biological markers were reliable determinants of psychosexual orientation (which Money had codified as gender). By contrast, in their view the sex of assignment and rearing was *the* best indicator so long as assignment decisions were made unequivocally by clinicians and reinforced by the child's parents.

Money et al wrote that their studies of hermaphrodite individuals made it clear that it was "definitely advantageous for a [hermaphrodite] child to have been reared so that a gender role was clearly defined and consistently maintained from the beginning" (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a:285). Hampson echoed Money's claim that "a child grows into a gender role against the background of myriad experiences encountered and transacted" (Hampson, p.265). These experiences were said to include everything a child learned, assimilated and interpreted about their own status as boys or girls from their parents, siblings and peers, as well as their interpretation of their own body (p.265).

As well as reinforcing the claims made in the first article, the authors focused on a range of other (interrelated) issues. The second and third articles contained a series of

recommendations that included: using the appearance of the genitalia to decide which sex to assign hermaphrodite infants; the types of surgical interventions to employ; how best to psychologically manage parents into their role as gender coaches and allay their anxieties about producing sexually deviant offspring; as well as how best to psychologically manage the children themselves into a gender. Two particularly vexatious issues were also addressed: the preservation of potential fertility (or otherwise) and clitoridectomy - specifically whether or not clitoridectomy had deleterious effects on orgasmic capacity. The following discussion examines each of these issues in order to demonstrate just *how much* differently sexed bodies matter. It is my argument that they matter precisely because of the extraordinary degree of social and cultural investment in the idea that the human species is, and only can be sexually dimorphic.

As mentioned above, prior to the mid-1950s surgical intervention was not customary as it is today. Indeed, surgical interventions became routinised as a direct result of the recommendations set forth in the articles under discussion. Up until the mid-1950s it was not uncommon for a change of sex to be imposed on pre-schoolers and young children should they be discovered to have gonadal structures that contradicted the sex they had originally been assigned - a legacy of Klebs' 'true-sex' model. Hampson (1955) noted that historically even those old enough to have an opinion were seldom consulted about their preferences. It is little wonder then, some individuals were said to have manifested (mild forms of) neurotic symptoms of one kind or another. While the impact of imposing a sex was acknowledged by Hampson it remained conspicuous by its absence in the authors' discussion of potential causes of neuroses found in some of their patients.

It was the view of Money et al that clinicians held the key to assuring a well-developed gender identity in their patients by being meticulous about:

Settl[ing] the sex of a hermaphroditic infant once and for all, within the first few weeks of life, before establishment of a gender role gets far advanced (1955a:288).

Money argued that his research into the “life adjustments” of hermaphrodite individuals pointed to a definite advantage in defining and consistently maintaining a gender role from the outset (p. 285). In other words, the earlier a sex was assigned and the more consistently it was reinforced, the greater the chances were that a hermaphroditic child would develop a positive gendered identity as male or as female. Hence it was up to clinicians and physicians to show clear and unwavering leadership to ensure the successful habilitation of hermaphrodite individuals (and their parents) into a gender.

### ***Perilous ambiguity***

Both articles identified two factors that the authors claimed were certain to jeopardise the establishment of an unambiguous gender identity. The first was uncertainty on the part of the attendant physicians about a child’s status as a sex, since physicians could transmit their doubts into the minds of parents who would then have misgivings about the sex of their child. As well as enhancing the risk of the child sensing that there was something wrong with them, the transmission of doubt would compromise the parents’ ability to rear their child in a gender *appropriate* manner. The second factor concerned the degree of conviction parents had that they were raising a girl or a boy.

The authors believed that parental misgivings about their child's sex increased the risk of the child developing a spoiled identity. Parental equivocation was, in their view, "a most potent factor in contributing to uncertainty or instability in the offspring" (Hampson, p.267).

Money and colleagues offered counsel on how best to manage the parents of hermaphroditic children. Both the articles under discussion recommended that parents *always* be told frankly about any doubts concerning the sex of their child. The authors believed that it was better for parents to remain doubtful about the sex of their child for as long as possible than for the original announcement of a child's sex to be renounced and another sex assigned. Any attempt to impose a change of sex after 18 months of age was doomed to lead to a corrupted identity and cause the child a severe "psychologic hazard" (Hampson, 1955; Money, 1955; Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a).<sup>88</sup> The term 'frankly' is particularly worthy of scrutiny since clinicians were advised to set parents straight that they had a child whose genitals were *unfinished* (including infants whose assigned sex rendered their phallic tissue, enlarged clitori), a point taken up further in the discussion that addresses the psychological management of children.

Ironically, the diagrams used to assist this educative process include what can be described as a hermaphroditic stage of development (see Figs 1 and 2 below). But this is not the way that the first stage of development is understood and thus signified by medical science. Rather as the explanatory text in the diagrams below demonstrate, the initial stage of sexual development is signified as 'male and female identical'.

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<sup>88</sup> See also, Money and Ehrhardt (1972:176-8) and Money (1998-81).

This particular signification serves to substantiate the idea that hermaphrodite bodies are unfinished since it involves an implicit link with a pre-sexually dimorphic state. It is my argument that these same diagrams offer possibilities for thinking otherwise, since they clearly indicate that all human bodies contain the elements of 'both' sexes.

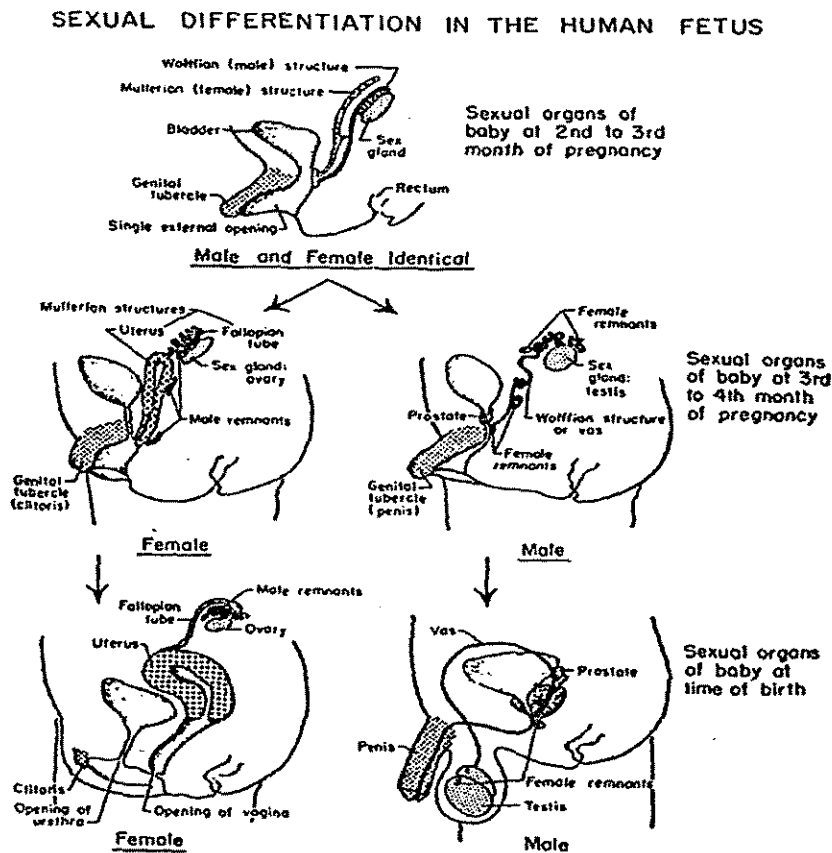


FIG. 1. Cross-section diagrams freely adapted from R. R. Greene and simplified for demonstrating to laymen the failure of complete sexual differentiation in hermaphroditism. (Drawn by Marie Vincent Kern)

Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of sexual differentiation used by Money et al to educate patients and their parents on foetal development.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Source: *Hermaphroditism: recommendations concerning assignment of sex, change of sex, and psychologic management* (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a:292). Note the accompanying text.

EXTERNAL GENITAL DIFFERENTIATION IN THE HUMAN FETUS

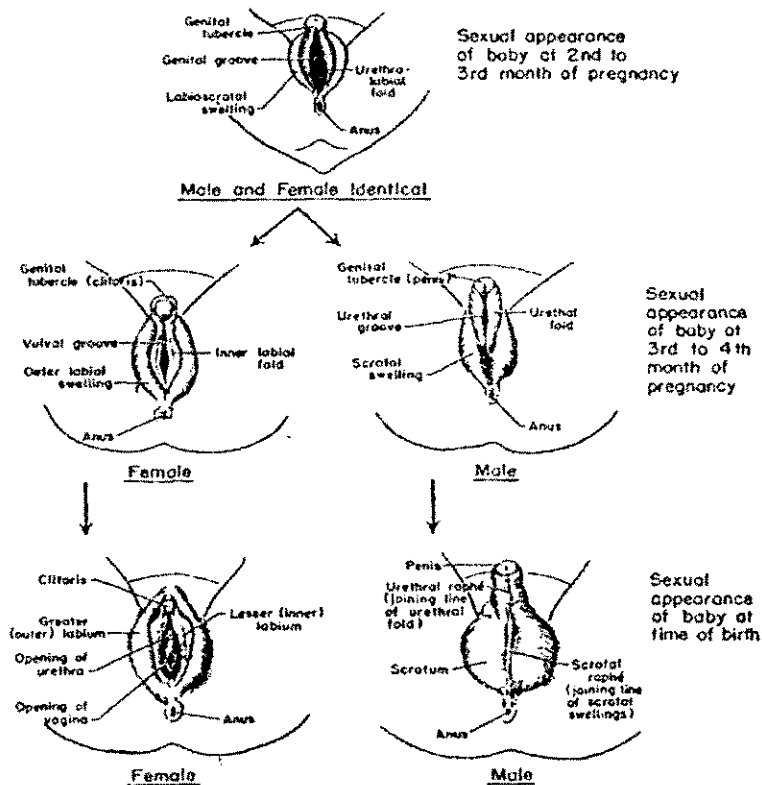


FIG. 2. Diagrams freely adapted from B. M. Patten and simplified for demonstrating to laymen the failure of complete external genital differentiation in hermaphroditism. (Drawn by Marie Vincent Kern)

Figure 2. Diagrammatic representation of external genital differentiation used by Money et al to educate patients and their parents on foetal development.<sup>90</sup>

Another point worthy of note is the doubling back of the normal/pathological relation discussed in Chapter one. While medical science turns to the so-called abnormal (or infrequent) in order to understand and substantiate so-called normal (or frequent) development, here the relation is upended with 'normal' development offered as the vehicle through which to understand 'abnormal' development.

<sup>90</sup> Source: *Hermaphroditism: recommendations concerning assignment of sex, change of sex, and psychologic management* (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a:293).

Parental fears regarding a child's future sexuality - specifically, that the child might grow up to be sexually deviant<sup>91</sup> - was also attended to by Money et al. The authors recommended an educative approach as the most effective way of alleviating parental concerns:

Most parents need to be told that their child is not destined to grow up with *abnormal and perverse desires*, for they get hermaphroditism and homosexuality hopelessly confused (1955a:292, emphasis added).

This quotation would appear to provide convincing evidence in support of a hetero-normative critique, however I intend to resist such an analysis. As discussed in the introductory chapter, global analyses such as this foreclose opportunities to explore the range of investments in binary gender by a range of constituencies.<sup>92</sup>

I suggest a more fruitful approach that allows opportunities to explore other investments in binary gender is to examine the epistemological context in which Money and his colleagues produced their theories. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Money undertook his postgraduate training during the period that Parsonsian functionalism dominated the social sciences in the United States. To have remained impervious to the influence of that paradigm is unlikely given that Money studied directly under Parsons in the Department of Social Relations that the latter

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<sup>91</sup> Read homosexual, lesbian or bisexual.

<sup>92</sup> A more thorough discussion of such constituencies is offered in Chapters One and Six.

founded at Harvard during the 1940s (Money, 1986a).<sup>93</sup> Critics of functionalism highlight its teleological propensities by pointing to the way that the effects produced by social institutions come to be perceived as their *raison d'être*. Indeed this is how functionalism serves to legitimate rather than contest prevailing social orders (Szacki, 1979). Two other factors are also relevant. Money's early academic training was in the field of psychology, a discipline that has historically trained its lens upon the individual outside of broader social contexts.<sup>94</sup> In addition, Money conducted his research in a medical facility alongside an interdisciplinary team of clinicians whose understandings of the body were also thoroughly imbued in a functionalist paradigm.

### ***Gender immersion***

For Money, educating hermaphroditic youngsters was equally important for managing their gender, its importance reflected in the protocols he and his colleagues developed.<sup>95</sup> As a "psychologic rule" said the authors, the earlier genital ambiguity

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<sup>93</sup> Parsons attempted to synthesise a general science of society with a set of universal categories that effectively transcended both space and time, leaving him open to charges of ahistoricism (Bershady, 1973). For perhaps the most rigorous critique of Parsons' theoretical project, see Mills (1959:25-49).

<sup>94</sup> This statement is not intended to deny one sub-field of psychology that has concerned itself with the social context in which individuals operate - social psychology.

<sup>95</sup> It is important to note that this was one element of Money's protocols that was not incorporated - for the most part - into ICM practices. There are numerous accounts of people having difficulty accessing basic information about their medical histories because their doctors consider the information too difficult for their patients to bear, even today. It appears that many clinicians were unable to reconcile the educative component with the risk that the child perceive themselves as 'freaks'. See for example, Chase (1996/1998), Cohen (2005), Holmes (1994; 1995), Kessler (1998), Turner (1999), and Wilton, for example (1997). The

was “corrected” the better off both the parents and the child would be (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a:294). At the same time the authors noted that where a delay was indicated, children could accommodate the impositions (and accompanying), embarrassments of a genital ‘anomaly’ so long as they were told about future medical and surgical plans. Without that information children were likely to construe themselves as freaks whereas with it, they had the means to develop strategies to deal with “interim emergencies’ [like] school urinary habits” - in the case of assigned males (1955a:295). The educative component then, was intended to provide a buffer for the child against “curious questioning or teasing [by] siblings or schoolmates” (Hampson 1955:267).

Clinicians were also advised that children be told what to expect of surgical procedures in simple terms:

A 3 yr old girl about to be clitoridectomised, for example, should be well informed that the doctors will make her look like all other girls and women (p.295).

Simple terms indeed, for this type of explanation perpetuates the idea that there is a single standard in female genitalia: a standard that any paediatrician, gynaecologist or obstetrician can attest is a complete misnomer. And as Iain Morland (2005a) so poignantly notes, “no child can actually look like all the other girls without becoming a polymorphous, *monstrous* chimera” (p.342, emphasis added).

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effects of that apparent irreconcilability provided the impetus for a political movement known as Intersex activism. Refer Chapter six.

The authors believed that keeping patients informed of their condition(s) in age-appropriate language would facilitate their understanding of the circumstances of their birth and so positively impact on their sense of self:

It is preferable that ... a child know, from the time when she can first begin to comprehend it, that she has a clitoris like all other girls but that it is too big and will be made smaller surgically. With little boys, the simplest comprehensible explanation is that one day the surgeons will finish off the penis so that the boy can stand up to urinate (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a:294)

Such instruction was intended to facilitate in the child an understanding that that were not a “half girl and half boy but rather girls or boys who were *not finished* genitally” (Hampson, 1955:267, emphasis added). Yet this advice begs the question: what sense is a child assigned female, supposed to make of the information that their genitals are on the one hand, ‘not finished’ and on the other, ‘too big’? In developmental terms, the advice makes little sense since a clitoris deemed to be ‘too big’ is surely *over-developed* or “more finished” rather than *under-developed* or unfinished (Morland, 2005a:337).

Money et al also stressed the importance of giving hermaphrodite children basic instruction in prenatal development as part of their training into a gender. Examples of the types of discourse clinicians were advised to use to that end included the following:

Girls should also know, incidentally, that whereas boys have a penis, girls have a vagina – in juvenile vocabulary, a baby tunnel<sup>96</sup> – as a double insurance against childish theories of surgical mutilation and maiming (Money et al, p.295).

Two points are worthy of note in this advice. In the first instance, to interpret the diagrammatic representations of sex differentiation in this way is not only misleading, it is factually incorrect. The diagrammatic representations of foetal development (see especially Fig 2), tell one story while the explanations clinicians were instructed to provide children and their parents, tell a completely different one. There is in fact *no* relationship between a penis and a vagina in pre-natal development since the homologue of penis is clitoris (where differentiation does take place). Hence the advice does not equate to basic instruction in prenatal development but rather a primer for (hetero)sex education. Little wonder then, that many cultural critics of Money accuse him of being an agent of compulsory heterosexuality.

In the second instance, the advice serves to infantilise children's apprehensions and fears regarding what can only be described as radical and invasive surgical procedures involving body parts tainted by taboo and shame within western (as well as many

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<sup>96</sup> This type of language begs an analysis given Money's views on 'potential vs actual' fertility' (see below) and his views on the importance of managing the psychological well-being of his patients. For what are the implications of telling a child that she is a girl and that girls have 'baby tunnels' when a child does not have one herself or - for whatever reason - is unable to bear children? This would seem to create the very conditions for trauma that Money sought to avoid.

other) cultures.<sup>97</sup> Money and colleagues recommended that children be told about pre- and post-operative procedures (including anaesthesia), because “these apparently *trivial* details are the source of their most intense anticipatory terrors and misconceptions” (Money et al, 1955a:295, emphasis added). The idea that children might be traumatised by their clinical and surgical experiences<sup>98</sup> (including repeated genital examinations often carried out by teams of doctors and/or repeated genital surgeries) is conspicuous by its absence as a possible cause of ‘maladaptation’ to an assigned gender.

There is considerable evidence in the medical literature (and in the narrative accounts of hermaphrodite individuals) that genital (re)constructive surgeries almost never involve a single procedure but in fact require multiple interventions over a period of years (See for example, Alexander, 1997; Creighton, 2004; Creighton & Minto, 2001; Creighton, Minto, & Steele, 2001; Dreger, 2000; Morland, 2005a; Preves, 2002). This is particularly the case when first surgeries are undertaken on infants and young children, a commonplace occurrence even today. Money and colleagues argued that “operative decisions were always contingent on estimates of surgical safety and success”, however, they did issue a caution that - clitoridectomy excepted - surgical success was better achieved after the organs had grown and were a “good size to work with” (1955a:295). Surgical success in this context referred to both form (genital

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<sup>97</sup> See Goffman’s (1968) work on stigma and shame. See also, Money’s critiques of antisexualism in the North American context (Money, 1985; 1988:134-135; 1995).

<sup>98</sup> Such trauma is said to be one of the main reasons that so many people become ‘lost to follow-up’ as adults. This situation is lamented by ICM clinicians and critics alike because without long-term follow-up, the efficacy (or otherwise), of ICM procedures is difficult if not impossible to determine.

appearance) and to function (for assigned females, a receptive vagina and in the case of assigned males, the ability to engage in penetrative sex and to urinate from a standing position).

The point that children needed a grasp of basic anatomy so they would not think of themselves as half female and half male is crucial on another level. Despite having first hand knowledge that humans come in more varieties than  $n=2$ , these researchers were unable to conceive of a healthy hermaphrodite subjectivity. When male and female are the only legitimate legally and socially sanctioned options, hermaphrodites can only ever be 'unfinished'. This point is exemplified in the premise that if something had not gone wrong in-utero, hermaphrodites would have been born as normal males or normal females, a point that is particularly relevant to the discussion and analysis of chapter six.

By Money and the Hampsons' account, gender ambivalence on the part of a child inevitably resulted from prevarication by clinicians and/or parents. That same prevarication often led to a child's original sex assignment being revoked, a situation that was not only considered harmful for the child, but also for the parents - particularly after the child had reached the age of two. Hampson warned:

After the transition from infancy to childhood, [...] children are virtually incapable of coping with a change of sex. Changes by medical or parental edict at this age are fraught with severe psychologic hazard for the child (Hampson, 1955:272).

Note the contradiction between this and the advice mentioned above that educating a child about their medical history and any plans for future surgical and other medical intervention would enable them to accommodate any impositions brought to bear by their possessing ‘anomalous’ genitalia.<sup>99</sup> Hampson’s claim was made on the evidence of ten individuals whose sex of assignment had been changed after the neonatal period. Four of this group had been reassigned prior to their first birthday and were reported as having no psychological disturbances. The remainder whose reassignment occurred between the ages of eighteen months to 16 years were reported - with a single exception - to be “inadequately adjusted” in some way (1955:269). The dangers of re-assignment after infancy were reiterated in Hampson’s concluding summary in more strident terms:

Reassignment or change of sex in childhood, with or without genital surgery, was found to constitute an *extreme* psychologic hazard’ (p.273, emphasis added).

No indication was given as to what constituted such hazards. In light of her earlier statement that psychosis was conspicuous by its absence across the entire sample, a clear disjuncture is evident. The same warning resonated in all of the subsequent material produced by the trio and in Money’s work more generally.

For individuals who were not surgically mediated as infants, Money et al recommended that the degree to which a gender role had already been established be

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<sup>99</sup> As mentioned, for the most part the articles under discussion reiterated and reinforced each other, which makes this glaring contradiction all the more salient.

used as a benchmark. This population was, they claimed, most at risk of a spoiled gender identity and presented the “most perplexing and difficult problems” (1955a:289). Parents would assign even the most ambiguous child a sex before long because “the [English] language dictates that they refer to the child as he or she, and they cannot sit on the fence indefinitely before announcing the birth of a son or a daughter” (p.289). Once an announcement of sex was made, parents would begin to raise the child accordingly and so facilitate the process of gender acquisition. In cases where the original sex assignment was incorrect, it was vital that the child be reassigned sooner rather than later because it was far too difficult they said, for a parent to “relinquish a son in favour of a daughter, or vice versa” (p.289). Effectively then, Money and his colleagues were promoting a prophylactic approach to managing ambiguity in order to assist parents cope with having a child who was not - in the statistical sense of the term - ‘normal’.

### ***On fertile ground?***

Of all the physiological markers of sex, Money et al privileged just one in assignment decisions: the external genitalia. The rest - as discussed earlier - were summarily dismissed as inadequate in and of themselves. The use of single criterion such as gonadal structure, or chromosomal patterning was “extremely unwise” said the authors (1955a:285), since it was known that in hermaphrodites there were often contradictions between the various markers of sex. The authors argued that just as external genital morphology served as the key indicator for sexing regular male and female neonates, they should also be given primary consideration in ICM. The difference with hermaphrodite infants was that external genital structures needed to be appraised for how well they would lend themselves to surgical intervention.

If the external organs are so predominantly male, or so predominantly female that no amount of surgical reconstruction will convert them to serviceably and erotically sensitive organs of the other sex, then the sex of assignment should be dictated by the external genitals alone (1955a:288).

After sexing, all subsequent surgical and hormonal interventions were to be directed toward “maintaining” the assigned sex in order to ensure successful adaptation to a gender (1955a:288). Money and his colleagues believed that the only time it was appropriate to give more weight to hormonal (and perhaps gonadal) sex was in cases of extreme ambiguity where “the possibilities of surgical reconstruction [were] equally promising in either direction” (p. 288).

Money et al acknowledged the contentiousness of this recommendation because it had implications for the future fertility of their patients. Addressing concerns that subsuming reproductive potential to genital appearance was ethically flawed, the authors argued that *actual* childbearing was a completely different issue to that of *potential* fertility. In keeping with the ideological framework set up in the preceding articles, actual childbearing was said to be contingent upon, not just biological capacity, but also “the social encounters and cultural transactions of mating and marrying, which are inextricably bound up with gender role and orientation” (1955a:285).

It is worth noting that when Money et al referred to ‘actual childbearing’, they referred not to biological or physiological capacity but rather to social context. This

turn is particularly curious given the amount of attention paid to morphological structures and formations in this article. Moreover the creation, removal and/or reorganisation of internal and external genitalia necessarily involves the material not the social, for it quite literally involves working with flesh.

Reproduction within the context of their discussion was located firmly within the institution of normative heterosexual relations, which during the 1950s meant within the context of marriage. What remained unspoken by this assertion was the conviction that without medical and pharmaceutical intervention(s), hermaphrodite individuals would be unlikely to establish intimate relationships that might lead to marriage. Yet the *majority* of adults in their own sample reported engaging in sexual relationships of a heterosexual nature and indeed, some were, or had been married.

Again this type of disjuncture between the evidence and Money et al's recommendations has fuelled criticism that intersex case management is driven by a heterosexual imperative (Chase, 1998; Dreger, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Epstein, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Hausman, 1995; Holmes, 1994, 1995; Preves, 2002). While it is hard to deny such a claim it is important, I believe, to keep in mind the historical context in which these ideas were being articulated. During the 1950s, homosexual practices were criminalised by the legal system and pathologised by medicine and psychiatry. Within this context, it may well have been irresponsible, perhaps unethical for clinicians to do anything other than facilitate a heterosexual

outcome in their patients.<sup>100</sup> Again it is important to emphasise that Money and his colleagues were thoroughly (and in the case of Money, doubly), immersed in a functionalist paradigm noted for its tendency to reinforce rather than challenge existing social arrangements.

At this point I wish to turn to the issue of clitoridectomy. Referring to the historical record which Money had used as the basis of his doctoral thesis, Hampson (1955) noted that until relatively recently, there had been no surgical options available to hermaphrodites raised as female who possessed phallic structures that were larger than clinically acceptable clitori. While a few of these individuals were known to have adopted a masculine persona and lived as men - with the accompanying social status - many lived as women. Hampson argued that for the most part a frequently erect phallus was a source of immense distress, not least because in many instances, “untreated women ... have been driven more often than not to frequent masturbation, sometimes with desperate urgency, despite personal taboos” (p.270).

For Hampson, twentieth century technological advances provided the means to not merely alleviate this kind of distress, but to avoid it altogether. The most effective treatment in Hampson’s view, was the (surgical) creation of ‘normal looking’ female genitals. This could be achieved, she and her colleagues argued, by reducing or completely removing the clitoris. Hampson asserted that there were little grounds for assuming that orgasmic function would be compromised or lost as a result. This

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<sup>100</sup> It is worthy of note that Money fully embraced the sexual revolution just a few years later and this was to have a significant effect on his ideas about female sexuality (See Money & Tucker, 1977:139-169).

assertion was made on the basis of just six individuals from the sample group who had undergone clitoridectomy as adults and were said to have reported being orgasmic post-operatively. In fact, one of the six was said to have experienced her very first orgasm following the more radical of the two procedures – that is, the complete removal of the clitoral tissue. That point was specifically made to reassure surgeons who had concerns about depriving their patients of “what some authorities have declared the most significant erotic zone of the body” (Hampson, 1955:270).<sup>101</sup> As the discussion in subsequent chapters will show, contemporary critics of ICM have rather a different story to tell. It is noteworthy that Hampson made no mention of whether the achievement of orgasm by this group was clitoral or vaginal despite extensive debates about the issue in both psychoanalytic and sexological circles during the 1950s, debates she was clearly cognisant of when she wrote this article (See for example, Ford & Beach, 1951; Grafenberg, 1950; Kinsey et al, 1953).

The third article in the series also took up the issue of clitoridectomy. In it the authors acknowledged that the procedure aroused vigorous “psychologic debate [...] among experts with respect to the loss of erotic sensation” (1955a:295). Nonetheless, Money et al reiterated Hampson’s claim that “no evidence of a deleterious effect of clitoridectomy” had been reported by any of the dozen women “experienced in genital practices” whom they had surveyed (p.295).<sup>102</sup> The authors were at pains to point out

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<sup>101</sup> This statement begs the question of what role Hampson’s knowledge and experience of her own body played in this understanding of female orgasm since she was at the time of writing, a young married woman, presumably with some sexual experience.

<sup>102</sup> Hampson’s article was submitted for publication in early March 1955 while Money et al’s was submitted toward the end of the following month. Apparently the team had gained access to reports from a further six clitorectomised women during the intervening period. Money

none of the twelve had been hostile towards the idea of clitoridectomy since each regarded themselves unequivocally as women with a concomitant gender role. This point appears to have been made to add weight to the ‘correctness’ of the recommendation. A disclaimer that was not raised by Hampson in the preceding article was offered within the context of a discussion regarding the finer points of extirpation (complete excision) versus amputation (reduction). Money et al suggested that the discovery of cortisone meant that amputation was sufficient. They had earlier recommended extirpation in order to avoid priapism of the amputated clitoral stump (that is, prolonged and painful erection) as reported by some of their patients.<sup>103</sup> Prior to the availability of cortisone, the remedy for priapism was further surgery to remove any remaining (visible) phallic tissue. At no point in the discussion did the authors consider that priapism might itself be an effect of nerve damage caused by the surgery.<sup>104</sup> Demonstrating a cautionary approach rarely found elsewhere in the series of articles under discussion, the authors went on to state:

Though there is considerable evidence that an amputated clitoris is erotically sensitive, enough uncertainty remains to require conservatism in recommending clitoridectomy for hermaphrodites living as women in whom

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would later describe female orgasm rather chillingly as “nature’s reproduction insurance ... so intent is nature on maintaining it that surprisingly large amounts of sexual tissue can be removed or relocated without destroying the capacity for orgasm” (Money & Tucker, 1977:47).

<sup>103</sup> Here the authors are referring to people diagnosed as hyperadrenocortical females (1955a:295).

<sup>104</sup> Until recently very little was known (though much assumed) about the actual structure of the clitoris. Helen O’Connell’s groundbreaking research using MRI technology has changed all that. Refer O’Connell (2005).

there is neither a blind vaginal pouch nor a vagina opening into a urogenital sinus (p.297).

The ‘considerable evidence’ of which they spoke equated to the reports of just 12 women. While this was twice as many as Hampson had cited, it remained a very small sample on which to recommend such a radical and irreversible intervention.<sup>105</sup> What is noteworthy in this call for conservatism, is the acknowledgement of a role for the intact phallic structure in female sexual pleasure, albeit as a ‘consolation prize’ for those without a penetrable vagina.

As to the timing of what can only be described as a thoroughly controversial procedure, Hampson recommended that clitoridectomy be carried out as early as possible after birth (for older individuals she recommended as soon as possible following diagnosis) (1955). While reluctant to commit to an exact time line, Hampson reiterated Money’s idea that gender becomes indelibly established by two years of age, suggesting that that should serve as the guiding principle for clinicians. As for other surgical procedures, “genital repair and reconstruction” such as vaginal extension or construction was said to offer better results after the organs had grown enough to be “a good size to work with” (Money et al,1955a:294).

### ***Measuring success – key performance indicators***

So how did these researchers gauge successful adaptation to the sex of assignment: that is, to a gender? Hampson bemoaned the difficulty of measuring a person’s

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<sup>105</sup> Nonetheless, the paucity of evidence has not deterred generations of clinicians throughout the western world from following Money et al’s recommendations regarding clitoridectomy.

adaptation given the lack of standardised tools available. The paucity of tools led her and Money to devise their own inventory of variables against which to evaluate the degree of a person's masculinity or femininity. Their inventory included the following indicators:

[G]eneral mannerisms, deportment and demeanour, play preferences and recreational interests, spontaneous topics of talk in unprompted conversation and casual comment; content of dreams, daydreams and fantasies; replies to oblique inquiries and projective tests; evidence of erotic practices; and the individual's own replies to direct inquiry (Hampson, 1955:266).

The use of these types of indicators is highly problematic not least because they rely upon the subjective judgements of those charged with making the assessment. I remind the reader again that a functionalist approach begins from the premise that something exists because it performs a function.<sup>106</sup> When one knows for instance, what feminine behaviour is and what masculine behaviour is, then all that is required is to assert its function in order to provide an explanation (Fried, 1979; Szacki, 1979). Much as we remain bound by stereotypical notions of what is gender-appropriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there have been significant attitudinal (and behavioural) shifts over the past 50 years, particularly with respect to 'the feminine' which remains constant is the oversimplification of complex multi-dimensional phenomenon. This serves to convey "a sense of stability and permanence to [that which is] inherently flexible"

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<sup>106</sup> Ironically their analysis did not extend to the presence of hermaphrodites. How might it be possible to analyse the *function* of the historical persistence of hermaphrodites since by this account, every 'fact' has a function.

(Deaux, 1987:301). The concepts of masculinity and femininity put forward by Money were indeed in many respects, oversimplified accounts of unstable and complex phenomenon.

Hampson noted that almost 30% of the people in her and Money's sample had lived for more than two thirds of their lives with a contradiction between genital appearance and sex of assignment and rearing, indicating the "surprising adaptability of the human organism" (Hampson, 1955:266). With one exception, all of the individuals discussed by Hampson were reported to have grown up with an orientation (as male or female) wholly consistent with their assigned sex and rearing. While some had disclosed feelings of shame and shyness at feeling 'different', in very few instances was *any* form of neuroticism evident and "psychotic symptoms were conspicuous by their absence" (p.266). Moreover, most children were resilient enough to deal with their "anomalous genital appearance and grow up with a sexual orientation appropriate to their assigned sex [sans surgery]" (p.266).<sup>107</sup> Even those who believed an error had been made were reported in this article to have adapted to their assigned sex with little more than "an uneasy kind of adjustment to life" or at worst, with the mildest forms of neuroses (p.267). Recall that Money reported in his doctoral research that a contradiction between a person's identity as male or female and their physical appearance *did not* in itself lead to psychoses or even neurotic symptomology. Yet Money and colleagues persisted with the idea that medical interventions designed to normalise hermaphroditic bodies were essential to a hermaphrodite's psychological health.

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<sup>107</sup> For a more detailed analysis of what constituted 'appropriateness' for Money in sexual orientation (and why), see Chapter five.

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Despite advancements of knowledge in embryology and endocrinology, most people have continued to make an absolute dichotomy between male and female – a dichotomy as seemingly axiomatic as the distinction of day from night, black from white (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955b:301).

So begins the fourth article in the series (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955b). This statement is rather provocative in light of the author's recommendations that parents be told that their children were 'unfinished' boys or girls. Moreover, it is suggestive of possibilities beyond a dichotomous tale of male and female.

Of all the articles under discussion, it is this, the fourth that situates the authors' research in its disciplinary and historical context. In this article Freud's first essay on sexuality - the article that served as the point of departure for the young Money - is raised (Freud, 1905/1953). Mounting a critique of Freud's essay was the first step towards gender's ascent as *the* signifier for human qualities and behaviours commonly attributed as masculine and/or feminine. The rest, as they say, is history. There is a certain irony that both Freud and Money turned to hermaphrodites to evidence their claims. The former had used understandings of embryological development to point to an innate and constitutive bisexuality in all human subjects. Money's reading of Freud suggests that the latter extrapolated that idea to argue the case for the presence of an "instinctive masculinity and instinctive femininity [of the sexual instinct] in all

members of the human species, but in differing proportions” (Money, Hampson & Hampson, 1955b:301).

Freud’s explanation involved a curious twist that might well offer the potential for ways of thinking about what it means to be human beyond the equation  $n=2$ .

Specifically Freud understood the hermaphroditic phase of embryonic life to indicate that,

A certain degree of hermaphroditism really belongs to the normal. In no normally formed male or female are traces of the apparatus of the other sex lacking; these either continue functionless as rudimentary organs, or they are transformed for the purpose of assuming other functions (Freud, 1905/1953:7).

Contained within this statement lies the potential for a hermaphrodite subjectivity, or what Freud would have called a constitutive bisexuality. In an extensive reading of the contemporary literature concerning hermaphroditism, I have found just one echo of this premise.<sup>108</sup> The prism of binary sex necessarily renders those who fall outside of the  $n=2$  equation as defective, incomplete or unfinished. This is why surgeons continue to believe that they are completing what ‘nature’ failed to do and through their practices are abrogating the hermaphroditic ‘condition’. Despite Money’s acknowledgement that a person’s gender role might be masculine, feminine or ambiguous in the first article and despite the above opening statement, ambiguity as a

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<sup>108</sup> See Epstein’s comment regarding the paradox of ambiguous sex (1995:104). While offering a similar interpretation of early embryonic development to the one I offer in this thesis, Epstein appears to fall prey to the fallacious (albeit compelling) idea of an original female sex otherwise known as the ‘default sex’ hypothesis.

mode of being was rendered null and void in his subsequent work. Ambiguity was in other words, thoroughly neutered.

The axiom of binary sex was invoked in the fourth article to signal toward psychological and psychiatric representations of an innate sexual instinct or drive (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955b:301). Within the framework Money devised to codify the markers of sex, hermaphroditism constituted a series of contradictions between two or more variables. In the earlier articles, internal gonads, hormones and chromosomes were pitted against assigned sex to discredit the idea that any of the former played a significant role in determining a person's gender. Now Money and colleagues extended their analysis to the remaining physiological markers of sex: the internal accessory organs (uterus and prostate), and genitalia. As with the other biological markers, these failed miserably in Money and the Hampsons' analysis. Despite insisting that genital appearance should serve as the primary indicator for deciding which sex to assign an individual, here they argued that it was entirely possible for a hermaphrodite to establish a gender role that aligned fully to their sex of rearing "despite a paradoxical appearance of the external genitals" (p.307).<sup>109</sup> The failure of these final two biological markers was used as further evidence against Freud's claim of an innate and instinctive basis for masculinity and femininity. But rather than dismissing the idea outright, the authors' - in the interests of rigour, they claimed - turned to the work of Richard von Krafft-Ebing.

Where else might an innate masculinity or femininity reside in the body, the authors asked. Krafft-Ebing had hypothesised special centres in the brain, but in light of their

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<sup>109</sup> Note that this was the primary finding of Money's doctoral research.

evidence that hermaphroditic individuals with identical diagnoses had been successfully raised as girls and as boys, Money et al dismissed the idea.<sup>110</sup> Pointing to the findings of their research, Money and his colleagues discredited the notion of an instinctive gender on the one hand, and laid the ground for an alternative explanation on the other. They argued that the capacity for hermaphrodite individuals to establish an identity as male or as female provided support they said, for the view that:

Psychologically, sexuality is undifferentiated at birth and it becomes differentiated as masculine or feminine in the course of the various experiences of growing up. [...] Our studies have pointed very strongly to the significance of life experiences encountered and transacted in the establishment of gender role and orientation (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955b:308-9).

They went on to caution that this was not to be read as an endorsement of a simplistic social or environmental determinist approach because, central to their theory was the concomitance of the terms *encountered* and *transacted*. They argued that “encounters do not automatically dictate predictable transactions [because] there is ample place for novelty and the unexpected in cerebral and cognitive processes in human beings” (1955b:309). But lest the reader interpret this as an argument for an infinite field of possibilities in gender, Money and colleagues turned immediately to the evidence offered by hermaphrodites who had been subject to a sex *re*-assignment after infancy.

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<sup>110</sup> It is important to note that Money et al’s disagreement with Krafft-Ebing turned on the idea of *innateness* rather than with the idea of neural centres as the following discussion makes evident.

Gender was not infinitely modifiable, they argued, because once established it became *indelibly* imprinted in the brain. It was on this point that the authors argued most forcefully for routinised medical interventions on hermaphrodite infants.

### **SECTION III**

#### ***Beyond dichotomous sex and dichotomous gender?***

In an article published many years later in the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* (Money, 1985a), Money wrote that his early studies had led him to realise that there was no absolute dichotomy of male versus female. Again this statement cannot be read as an endorsement of more than two sexes, for Money went on to propose that a hermaphrodite individual's sex be determined on the basis of multi-dimensional rather than single criteria such as chromosomes gonads, or external genital appearance. For Money the recognition of multiplicity had a particular utility: it allowed him to draw distinctions between *variables* rather than between *individuals* so that one could say a person was male in this sense and female in that sense. To illustrate, he offered the example of a person with testes who appeared morphologically female, whose gender identity was female, and whose erotic orientations were directed towards women. On the basis of the diagnostic tool he and Hampson used to assess adaptation to a gender, this last variable constituted a mild neurotic symptomology, an issue I take up in detail in Chapter five.

Money suggested that for those of us who might be described as unremarkable females and males, it was entirely "feasible to assume" that sex was uni-variate in character "simply because all of the multiple variables are concordant with one another" (1985a:73). However, concordance was, and remains to this day assumed for most people since sex chromatin testing is only undertaken when there is a question mark over a person's sex (or their fertility). Since this is not the case for the majority

of people, the assertion of a general concordance is speculative and entirely without empirical support.<sup>111</sup>

Money's hermaphrodite research and the clinical guidelines that he and others developed in the 1950s can be read as an exemplar of the normative medico-scientific traditions discussed in the previous chapter. That tradition tends to substantiate the statistically frequent as 'normal' by rendering statistical infrequency as anomalous and so by extension, pathological. In the context of hermaphrodite research, this provides the mandate to 'rectify' disorderly or deviant bodies. The idea that medical intervention is necessary has for at least 50 years now, gone unquestioned.<sup>112</sup> Indeed intervention is 'sold' on the grounds that without it, hermaphrodite individuals are doomed to a life of misery and dejection.

The underlying premise of Money's research assumes that hermaphroditic individuals would have been born as 'normal' males or 'normal' females if something hadn't gone wrong. Thus by situating hermaphrodites as 'unfinished', the apparent truth of dimorphic sex is not merely upheld, it is proven. In other words, the human species properly consists of two (and just two) sexes. Here we see a particularly poignant example of the is/ought distinction at work, since doctors' interpretations of 'what is' are fully informed by their beliefs about 'what ought to be'. But more than this, at the

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<sup>111</sup> Recent findings in genetic research indicate that genetic variation is much greater in the general population than has historically been assumed. Cf. Dewing et al (2003) and Rosario (2005) Cohen (2005).

<sup>112</sup> In almost all of the medical literature written prior to the late-1990s, debates centred around what form the interventions should take, never whether they should be taken. It is only in the past five to six years that non-intervention as a possible option has been raised.

point at which Money extend the concept of gender beyond the hermaphrodite population, gender came to substantiate the so-called normal development of masculine and feminine identities. In the process hermaphrodites, once central to the concept of gender, disappeared for the most part, from the frame. This point is taken up again in Chapter four where I chart the settlement of gender into the feminist lexicon.

### ***Imprinting and native language***

Money went on to extend his theories of gender acquisition to the wider population, all the while refining and complicating his earliest elaborations of the concept. He had signalled his intention to do this very early on, alluding to it in the first of the articles discussed above. For Money, *all* individuals acquire their identity as masculine or feminine during the first eighteen months of life. This process, he believed, occurred in the same way and during the same period of development as the acquisition of native language. He believed that humans were born with a template in the mind - which he coined a 'gender map' - that primed for *both* masculinity and femininity so that children could learn which behaviours were appropriate for their gender and which were appropriate for the 'other' gender (and by extension, inappropriate for them). Money insisted that once acquired, an identity as male or female became permanently hardwired into the brain in the same way as a person's native language.

The idea that a person's gender was acquired and functioned in the same way as native language was one of Money's most powerful articulations. In his view:

Once ingrained, a person's native language may fall into disuse and be supplanted by another, but it is never entirely eradicated. So also a gender role may be changed or, resembling native bi-linguism may be ambiguous, but it may also become so deeply ingrained that not even flagrant contradictions of body functioning and morphology may displace it (Money, 1955:258).

The potency of this link should not be underestimated. Linking gender with language served to ground the former in a very significant and persuasive way. Money did not just propose similarity in terms of process he also proposed that native language and gender acquisition were temporally simultaneous. Both processes occurred prior to two years of age, according to Money. This point was reiterated and elaborated in many of his subsequent writings on gender.<sup>113</sup> There is no denying that language acquisition occurs in response to external post-natal stimuli. To suggest that once established, a person's native language(s) could be *unlearned* is of course, a specious claim. One can only speculate on whether Money picked up the term gender through his interest in language or if that interest was piqued by his search for a shorthand term to discuss the masculinity and femininity of hermaphroditic subjects. This point is not one that he has discussed in any of his published writings, to the best of my knowledge.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See for example, Money (1985a; 1986a; 1988; 1995), Money and Ehrhardt (1972), Money, Hampson and Hampson (1957), Money and Tucker (1977).

<sup>114</sup> At the time I visited the Kinsey Institute to examine Money's substantial personal archive it was in the process of being catalogued by the Institute library. Unfortunately this meant that access to his professional correspondence was limited.

Money was fully aware that mainstream psychological theory gave little credence to the idea that psychological functions established postnatally were resistant to eradication, despite a number of powerful medical analogies that would support such a notion.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, it was an idea that struck at the heart of the philosophical framework of psychotherapy and behaviour modification therapies that rely on the premise that learned behaviours are modifiable. Yet this is precisely what Money was proposing with his theory of gender.<sup>116</sup> With no precedent in their own fields (psychology and psychiatry), Money and his colleagues had turned to the work of Austrian embryologist Konrad Lorenz to support their assertions.

Lorenz (1961) claimed to have successfully established himself as ‘mother’ to a clutch of mallard ducklings by imitating the adult female’s quacking for a half day after the birds had hatched. From then on the young birds had continued to respond to him as if he were their mother.<sup>117</sup> Money used this analogy to argue that learned responses and behaviours were as resistant to elimination as those of genetic or hormonal influence:

[The] example of native language shows that permanence in the brain is not synonymous with innateness. That which becomes permanent may also be

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<sup>115</sup> The examples he offered were the impact of rickets and cretinism on bone development prior to maturation (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1957:335).

<sup>116</sup> This idea proved highly significant for feminist theory and was one of the main attractions of Money’s work for the feminists who engaged with his ideas during the early 1970s. Refer Chapter four.

<sup>117</sup> It is worth noting that Lorenz did not have the same success with any other bird species that he attempted the same experiment on (Lorenz, 1961).

postnatal and acquired by social learning. Thus, the much vexed question of whether G-I/R<sup>118</sup> in human beings is innate or acquired, biological or learned, prenatal or postnatal, does not either quarrel or correlate with the issue of whether G-I/R is immutable or changeable (Money, 1985a:75).

*Sexual Signatures* (1977), was the first of Money's publications directed specifically toward a lay audience. In it Money and his co-author Patricia Tucker offered a fascinating account of the history and politics of language development. Money and Tucker linked language development to relations of power,<sup>119</sup> suggesting that when written language came into being, generalisation had already become an effective tool for ruling-elites to augment their power. Generalisations, once accepted, became "eternal verit[ies]", that assumed a life of their own (p.88). For Money:

The gender generality legacy, embalmed in language and custom, still weighs heavily on the human race, and since human thought is limited and shaped by language, that legacy still distorts and limits human thinking. [...] [A]rbitrary gender distinctions in themselves perhaps do no harm but their cumulative effect is to polarise the sexes, to so overstress sex differences that the human similarities are overlooked (p. 88).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> G-I/R is an acronym for gender identity/role, a referent to Money's understanding of identity and role as two sides of the same coin. For explanations of what led Money to devise this acronym, see Money (1995:25). See also Money and Ehrhardt (1972:284).

<sup>119</sup> See Money and Tucker (1972:83-90).

<sup>120</sup> In this discussion the authors advocated for the adoption of a gender-neutral pronoun into the English language - such as that used in the Turkish language ('o') - in order to eliminate

That Money was fully aware of the cumulative effects of such distinctions is paradoxical in light of the multitudinous ways that his own work has contributed toward maintaining stereotypical notions of what it meant to be a woman or a man. Money's theories of gender have reinforced rather than contested the very distortion and limited thinking of which he spoke, by overstressing sex differences (as oppositional and mutually exclusive categories), and ignoring or underplaying 'human similarity'.

As mentioned, Money's later elaborations of gender were increasingly refined and complicated versions of the ideas first offered in his doctoral thesis. Long a critic of Cartesian dualism with its legacy of binary oppositional concepts of mind and body,<sup>121</sup> Money attempted to undermine that legacy by proposing a model of gender acquisition composed of three, rather than two elements. To nature and nurture, Money offered the idea of a 'critical period' (after Stockard),<sup>122</sup> in order to mediate the gaping chasm of the nature-nurture divide. This conceptual turn reflected Talcott Parsons' meta-theoretical project because the addition of a critical period to the theoretically opposed poles of nature versus nurture transformed them into elements of a single theory. A critical period refers to a specific time span (in contemporary

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the need for repetitious and "tedious 'he or she' phrases" required by English speakers and writers (1977:89).

<sup>121</sup> See also Money (1957; 1980:7-9).

<sup>122</sup> The concept of a critical period originated in embryology. Charles Stockard (1921) devised the term to describe pre-natal events whose effects manifested post-natally (Bateson & Martin, 2000). Konrad Lorenz (1961) also used this concept for his theory of imprinting.

parlance, a window of opportunity) of heightened sensitivity to environmental stimuli that has long-term irreversible developmental consequences (Stockard, 1921).

Money not only employed Stockard's innovation directly, he expanded it by extending the concept beyond foetal life to the postnatal period from birth to around 18 months to two years of age. This, he believed, represented *the* major critical period for gender acquisition when sensory stimuli - mediated through the central nervous system - mapped onto pre-established neural pathways.<sup>123</sup> On the basis of rodent and primate studies, Money proposed that hormone production<sup>124</sup> from the fetal gonads primed a cognitive schema or neural template in-utero that coded for masculinity, femininity and androgyny and lay dormant until stimulated post-natally by "matching input stimulus" (Money, 1995:95).<sup>125</sup> While he had no proof positive of such a template, Money was fully confident of its existence:<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> It is not my intention to refute the idea that learning is a function of biology per se. However I do take issue with the immutability aspect of Money's claim with respect to gender. Gendering is an aspect of subjectivity that is continually reinforced and reiterated over the entire life course. See for example, Butler, (1990), Goffman (1977/1998), and West and Zimmerman (1987/1998) for analyses of the self-fulfilling effects of the gendering process.

<sup>124</sup> It is important to note that this reference to fetal hormones is in fact a reference to the androgenic substance, testosterone. A surge of testosterone (which must first convert to *estradiol* in order to be utilised) has historically been understood to 'masculinise' the fetal brain. See Fausto-Sterling (2000).

<sup>125</sup> I have used a later reference here and at other points during this discussion because they offer more succinct explanations than those offered in *Sexual Signatures*.

<sup>126</sup> Money coined this template a 'gendermap' in the mid-1990s, long after he proposed the concept of a neural template. Refer Money (1995:95-108).

The interaction of nature and nurture at a critical period may produce a permanent sequela that, in turn, may react at another critical period with a new facet of nurture (Money, 1987:14).

As previously discussed, Money subscribed to the hard-wiring thesis and it was this that provided the ultimate rationale for swift interventions on hermaphrodite infants so as to assure a stable gendered identity. Articulating this idea in typically dramatic fashion, Money claimed that:

When the gender identity gate closed behind you, it locked tight. You knew in the very core of your consciousness that you were male or female. Nothing short of disaster could ever again shake that conviction (1977:91).

Little wonder then, that the postnatal period was seen by Money as the major of the two critical phases. Like Stockard and Lorenz, Money understood imprinting to be an irreversible process, adding further impetus to his recommendation for early intervention.

Adding force to his argument that there was a direct relation between gender and language, Money asserted that the critical period for gender identity differentiation was linked to the critical period for language acquisition since both derived from the origins of conceptual language (1977:83). Money had long held that learning was a function of biology, which he articulated as the “biology of learning and remembering” (1987:14). If an individual’s gender had not established unequivocally during this period - as in the case of those whose sex was reassigned after the age of

one year - there would likely be a discordance between their 'gender map' and genital appearance that led to a 'faulty' or 'spoiled' identity. This discordance was said to express itself through an incomplete coding of the positive and negative poles of the neuralgendermap. In non-hermaphrodites according to Money, incomplete coding manifested in transvestitism (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:20).

### ***The identification/complementation component of gender acquisition***

In the Freudian tradition, identification is the means by which an individual becomes aware of their own masculinity or femininity. That is, children learn to imitate or model the behaviour of the same sexed parent (in simple terms, boys identify with their fathers and girls with their mothers). For Money, this model told only part of the story. Returning again to language acquisition, Money suggested (in the early 1970s) that the phenomenon of bilingualism offered a useful analogy. Just as the bilingual child was exposed to two different language systems that required two different sets of responses, the acquisition of a gendered identity/role required exposure to what he termed, 'bi-genderism' (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:163).

By this account children receive and respond to two sets of gender stimuli - to 'male behaviours' and 'female behaviours' - by imitating the behaviour of their same-sexed parent and peers on the one hand and by learning to behave in a complementary fashion to the 'other' (Money, 1985a, 1995; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Money & Tucker, 1977). Learning (and remembering) which behaviours were appropriate for one's sex-gender resulted from the ongoing reinforcement of parental and peer approval *and* disapproval. Thus in Money's view, it was essential that a child received consistent signals from both parents and/or carers.

The identification/complementation thesis turned on the idea that every individual possessed reciprocal learning schemas in the brain, one female and the other male. In every individual, one of these schemas was said to code positively while the other coded negatively. Money suggested that the positive pole coded for “me”, while the negative coded for “thee” (1995:112). Moreover, these schemas became “locked in the brain as templates that govern sex-dimorphic behaviour” (1985a:76). In other words they became hardwired.<sup>127</sup> Money described the process thus:

For the ordinary little boy growing up, everything pertaining to the female gender role is brain-coded as negative and *unfit for use*. The opposite holds for little girls. The negatively coded system in both instances is not a void, however. It serves as a template [...] of what not to do and also as a guide of what to expect in the behaviour of the opposite sex, when one’s own behaviour must be complementary (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:19).

Money certainly did not rule out the possibility of overlap, indeed the more the overlap, the more likely he believed androgynous-type behaviour would result. Conversely, less overlap would result in an individual rigidly adhering to and investing in, sexual stereotyping. Some allowance was made for a degree of change over the course of a lifetime but this allowance was qualified by the authors’

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<sup>127</sup> It should be noted that the hardwiring thesis has become increasingly undermined over the past decade as research by developmental neuroscientists has shown that neural pathways continue to respond to new stimuli over the entire life course. For an overview of some of the theoretical shifts in neuroscience since the late 1950s, see McKhann (2002).

suggestion that the identification/complementation quotient remained remarkably fixed with respect to a person's gendered identity and role (1985a). Maccoby (1987) and others have noted that boys have historically been subject to considerably more social pressure - and indeed exert more pressure on each other - than girls to conform to proscribed behaviours. While there are many things that boys cannot do if they are to be considered adequately male, girls in general are extended a greater degree of latitude (p.232). Hence 'tomboyism' is relatively socially acceptable<sup>128</sup> while so-called effeminacy in boys is not, as is clear by the pejorative term 'sissy boy' which carries with it the taint of male homosexuality.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Gender Identity/Role: A dimensional account***

In teasing out and refining his gender theory over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, Money developed a four-dimensional schema of gender differences based on social and cultural stereotypes.<sup>130</sup> Each of these dimensions was codified as either irreducible<sup>131</sup> or reducible. The (sole) irreducible category was constituted by the reproductive or procreative capacities of males and females: that is, men's capacity to

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<sup>128</sup> Albeit with the qualification that it is a phase that 'normal girls' are expect to grow out of.

<sup>129</sup> The term 'sissy' is said to have originated in the mid-nineteenth century but did not become a clinical term until one of Money's former students, Richard Green codified it as a diagnostic category in the 1980s (Grant, 2004:829).

<sup>130</sup> In his earliest elaborations, Money framed these dimensions in terms of 'roles' (Money, 1980:137-144), and later as categories of 'gender coding' (Money, 1987:18-24; 1995:51-61).

<sup>131</sup> Such differences were by his account, "the definitive ones that cannot be interchanged without changing the very concept of male and female – at least for the remainder of the century" (1980:137).

impregnate and women's capacity to ovulate, menstruate, gestate and lactate.<sup>132</sup> It is noteworthy that for Money there was no:

imperative that a man should actually impregnate in order to qualify as a man, nor that a woman should either menstruate, gestate, or lactate in order to qualify as a woman (Money, 1980:137).

Nonetheless in Money's view, since these were the only non-overlapping forms of sex differences between men and women, they formed the basis upon which all other sex differences were built. (Money, 1995:52).<sup>133</sup> The apparent contradiction between the qualification of the above quotation and his insistence that these capacities formed the ground for other forms of sexual difference is noteworthy.

The remaining categories were said to be influenced - to varying degrees - by prenatal hormone release that set "differential thresholds for behaviour that is sex-shared but threshold dimorphic" (Money, 1985a:75).<sup>134</sup> What Money meant by this was that either sex could manifest the same behaviour but "the threshold for its release is male/female divergent" (p.75). Here he was referring to behaviours manifested by both males and females that were *most usually* associated with one or the other. He offered the following examples: kinetic energy expenditure (particularly with respect

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<sup>132</sup> Refer Chapter five for a discussion of the reproductive paradigm in sexological thought.

<sup>133</sup> Prior to 1980 Money wrote of sex-irreducible versus "optional" (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:19) or "arbitrary sex distinctions" (Money & Tucker, 1977:33). It was not until 1980 that he codified four distinct dimensions in print (See Money, 1980:137-144).

<sup>134</sup> Here Money is making an explicit link between the prenatal critical period and sexual dimorphism

to sports); competitive rivalry; roaming; territorialism; defence against intruders; guarding and defence of the young; nesting behaviours; caregiving of children; active and passive forms of sexual behaviour; and erotic arousal to visual or tactile stimuli (p.75). In my reading of these categories (and to a degree in Money's also), what are at stake are a range of *human* behaviours and characteristics that may (or may not) be subject in any given historical period to classification as masculine or feminine. Yet the three reducible categories or dimensions included more than behaviours, for they also incorporated aspects of physicality.

The second dimension in Money's schema was designated as 'sex-derivative'. This category referred to the so-called secondary sex characteristics and to physiological features such as bone structure, muscular build and fat distribution; to urinary postures; and to characteristics linked to hormones such as aggression and docility for example (1980: 138-9; 1995:54).<sup>135</sup> It was also possible in his view, that sex differences in morbidity and mortality had some underlying hormonal cause. If correct, then they would also qualify for inclusion in this second category.

The third dimension - 'sex-adjunctive' - referred to socially ascribed roles manifested through the sexual division of labour and occupational stereotyping. Money proposed that this category superimposed on the second (sex-derivative) one. What distinguished this category (and the fourth) from those discussed above was its very loose association to the body and to capacity. The elements of the sex-adjunctive

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<sup>135</sup> There is considerable emphasis placed on urinary posture in ICM assessments of phallic potential since it is deemed essential for boys and men to be able to urinate from a standing position. The ethnocentrism of this idea has been highlighted by Money's esteemed colleague, the psychobiologist Frank Beach (1987).

dimension were, he said, the effects of the differential treatment accorded boys and girls from the moment they were born. Drawing on the anthropological record, Money associated women's historical responsibility for food preparation and other domestic duties with the constraints of pregnancy and breastfeeding in the prehistorical context. While hard physical labour was gender-coded for both men and women, nonetheless Money argued that men's (generally) larger muscular build and relative strength (sex-derivative characteristics) were compatible with distance and long absences from the domestic sphere. Invoking the hunter/gatherer thesis, Money suggested (rather curiously) that men's ancient predisposition to territorial roaming extended contemporarily to truck driving:

Wheeled travel was so strongly gender coded for men that when in recent times automotive steam and internal combustion engines replaced horses, building, driving and repairing the engines became gender coded as men's work (1995:57-8).

Yet at the same time he declared that in the contemporary context, such rigid divisions of labour were anachronistic since no definitive or incontrovertible evidence existed to support the phyletic destiny of male dominance (whether erotic or domestic) in humans.

The fourth dimension of Money's schema was designated as 'sex-arbitrary'.<sup>136</sup> Included in this category were recreational, educational and vocational interests and accomplishments, as well as grooming styles, adornment, body language and social

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<sup>136</sup> This category was referred to elsewhere as 'sex adventitious' (See Money, 1995).

etiquette. Moreover Money classified sex differences in vocabulary and speech patterns within this dimension although he did note the influence of social class in “vocal sex-coding” (1980:143). The very arbitrariness of this category provided, he said, ammunition for those invested in the nurture side of the nature/nurture debates by “lend[ing] superficial credence to their theory that all gender coded roles are the product exclusively of arbitrary social constructs” (1995:61).

Money argued that social change such as women’s increased participation in the workforce was often interpreted as a threat to the very fabric of social life and a challenge to the ‘sex-irreducible’ components of gender relations (eg to the procreative roles of the two sexes). It was his argument that the four dimensions of gender coding constituted a “pervasive unity” and because of that, any threat (whether perceived or real) to one component was experienced as a “threat to the whole” (1980:144). Money remained fully confident that the liberation of women would not require women or men to forfeit their erotic<sup>137</sup> and procreative roles and furthermore, that its benefits would extend to everyone. In the late 1970s he wrote:

The stereotype says that the ideal woman is not a very good human being. If a woman is feminine she’s incompetent, if she’s competent she’s not feminine, and the value of whatever she does except procreate will be downgraded because it was done by a woman. Protesting such systematic erosion of their pride of gender is anything but a rejection of female gender identity/role, yet

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<sup>137</sup> Within the context of that discussion, Money was referring not to erotic roles in the sense of active/passive or dominant/subordinate but rather to male and female reproductive capacities.

that is how a great many men and some women view the women's liberation movement (Money & Tucker, 1977:147)

The various controversies generated by women's liberation were something of a wonder he suggested, given that all that was really at stake were "historically arbitrary decisions regarding the decorative, recreational, educational, vocational, and legal roles of men and women" (1980:144). In other words, what he perceived to be at issue were those historically contingent elements of the third and fourth dimensions of his schema: dimensions with only the very loosest association to the body.

In Money's view, behind every biologically determinist explanation of sex differences lay a deep-seated anxiety by those invested in preserving the power differential between men and women. Proponents of biological determinism were, he said, as politically motivated as their nurturist or social constructionist counterparts as the following quotation makes clear:

[N]ature is a political strategy of those committed to the status quo of sex differences. They use reductionist biology to maintain the biological inevitability of sex differences and to exclude the possibility of their being historically stereotyped (Money, 1987:14).

Clearly Money had little time for those invested in the false dichotomy of nature versus nurture, irrespective of what side of the fence their allegiances lay. I would argue that Money's dimensional account of sex differences was not then, an argument for the maintenance of the status quo. From this perspective his account of sex role

differences reads as descriptive rather than prescriptive since he recognised the rigidity of the sexual division of labour across societies: a division as subject to the “force of custom and weight of religion [as it was subject to] the power of the law” (1987:60). Indeed, the loosening up of the sexual division of labour over the course of the twentieth century was in Money’s view, a thoroughly positive development that could be attributed to three factors: the impact of the second wave feminism; automation in the workplace; and the increasing computerisation of many occupational tasks. It is my argument therefore that Money’s analysis and theory making are infinitely more complex than any straightforward vilification or valorisation of the man and his work can offer.

In making such a claim I recognise at the same time that Money accorded non-hermaphrodites a much greater degree of latitude with respect to culturally sanctioned stereotypes than that extended to hermaphrodites. As I have attempted to establish in the preceding sections, hermaphrodites were expected to demonstrate - through their words, deeds and social presentation - that they epitomised manliness and womanliness in order to satisfy the demands of those charged with measuring the success of a person’s adaptation to their sex of assignment and rearing. In other words, it was incumbent upon them to identify and perform a type of hyper-masculinity or femininity.<sup>138</sup> To evidence this claim, I offer a quotation taken from the results of a clinical survey Money and his colleagues undertook on a group of ten

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<sup>138</sup> See especially Kaplan (1980) for an alternative analysis of Money’s reports that reads hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity as maladaptive and discusses the implications of Money’s reporting of women diagnosed with Turner’s syndrome (women with a single X chromosome) outdoing control groups of non-hermaphrodite women in their conformity to feminine stereotypes (p. 85). See also Bem (1981) and Fried (1979).

patients diagnosed as Androgen Insensitive (AIS) in the early 1970s. In that report Money wrote that:

With respect to marriage and maternalism, the girls and women showed a high incidence of preference for being a wife with no outside job; of enjoying homecraft; [...] of having played primarily with dolls and other girl's toys; of having a positive and genuine interest in infant care (Money and Ehrhardt, 1972:111).

Moreover, Money asserted that eight of the group had reported “a strong interest in personal adornment which *clearly* tell[s] a story of women whose genetic status as males was utterly irrelevant to their psychosexual status as women” (1972:112, emphasis added). What these statements indicate equally *clearly* is that the proof of successful adaptation lay in how closely individuals conformed to rigid (yet arbitrary) stereotypes. At a time of profound social change in the United States<sup>139</sup> one must ask why he relied so heavily on such seemingly static, inflexible concepts. Perhaps the answer lies in the comment above regarding genetic status. As I have demonstrated in the preceding pages, Money insisted from the outset that there was no necessary one to one relation between the bodily signifiers of sex and a person's social and personal status as a man or a woman. Hypermasculine and hyperfeminine hermaphrodites then, provided proof positive of that idea and also provided proof of the veracity of the treatment model he devised.

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<sup>139</sup> Here I refer to changes brought about by the sexual revolution, the rise of counterculture and gains made by the American civil rights movement.

## ***Conclusion***

In this chapter I have mapped out the central elements of Money's theories of 'gender' from his earliest articulations through to the fuller elaborations of them over the course of his career. I make no claim to have offered a full and complete representation of Money's theory of gender: a task well beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather I have endeavoured to capture the central elements of a significant (and substantive) body of work in order to pursue two dual (non-binary) lines of argument that weave through the entire thesis. In the first instance I have been concerned to make clear the historical (and ongoing) relation that hermaphrodites have to gender. I do so precisely because that relation has been obscured - almost to the point of invisibility - by the very theories that Money devised, by the case management protocols he and his early collaborators developed, and by the interventions of others who have found utility in the concept. In the second instance I argue that gender is one of the great conceptual devices of the late twentieth century, evidenced by the fact that it has become thoroughly naturalised into the English lexicon in just fifty years. Today gender seems indispensable to the way that we understand what it is and what it means to be a sexed subject. So institutionalised has gender become that I have been able to undertake this research under the auspices of a Gender Studies Department. As I go on to demonstrate in Chapters Three and Four, much of the power of the concept derives from its dynamism since it operates in a constant state of flux.

I began by examining the intellectual and historical context in which Money embarked upon what would become his life work. Much of the discussion in the preceding pages turned on his earliest published material for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it was in those articles - written during the mid-1950s - that Money initially offered the term gender. Appropriating the term from philology, Money used it (in the first instance) to explain how somehow who was neither male nor female was able to acquire an identity as masculine or feminine. Secondly, gender proved to be a powerful stabilising factor at a time when technology was increasingly undermining the long-held medico-scientific assumption that the somatic signifiers of sex aligned in a unilateral fashion. Thirdly, gender served to substantiate the idea that one's identity and behaviours were natural and inevitable products of one of two natural and inevitable types of bodies: male and female. Gender then, can be read as the most recent historical apparatus to contain the body within a political economy of sexual difference.

The final section of this chapter was concerned with the Money's elaborations of gender after he had extrapolated the concept to account for how everybody acquired their gender. As part of that analysis I argued that hermaphrodites are subject to a rigorous and unrelenting form of gendering in a way that non-hermaphrodites for the most part, are not. Moreover, the proof of successful adaptation to a gender lay in what can only be described as excessive performances of masculinity or femininity. Hermaphrodites were (and in many places, still are) it seems, required to be more masculine or feminine than regular males and females. In other words they were (and are) expected to be exemplary men and women, girls and boys. Any signs of sexual *in*-difference were interpreted as evidence of an inadequate or failed adaptation to the sex of assignment and rearing. The demands of which I speak have provided the impetus - almost forty years after Money introduced the concept of gender - for the

development of a political movement and a burgeoning body of scholarship that takes as its object, the clinical practices at issue in this chapter.<sup>140</sup>

In the following chapter, I continue to trace the history of 'gender' by turning to the work of Robert Stoller, who picked up the concept during the mid-1960s, some eleven years after it was initially offered by Money. Stoller made a number of important interventions into 'gender' that have had, as I demonstrate, significant ramifications for the way it has become possible to think about and talk about gendered (and sexed) subjectivity over the past forty years. Equally they have had significant ramifications for hermaphrodites themselves.

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<sup>140</sup> The political movement, to which I refer is Intersex (IS) activism, the focus of Chapter six.

## Chapter 3

# Stoller's seductive dualisms

## ***Introduction***

In the previous chapter I discussed how John Money and his colleagues, Joan and John Hampson (1955; 1955a; 1955b; 1956; 1957), offered 'gender' as a new conceptual realm of sex. Their research was concerned with understanding how a person born hermaphrodite or intersex could develop an identity as either male or female despite being born neither. They became convinced that an individual's gender was established during the first 18 months of life through a process of imprinting onto the psyche, in much the same way as a person is understood to acquire their native language. This timeframe was referred to by Money as a "critical period" (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955b:310), that involved the interplay of two primary factors: firstly, the anatomy and physiology of the external genitalia and secondly, the child's interactions with parents, siblings, and peers. The appearance of 'appropriate' looking genitals, they said, enabled and sustained the parents' conviction that their child was unambiguously male or female. Any uncertainty on the part of the parents was believed to threaten the child's unequivocal sense that they were *either* a boy *or* a girl. It was for these reasons that Money et al advocated the use of "plastic reconstructive genital surgery" on hermaphrodite infants (Hampson, 1955:270).

Money and colleagues' work proved especially profitable to psychoanalysts who were dealing with and theorising the phenomenon of transsexuality. Two prominent figures in this field from the late 1950s onwards were Harry Benjamin and Robert Stoller.

Both drew on Money et al's work; and both were involved to a degree, in the reconfiguration of some of Money's fundamental maxims concerning gender. While acknowledging the role of both men in this process (they were collaborators for a time), the following discussion will focus primarily on Stoller's work, since it was he who was responsible for the conceptual splitting of gender from sex. In light of the discussion and analysis in the previous chapter, it is apparent that Stoller had a very different idea of what 'gender' might mean, than did Money.

While the sex gender distinction was without doubt Stoller's most well known contribution to gender theory, a review of his work indicates that he actually did a great deal more than this. As I will demonstrate in the following discussion, Stoller made not one, but three significant interventions. Each of these shaped the way that subjectivity came to be talked about and understood, both epistemologically and ontologically by psychologists, medical professionals, social scientists, feminists and in time, by the wider population.

In a paper published in 1964,<sup>141</sup> Stoller elaborated on Money's more generalized concept of gender, which had originally been defined (by Money) in terms of role and orientation.<sup>142</sup> The "Contribution" paper is remarkable for its refinement of Money's

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<sup>141</sup> The paper, entitled "A Contribution to the Study of Gender Identity", was originally presented at the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Psycho-Analytical Congress in Stockholm in 1963 (Stoller, 1964:220, fn 1). A modified version of the paper later appeared as a chapter in *Sex and Gender* (Stoller, 1968).

<sup>142</sup> As discussed in Chapter two Money defined 'gender role' as a term to "signify all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman respectively. It includes, but is not restricted to sexuality in the sense of eroticism" (Money, 1955:254)

original concepts through a number of distinct, though not unrelated interventions. In the discussion that follows, each of these will be elaborated in turn. I begin with an examination of the distinction that Stoller made between one's identification as a gender (gender identity) and its enactment in behavioural terms on the basis of social expectations (gender role). This distinction enabled Stoller to provide an account of the psychology of those whose identifications and behaviours were at odds with their morphological status. His second intervention was to name the outcome of the imprinting process as described by Money. Framing this outcome as a 'core' gender identity enabled Stoller to devise a theory to account for so-called aberrant gendered identifications in both hermaphrodites and male transsexuals. These initial interventions provided the ground that enabled Stoller to separate out the concept of gender out from the concept of sex. Once again this was a strategic move designed to enable Stoller to develop an etiology of transsexualism. Before turning to Stoller's third and most well known contribution, I examine in detail Stoller's invocation of biological forces, forces with the power to augment or to distort gender development. It is important to note that Stoller was unable to identify precisely what such forces were, yet he remained fully committed to their presence (Stoller, 1964a).

In the tradition of bio-medical discourse, Stoller developed a theory of 'normal' development by turning to the so-called abnormal: those 'experiments of nature' as hermaphrodites/intersexuals are so often referred to in the medical literature.<sup>143</sup> Much of the focus of this chapter concerns the way that Stoller put hermaphroditism to work to both reinforce understandings of normative gender identity formation and to cement his claims about how that process became distorted in some individuals. The

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<sup>143</sup> See Braidotti (1996), Canguilhem (1978), Epstein (1995).

legacy of that move remains with us to this day: a legacy that was at the same time productive and reductive. On the one hand it opened up the theoretical possibilities for an emergent second wave feminist movement and on the other it circumscribed the very terms of the debate and the ways in which it was possible to think about gender. This point is central to the overall thesis because, as I demonstrate in this and subsequent chapters, it contributed to the ongoing status of hermaphrodites as abject 'Other'.

Each of Stoller's interventions had significant consequences for the way in which subjectivity – that is, sexed subjectivity – has come to be understood. As I will argue, while Money's more general concept of gender relied upon the binary logic of male and female (sexual difference), the theoretical work done by Stoller served to entrench gender even further into that logic. It did so by returning to and reinforcing an imagined nature/nurture divide, rendering sex the property of the former and gender the property of the latter. Over the past thirty years, in the feminist literature particularly, it has been the received wisdom that Stoller's contribution to understandings of sexed subjectivity was the sex/gender split (see for example, Curthoys, 1998; Gatens, 1996; Hare-Mustin & Marbeck, 1998; Segal, 1990; Unger, 1979b). However, my research reveals a greater level of complexity in Stoller's theoretical and conceptual contributions than such received wisdom allows.

### ***Of being and doing***

Robert Stoller's early academic training had, like Money's, been in the field of psychology. He was a graduate of Columbia University in New York and Stanford University in California (BA and MA respectively). Stoller went on to gain a degree

in medicine at the University of California (Berkeley and San Francisco), specialising in psychiatry. Prior to completing his residency at the University of Southern California, Stoller served as a psychiatrist in the United States Air Force Medical Corps (West, Green, & Peter, 1993). Unlike Money, who had rejected Freud's theories of instinct and drive, Stoller embraced psychoanalysis, going on to become a practitioner after training at the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Institute. In the mid-1950s he joined the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at the newly established UCLA medical school where he remained on staff until his sudden death in 1991 (OAC, n.d.; West, Green, & Peter, 1993).

Stoller was one of a group of psychoanalysts from the Los Angeles region who set up the *Gender Identity Project* in 1958 specifically to study transsexualism (Haraway, 1991). Among his collaborators were fellow psychoanalysts Ralph Greenson whose research was concerned with the process of masculine identity formation, (Greenson, 1968), endocrinologist Harry Benjamin<sup>144</sup> and later, an ex-student of Money's, Richard Green. Four years later in 1962, the Gender Identity Research Clinic was formed under the auspices of the School of Medicine at UCLA (Meyerowitz, 2002). This was the first such clinic to be set up on the west coast of the United States and it was from there that the *Gender Identity Project* continued. When Stoller presented the *Contribution* paper at the Stockholm conference of 1963, he held an Associate Professorship (Stoller, 1964), and had secured a full Professorship by the time that *Sex and Gender* was published some five years later.

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<sup>144</sup> Benjamin's was the only endocrinologist involved in *The Project*. The rest of the group were all psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.

Stoller's earliest intervention into Money's gender theory was to unpack the original concept by partitioning gender identity and gender role in order to make a clear distinction between one's self-awareness as male or female and the behavioural manifestations and social expectations associated with being a gender.<sup>145</sup> This allowed him to focus on 'gender' as a psychological rather than a cultural manifestation. Stoller offered the term 'gender identity'<sup>146</sup> in order to talk about the psychological sense of knowing "to which sex one belongs, that is, the awareness 'I am a male' or 'I am a female'" (Stoller, 1964:220). Stoller credited the term to himself and Greenson who together, introduced it at the Stockholm conference (Haig, 2004). Gender identity was offered as a working term to account for all those psychological phenomena "related to the sexes but without direct biological connotations" (Stoller, 1968:ix). Recall that historically, a range of terms were used interchangeably in English to refer to what we now understand as gender, the most common being 'sexuality', 'sexual outlook' 'sexual identity' and 'psycho-sexual identity' (Green, 1987; Grosz, 1996; Haig, 2004; Lopata, 1976; Money, 1955).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> John Money himself did not use the term 'identity' in his earliest articulations of gender, but instead used the term "sexual orientation and outlook" (Money, 1955:253).

<sup>146</sup> Money has claimed that he first became aware of the term 'gender identity' in correspondence with Evelyn Hooker, one of Stoller's colleagues at the University of California (UCLA). According to Money, Stoller informed him that the members of a Los Angeles-based psychoanalytic group that met regularly from the late 1950s on, were responsible for splitting gender identity from gender role (Money, 1995:23).

<sup>147</sup> See Haraway (1991:128-133), for a discussion of some of the problems inherent in trying to translate 'gender' from English into say, the Romance languages. See also de Lauretis (1987).

The term 'gender identity' offered a number of advantages for Stoller over its predecessors, since 'sexuality' and 'sexual identity' were each haunted by a certain ambiguity because they referred not only to identifications but to sexual practices and desires. As a relatively fresh term, 'gender identity' carried no such conceptual baggage.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, theorising gender in terms of identity had a specific utility for Stoller because it allowed him to focus on a person's self image as a sexed being and leave aside issues pertaining to how such identities were enacted as roles.<sup>149</sup> The task of theorising gender at the level of social expectations was one that Stoller left to social scientists. This made sense for a practising psychoanalyst engaged in the business of developing a theory to explain transsexuality (Hausman, 1995; Stoller, 1968).

Money meanwhile, attempted to restore a sense of unity to the concept of gender by introducing the term gender identity/role (represented as G-I/R) in the early 1970s (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972). Money remained adamant that they were two sides of the same coin explaining their conceptual unity thus: "Gender identity is the private experience of gender role and gender role is the public expression of gender identity" (1972:284). In other words, a person's gender role was a direct effect of their identification as a gender. The explicit tautology of such a definition assumes the relation between the two elements to be straightforward and uncomplicated. Money's attempt at recuperating a conceptual unity did not succeed however, for once the

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<sup>148</sup> Readers will recall from the discussion in the previous chapter that Money had the very same issues with the conceptual overload of 'sex'.

<sup>149</sup> The split proved just as invaluable to transsexuals. Codifying a mismatch between one's gender identity and somatic sex as a disorder (of gender identity) instantiated sex reassignment surgery as necessary to the amelioration of the condition (Hausman, 1995).

distinction had been made between identity and role, it fell prey to the dichotomising impulses of a binary logic. Before long sociology reclaimed its mantle as the appropriate domain for theorising 'gender role' (See for example, Garfinkel, 1967; Oakley, 1972), although it did concede some of that authority to social psychology (See Archer & Lloyd, 1982; Chodorow, 1978, 1979/1998; Roszak & Roszak, 1969; Sherman, 1971).

By splitting identity from role in this way, Stoller offered the possibility that one could have a gendered identity without necessarily being locked into social expectations of how that identity *should* be either experienced or enacted. That move also allowed for change in terms of social expectations while holding gender identification constant. Thus on the surface at least, Stoller's intervention appears to have been significantly more productive (in the Foucauldian sense) than Money's response to it. It is certainly my argument that Stoller provided 'gender' with a fluidity that contributed to its survival in the face of epistemological and ontological changes brought about (in part), by the then nascent women's movement and by a raft of political, cultural and economic changes that have since transformed the social and cultural fabric of liberal democracies where English is the dominant language. At the same time, I intend to demonstrate the constraining effects of Stoller's intervention.

### ***Identity as essence***

Stoller's second intervention was to offer a term for the outcome of the initial phase of gender acquisition which Money and colleagues believed occurred during the first eighteen months of life. Money had already provided an *explanation* for the process vis-à-vis the acquisition of a native language. By their account, interactions and

experiences imprinted onto an already established neural template that formed during a postnatal critical period. Stoller went on to provide a term for the *outcome* of that process: that is the establishment of the apparently unalterable sense that one is either a male or female. Stoller dubbed this as one's "core gender identity" (1964a:223) and described it thus:

By "the sense of maleness" I mean the awareness *I am a male*. This essentially unalterable core of gender identity is to be distinguished from the related but different belief, *I am manly* (or masculine). The latter attitude is a more subtle and complicated development. It emerges only after the child has learned how his parents expect him to express masculinity; that is, to behave as they feel males should. ... [T]he knowledge that *I am a male*, with its biological rather than gender implication, starts developing much earlier than the sense that *I am masculine* (1968:40).

Teasing out the subtleties of that distinction, the statement 'I am not a very masculine man' would indicate that the speaker has a clear sense of their core identity as male, yet at the same time recognises that the way they *perform* their masculinity fails to meet social expectations of what it is to be a man. This elaboration of Money's original concept of gender served to transform it still further, providing it with an enhanced discursive power at the level of subjectivity. It not only suggested the possibility of variation between individuals – at the level of investments - it also highlighted the possibility of degrees of fluctuation within any given individual (Hausman, 1995). Stoller, like Money, had clear views about what constituted appropriate characteristics and behaviours for men and women, girls and boys. While

some of their respective ideas appear terribly outmoded today, their seeming intractability cannot be denied.<sup>150</sup>

The idea of a core gender identity overlaid by a growing sense of its meaning in terms of social expectation was crucial to Stoller's analysis of the constitution of transsexuality. This analysis was conditional upon on the notion of a core gender identity, said to be the property of every individual and therefore a crucial element of subjectivity. A male to female transsexual's core identity, Stoller believed, was corrupted by a noxious or pathological relationship with the mother - one that could be described in crude terms as a *smothering* type relationship. It was Stoller's view that a mother who held her male baby too close (both literally and figuratively) for a prolonged period interfered with the child's ability to properly separate and individuate (Stoller, 1968:97-103).

Stoller's transsexual etiology elaborated the variables of anatomy and parental interaction. It is here that we get the strongest sense of Stoller the psychoanalyst. The contribution of 'natural appearing' genitalia to identity development extended beyond signifying that the sex assignment at birth was a correct one. Genitalia also functioned at the level of sensation and thus contributed to "primitive body ego, sense of self and

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<sup>150</sup> An example of such intractable ideas is evident Stoller's discussion of a young child (initially reared as a girl) who was re-assigned as a boy (this child's 'case' is discussed later in this chapter). Upon reassignment, the child came to be "among the first in his class in mathematics, a subject in which he did very poorly when he thought he was a girl" (1964:222). The idea that boys have a *natural* aptitude for mathematics and thus girls a natural *inaptitude* has been thoroughly disavowed not just by a significant body of research but more importantly by the test results of school-age children, yet the idea continues to hold sway as a cultural and social 'fact'.

awareness of gender” (Stoller, 1964:223). While such sensations derived primarily from external structures, in the case of female infants Stoller believed they also derived from some “dim sensation” emanating from the vagina (p.223). No evidence was offered to account for this dim sensation, however I would argue that it is indicative of Stoller’s commitment to aspects of a psychoanalytic paradigm, in particular to Freud’s distinction between so-called immature and mature (that is, clitoral versus vaginal) orgasm in adult female sexuality (See Freud, 1905/1953:125-245).

With respect to the infant-parent relationship, Stoller suggested that it was a reciprocal one that involved parental expectations as much as a child’s identification with its same-sexed parent.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, the constitution of each parent’s respective gender identities he believed, played an important role in the process as did:

Libidinal gratifications and frustrations between the child and its parents, along with many other psychological aspects of pre-oedipal and oedipal development (Stoller, 1964:223).

Stoller (after Money) disputed the relevance of castration anxiety and penis envy in the formation of a gendered identity in its *earliest* manifestations.<sup>152</sup> While very

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<sup>151</sup> This brings to mind Money’s assertion that gendered development relies upon both identification *and* complementation, which appears to be a more sophisticated understanding of infant-parent relationships than a psychoanalytic model allows (see previous chapter.).

<sup>152</sup> See also Stoller (1968:50-55) and Money and Ehrhardt (1972:184-5). For a range of broadly feminist critiques of Freudian concepts of female sexuality, see Chodorow (1978; 1979/1998), deBeauvoir (1972), Millet (1971) and Mitchell (1974; 1986).

careful not to discredit the explanatory power of such notions and thus alienate his psychoanalytic colleagues, Stoller justified his critical position by arguing that the formative period of a gendered identity (eg Money's critical period) preceded the phallic stage of development as understood in classical psychoanalysis. The development of one's gendered identity was, by his account, an ongoing process of achievement that continued well into late adolescence, building on and overlaying the core identity established during the postnatal critical period. While Stoller did not dispute the idea that castration anxiety and penis envy were crucial to gendered identity formation, in his view they impacted on an already established core.

While Stoller's etiology provided an account of the male to female transsexual, it did not and could not so easily explain female to male transsexuality. Stoller suggested that the development of a core gender identity in females was a non-traumatic learning process<sup>153</sup> that preceded any awareness that there were people who were better off than she: that is, people designated male (1968:50,52). Against Freud, Stoller argued that in order to become feminine:

The little girl does not have to surmount her relationship with her mother. We can imagine that the more feminine the mother, the easier the girl's task of creating an appropriate gender identity (1968:263).

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<sup>153</sup> Here Stoller's position aligns with that of object relations theory as exemplified by Nancy Chodorow (1974; 1979/1998).

This explained for Stoller the comparative rarity of female to male transsexualism<sup>154</sup> since, in general, women were more likely to have primary responsibility for the care of babies and infants. Stoller's radical departure from Freud with respect to female development effectively compromised his ability to theorise female to male transsexualism. Nevertheless Stoller did attempt to explain the phenomenon by suggesting that in a few rare instances a family dynamic that consisted of a psychologically absent mother and an excessive physical and emotional closeness between the child and the father *might* be responsible. Perhaps, he suggested, "it may be a hint that too much father and too little mother masculinises girls" (Stoller, 1968:204-5). Given that Stoller's own clinical evidence did not support such a neat inversion of his theory of male to female transsexualism, he was forced to concede the idea was entirely speculative. The existence of female to male transsexuals did however, tempt Stoller to postulate that perhaps "biological forces" were responsible (in part at least) for the formation of corrupted as well as normative gendered identities (p.205).

### ***The 'force' is with(in) you***

It is to the invocation of biological forces in identity formation that the discussion now turns. As I suggested earlier, Stoller's separation of identity from role served to endow the concept of gender with the flexibility to survive the radical epistemological transformations it has undergone over the past forty years. The notion of a *core*

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<sup>154</sup> In recent times, the ratio of MtF and FtM transpeople has become somewhat less marked as increasing numbers of (apparently) born-women seek recourse to hormonal therapies and surgical procedures. For recent writings in this area see for example, Devor (1997), Diamond (2004), Halberstam (1998; 2005), Prosser (1998a).

identity also contributed to the ongoing vitality of the concept since the very term implies some form of essence. At first glance the invocation of biological forces (however mysterious) appears to have provided Stoller with a means to at least partially ground gender in the body. Of course, Money had long since achieved this by drawing on Stockard's theory of pre-natal critical periods *and* by insisting that learning was a function of biology mediated through the central nervous system. It was arguably more difficult for Stoller to retain an explicit link with the corporeal since he had categorically bracketed 'gender' off from 'sex' and was far less concerned with any constraints imposed by Cartesian dualism than was Money. Yet despite his claims to the contrary, Stoller did in fact have an awful lot to say about the body, about biology. Indeed it is my argument that Stoller's attempts to escape the body were doomed from the outset since a sense of self is always necessarily and inextricably tied to embodiment.

Stoller asked whether it was indeed necessary to draw on biology in order to explain his data. While admitting that he was unable to categorically answer in the affirmative, Stoller's declared that his personal bias as a biologist rendered the proposition entirely logical: "I cannot believe that biological substrates are as powerless as some learning theorists seem to believe" (1968:83). Stoller framed these forces as forms of energy possibly emanating from the endocrine and central nervous systems which influenced both the formation of a gendered identity and - in the regular course of events - gendered behaviours.

Stoller pointed to Freud's assertion that biological forces played an essential though immeasurable role in personality development. After Freud, Stoller proposed that

while hidden from both conscious and unconscious awareness and thus not readily identifiable by either the individual patient or by clinicians, such forces nevertheless seemed to provide at least *some* of the “drive energy” for an individual’s gender identification (p.65).<sup>155</sup> Stoller remained optimistic that developments in neurological and medical research would one day shed light on the matter. It must be noted at this point that endocrinologist Harry Benjamin, one of the collaborators on the *Gender Identity Project*, understood the body to be far more implicated in aberrant forms of identity than most clinicians working in the field at that time were ready to admit. Benjamin proposed that genetic and hormonal processes provided fertile ground for the development of such ‘disorders’.

[T]he soma ... has to provide a “fertile” soil on which the “basic conflict” must grow in order to become the respective neurosis (Benjamin in Hausman, 1995:122).

Benjamin was already an established expert on transsexualism and was part of Stoller’s team thus his ideas would have wielded some considerable influence on Stoller and the other psychiatrists and psychologists at the Gender Identity Research Clinic. Again this points to the futility of Stoller’s attempts to (even hypothetically) leave the body behind as if matter somehow didn’t matter.

Stoller used hermaphrodite case studies to reexamine Freud’s assertions of the omnipotence of biological forces, since they seemed to demonstrate the influence of

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<sup>155</sup> Note Stoller’s commitment to one of the foundational concepts of Freudian theory - the idea of innate drives.

said forces with “unusual clarity” in his view (1964a:220). Stoller’s conceptualisation of hermaphrodites as ‘experiments of nature’ (alternatively, ‘natural experiments’) rendered those who provided him with an evidence base, ideal experimental fodder with which to prove hypotheses such as the above. While this may seem an overly harsh assertion, Stoller believed quite sincerely that such cases provided the opportunity to examine the consequences of removing or manipulating morphological “variables”<sup>156</sup> in order to determine “in what way their absence distorted the process [of normal development]” (p. 220).<sup>157</sup> The reference to clarity here is tenuous given that the examples he offered were individuals whose gendered identifications were not easily accounted for by their genital anatomy or parental attitudes. Since he lacked the material evidence to identify what ‘forces’ might be involved in the process, he consequently had no understanding of their mechanics.

***It’s chemical, or perhaps it’s genetic ...***

Like Freud, Stoller could only speculate on the particularities of the forces he was invoking since neither endocrinological nor neurological research were able to provide him with any conclusive answers. While Stoller did not draw on Money’s concept of the neural template formed in-utero, he did invoke the very same pre-natal hormonal surges in fetal differentiation that Money had, suggesting that:

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<sup>156</sup> This terminology (describing bodily organs as ‘variables’) does I believe, support the preceding claim.

<sup>157</sup> Here we see a clear example of the normal/pathological relation at work. As discussed in Chapter one, normality is unable to be apprehended on its own terms (Braidotti, 19968; Canguilhem, 1978; Epstein, 1995).

Some day, such a force may be found to be the algebraic sum of the activities of a number of neuro-anatomical centres and hierarchies of neuro-physiological functions. At present we cannot be so specific (1964:224).

Experimental research on lower mammals offered Stoller the strongest available evidence for his proposition, though he conceded its limitations. Extrapolating research findings from lower animals was, he believed, “exhilarating but dangerous [since] the higher the animal, the more difficult it is to trace the course of a piece of behaviour from its biological origins to its ultimate action” (1968:8). It was for this reason that those deemed ‘nature’s experiments’ became the privileged site through which to better understand the process of gender identification. In a rather curious turn, the medically trained Stoller invoked the mystical by suggesting that the variables of sex and gender in such individuals were “manipulated by *fate*” (1968:ix, emphasis added).

Stoller’s faith in the capacity of biological forces to override the power of visible anatomical structures and parental input allowed him to formulate a theory of the process of normal (shall we say, unremarkable) development. If correct, then it was entirely possible in his view that:

A sex-linked genetic biological tendency towards masculinity in males and femininity in females works silently but effectively from foetal existence on, being overlaid after birth by the effects of environment, the biological and environmental working more or less in harmony to produce a preponderance

of masculinity in men and femininity in women. In some the biological is stronger and in others weaker (1964a:225).

Here Stoller's ideas converge with those of Money and indeed partially reflect the latter's position.<sup>158</sup> Yet any convergence was a matter of degree since Stoller appears to be privileging genetic factors as the ground for masculinity and femininity, an idea that Money refused to entertain. Money believed unequivocally that hormones produced by the fetal gonads were responsible for the development of a cognitive schema that coded for both masculinity *and* femininity in any given individual. More importantly, Money steadfastly refused to accept that biological forces had the capacity to *override* the sex of assignment and rearing if they were executed 'correctly': that is, unambiguously. An ambivalent gendered identity was, in Money's view, always an effect of uncertainty or prevarication on the part of a child's parents or physicians regarding the child's gender identity; in other words a direct effect of environment.

Stoller hypothesised (after Money) that if a parent had no idea that their child was intersex, the child would grow up to perceive themselves to be the sex they had been assigned, irrespective of their biological status. In such cases, Stoller argued, postnatal environmental factors clearly played the more substantive role in determining and directing psychological development than any biological factors could as was the case (generally) for those born unequivocally female or male.

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<sup>158</sup> Money's influence is evident throughout Stoller's work though it must be noted that the latter's commitment to psychoanalysis resulted in as many points of divergence as points of alignment.

Critics argue that such a hypothesis is underpinned by the assumption that individual subjects are born “psychosexually neutral” or *tabula rasa* (Diamond & Sigmundson, 1997:298). This level of criticism comes predominantly from those who believe that at birth “*normal* humans [...] are, in keeping with their mammalian heritage, predisposed and biased to interact with environmental, familial, and social forces in *either* a male or a female mode” (p.303, emphasis added). I would argue that a close reading of both Stoller and Money’s work fails to support such a critique. Money’s position has always been that of an interactionist, while Stoller was convinced that biological forces were one of three instrumental variables in gender identity formation. Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) has noted that such criticisms may well be indicative of professional rivalry rather than an accurate characterisation of the ideas being critiqued. To claim that Stoller and Money’s work exemplifies the *tabula rasa* position is not only a gross misrepresentation, it also allows said critics a means to position their own contributions as *more sophisticated* and *more complicated* than the analyses they seek to discredit.

Individuals who developed gendered identities that contravened their genital appearance and assigned sex, were offered by Stoller to prove the power of biological forces. In the *Contribution* article Stoller provided two case studies to support this claim.<sup>159</sup> The first concerned a child who had presented as an unremarkable female at

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<sup>159</sup> In a chapter entitled “A Biological Force in Gender Identity?” in *Sex and Gender* (1968), Stoller supplemented these two cases with brief summaries of a further five. I will draw on both publications for this segment of the discussion.

birth<sup>160</sup> but at the age of fourteen had been subject to a physical examination and a chromatin test that found a Y chromosome, a small erectile phallic structure and hypospadias.<sup>161</sup> Stoller describes this child as “active and forceful” in infancy and throughout childhood, completely “lacking in gentleness” - to the despair of its mother (1964:221), who was described in the text as a ‘graceful, feminine, neurotically masochistic “perfect lady”’ (1968:67). The mother reported the child had always identified with male peers, taken ‘male roles’ in play and shunned all attempts by family members to *make her* behave in ways that were in keeping with the prevailing social expectations of a little girl.

Stoller’s case notes indicate that there was much more than the child’s behaviour at stake: the mother was reported to have invested an extraordinary amount of energy – using bribery, threats and various other forms of manipulation - to get the child to “dress, walk, sit, talk, *think, feel*, and otherwise act as a feminine girl”, all to no avail (1964:221-222; 1968:69, emphasis added). Given that Stoller himself had opened the space between identity and role in gender – with the former indexed to self image and the latter to behaviours and social expectations of what was appropriate in gendered behaviour – the slippage between acting, feeling and thinking in this passage is rather curious to say the least. Hausman (1995) has suggested that it is indicative of an

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<sup>160</sup> Stoller made an extremely poignant comment in discussing this child when he suggested that “there was not even the appearance of an enlarged clitoris, *a common enough normal variation in females*” (1964:221 emphasis added). What might this mean for the practice of clitoridectomising XX infants? It also begs the question, at what point does a clitoris exceed the range of normal variation?

<sup>161</sup> Hypospadias is the name given to the relatively common condition where the urethral meatus (urinary outlet) is located elsewhere than at the *tip* of the penis.

internal inconsistency in Stoller's taxonomic distinction and questions as I do, how it is possible to "feel oneself to be a role" (p.109). Stoller offered no explanation for collapsing such crucial elements of identity into the panoply of behavioural variables in either of the texts in which this case study appeared. One might speculate that the slippage was a byproduct of his own exhilaration at the apparent veracity that "a piece of behaviour [could be traced] from its biological origins to its ultimate action" (1968:8).

Following diagnosis, Stoller and colleagues decided that this child should be informed of its "proper" sex, not least because s/he appeared to the attending clinicians as "grotesque" in female attire (1964a: 222). Against the expectation that the child might respond with "intense affect", Stoller reported that s/he had received the news in a rather matter of fact way. This "poised and well integrated reaction", affirmed for the clinicians that they had made the correct decision (1968:70). The child was reported by Stoller to have gone on to make an easy transition to the reassignment, having known all along that s/he was *really* a boy in spite of all evidence to the contrary.

It is worthy of note that Stoller's invocation of biology slipped from the presumption of causality at the level of hormones to land squarely on the Y chromosome without so much as a comment, let alone a rationale. One can only speculate as to why this was so. Perhaps he believed that either or both of these factors could be responsible yet this was not made clear at any point in his discussion. Rather, it seems to have been enough that chromosomes and hormones both register at the level of (internal) morphology.

Evident too is a contradiction between an intersex diagnosis and the idea that the child had a ‘proper’ or ‘true’ sex (proper in the sense of a singular sex: as male or female). Stoller (unlike Money and many of their predecessors, peers and successors) did recognise the possibility of a hermaphrodite subjectivity, yet he asserted that in this particular case, “pre-consciously, the ‘girl’ must always have known *his true* gender identity [as authentically male]” (1968:71, emphasis added). This statement highlights a stubborn commitment to a binary logic of sex in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. It could equally be argued that this child’s identification with its male peers was a response to either (or both) the proscriptive expectations of what was appropriate behaviour for girls in the mid-1960s and the mother’s desperate attempts to manipulate the child’s gender, by fair means or foul.

Binarian<sup>162</sup> concepts of sex and gender, as articulated through the semantics of ‘proper’ and ‘true’, better describes the ways in which sex differences were (and continue) to be thought about, rather than reflecting how things actually or necessarily are (Tresemer, 1975). Nowhere are the pitfalls of this commitment to binary logic more evident than in the second case study Stoller offered to support his theory of the power of biological forces in gender identity, as I shall demonstrate in the discussion that follows.

Agnes,<sup>163</sup> the subject of Stoller’s second case in the “Contribution” article was presumed by *all* attendant medical professionals to be intersex. Agnes featured in

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<sup>162</sup> I am indebted to Curtis Hinkle for suggesting this term (Hinkle: 2004, personal communication).

<sup>163</sup> Harold Garfinkel bestowed the pseudonym ‘Agnes’ upon this individual. A great deal of Garfinkel’s well known text, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) is based on Agnes’ story.

Stoller's text as an exemplary case of the power of biological forces. She presented with what Stoller described as a very feminine looking body and demeanor, along with a fully developed penis and scrotum. Having grown up as a boy, Agnes reported that she had spontaneously developed female secondary sex characteristics at puberty (1964). Stoller called in a number of clinicians to assist with Agnes' diagnosis, which was eventually deemed to be Testicular Feminisation Syndrome (TFS). The name of this syndrome which has its origins in endocrinology has in more recent times, been replaced by the term Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS).<sup>164</sup> The condition is specific to individuals with an XY karyotype and gonadal testes who appear at birth as unremarkably female because - as the contemporary diagnostic term suggests - their cell receptors are unable to respond to testosterone produced by the fetal gonads. The cells instead respond solely to the estrogenic substances produced by the testes.<sup>165</sup> As a result, such persons are born with unremarkable female external genitalia and later develop the secondary sex characteristics associated with female morphology (Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Hausman, 1995; Haynes & McKenna, 2001; Money, 1986a, 1988, 1965b; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Money & Tucker, 1977; Stoller, 1968).

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<sup>164</sup> This 'condition' falls within the broader category of male pseudo-hermaphroditism due to the presence of testes rather than ovaries. In Money's earliest hermaphrodite typology (refer to Table 1 in the previous chapter), the term 'simulant female' is applied to individuals diagnosed thus.

<sup>165</sup> Despite the naming of testosterone as male sex hormone and estrogen as female sex hormone in the early 1900s, it has long been understood in biology that such classifications are a (double) misnomer since both substances are produced in varying quantities in both males and in females and furthermore, are necessary for protein synthesis, bone structure and neural functioning.

It is clear that morphologically Agnes did not and could not fit the criteria for such a diagnosis since s/he had both a fully formed penis and testicles: recall the diagnosis demands female genitalia.<sup>166</sup> But once the diagnosis was made, Stoller and his colleagues unwavering commitment to it saw Agnes' case described in the literature as 'unique' (Stoller, 1968; Garfinkel, 1967). The only other feasible explanation for Agnes' feminine appearance was that it had been induced by the ingestion of estrogen during adolescence. This latter explanation was ruled out since it was unthinkable to the clinicians that a child could self medicate with the correct amounts of estrogen at exactly the right time, so the clinical diagnosis was deemed appropriate. Agnes' apparent spontaneous change of sex (from male to female), was less problematic for Stoller than the idea of a lifelong feminine identity, which was in his view, "inexplicable" (1964:225), despite the fact that transsexuality was his primary area of expertise. Having painted himself into a conceptual corner Stoller had but one means of escape:

So we again fall back on the biological 'force' to explain the fact that the core gender identity was female, despite the fact that the child was an apparently normal-appearing boy and was also genetically male (p.225).

At the age of twenty Agnes was granted the surgery s/he desired: removal of the penis and testes and the creation of an artificial vagina. Post-operatively, the pathologist who examined Agnes' gonadal tissue concluded that her testes had been producing

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<sup>166</sup> There are parallels here with the case study Money offered to evidence his theory that *any* child could be reared successfully as an assigned sex: that of John/Joan (David Reimer, now deceased). Recent media exposure has revealed that this 'experiment' was not the success that Money claimed. These examples serve to indicate the extent to which researchers can be blinded by an overzealous commitment to the theories they are promoting.

large amounts of estradiol (testicular estrogen) since puberty. Some years later, Agnes revealed to Stoller that s/he had been born male and had indeed self medicated with his mother's estrogen tablets (stilbestrol) for a prolonged period during adolescence. Agnes' story of spontaneous change of sex at puberty had been a ruse to access surgery. By the late 1960s, sex reassignment surgery was fully legitimated as a means to inscribe the appearance of a singular bodily sex on those born without one, however access to the same procedures by transsexuals remained heavily circumscribed by doctors' codes of practice regarding the removal of or interference with, apparently normal functioning organs (Hausman, 1995).<sup>167</sup>

And so it was that one of the cases Stoller relied most heavily upon to evidence the power of biological forces in gender identity was in fact, fraudulent.<sup>168</sup> But rather than forcing a rethink of his theory, Stoller simply found another way to use the material Agnes had provided: to support the development of his etiology of transsexualism, a project to which much of his career was dedicated.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Bernice Hausman cites a passage from David O Caldwell's 1949 article "Psychopathia Transexualis" in which he argued that removing healthy breast and ovarian tissue from a female to male transsexual was "criminal" (Hausman, 1995:119). In the accompanying footnote to this passage, Hausman recounts a conversation with retired pathologist David Hausman regarding his team's distress when healthy genital organs arrived at his laboratory for examination (p.225-6, fn 43).

<sup>168</sup> Stoller noted that his "chagrin" at learning that he had been duped was tempered somewhat by his amusement at how skillfully Agnes had managed to fool him and his colleagues (1968:136).

<sup>169</sup> See Stoller (1968:133-139, fn 74).

What is noteworthy here is the way in which all of the medical experts interpreted the seemingly incontrovertible - albeit inexplicable - material evidence of Agnes in such a way that ensured their assumptions and theoretical investments remained intact.

Agnes' diagnosis (TFS) was clearly contraindicated by the presence of a fully formed penis and scrotum. Yet the diagnosis was upheld because of the clinician's disbelief that a child could possibly self-medicate 'correctly'. Once established, the diagnosis accorded to Agnes did not merely influence the pathologist's findings, it actually determined how he interpreted the fact that Agnes' gonadal tissue contained more than twice the amount of estradiol usually found in an adult male (1968). In reality, Agnes' testes had never produced excessive amounts of estradiol since the production of normally expected levels of the substance had in fact, been supplemented exogenously.

Stoller offered very brief sketches of five other cases to supplement the aforementioned two, situating them as exemplary instances of the power of biology to determine a person's gender identity. Rather than seeing them as isolated instances, in Stoller's view they were representative of enough other cases to provide a "sound basis" for his claims (Stoller, 1968). He acknowledged the controversial nature of his proposition but for altogether different reasons from those presented in the preceding paragraphs. For Stoller, his proposition was controversial because, while his analyst colleagues might accept the idea that constitutional biological factors influenced sexuality and personality development, he believed that few would accord them the power to override genital appearance and parental influence.

Stoller's commitment to the idea of unknown biological forces in gender identity development was by his own admission, a consequence of his medical training. The bibliography of *Sex and Gender*, reveals that the majority of sources Stoller drew upon from outside of the psychoanalytic and psychiatric literature were endocrinological,<sup>170</sup> embryological and animal studies (primarily mammalian and rodent research). Indeed the first chapter of *Sex and Gender* is devoted to a discussion of animal research and its relevance to his project.

At the heart of Stoller's work lay the conviction that Freud was correct to assert that "reproduction [was] the fundamental purpose behind all sexual behaviour" (1968:6), even that with no apparent connection to the libidinal. He also agreed with Freud that masculinity, femininity and sexuality were all fundamentally organic in origin (Stoller, 1972).

In the case of [constitutional] bisexuality, we can see that the brain is not the *tabula rasa* some allege. While the newborn presents with a most malleable central nervous system upon which the environment writes, we cannot say that the central nervous system is neutral or neuter (Stoller, 1972:210).

Stoller's invocation of biology slipped all over (and through) the body: from hormones to chromosomes, to the central nervous system and back. While readily admitting that he had no idea of what form such forces might take, Stoller steadfastly

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<sup>170</sup> Endocrinological research dominated the field of sexual medicine since the early 1900s. It was not until Barr's development of chromatin testing in the mid-1950s that genetics began to seriously exert its influence on the field.

refused to relinquish a role for them in gender. This explains in part, the slippage to which I refer, for it is surely difficult to attribute causality to a phenomenon for which you can find no definitive supporting evidence.

More importantly in my view, are two other reasons that account for the slippage. The first of these was a consequence of Stoller's insistence on bracketing sex from gender in the Cartesian tradition. Conceptualising the mind and body as distinct and separate spheres proved impossible for Stoller to sustain, not least because the central thematic of transsexualism – which was after all, Stoller's primary theoretical project – is a dissonant relation between one's sense of self and one's embodied self. Equally important was Stoller's agreement with and commitment to Freud's belief that gender had a constitutional basis. This may explain why Stoller did not (or perhaps could not) take up Money's hypothesis of a neural template that coded for both masculinity and femininity *and* androgyny since Money rejected the idea of gender being constitutional on the one hand, and he considered Freud's theory of identification to be a partial account on the other.

### ***On the matter of hermaphrodite subjectivity***

While Stoller privileged normative masculine and feminine gender identifications, he did acknowledge the possibility of a hermaphroditic gender identity (however rare). He was willing to concede that it was remotely possible - though highly unlikely - that the bearer of such an identity could be well-adjusted or in other words, psychologically healthy.<sup>171</sup> In a paper entitled "Gender-Role Change in Intersexed

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. Money (1952; Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1956).

Patients” (1964b), Stoller challenged a growing number of reports that claimed to offer evidence against Money’s assertions that gender identity in hermaphrodite individuals became fixed early in life and any subsequent attempts at re-assignment were fraught with disastrous consequences for the individual’s psyche. The reports Stoller referred to provided case studies of intersex children and adults who appeared to have made a successful transition from one gender to the other following sex re-assignment. At face value the studies suggested that the first few months of a child’s life were not as important for gendered identities as Money had claimed.

Upon reviewing the evidence, Stoller argued that each case revealed a degree of uncertainty with respect to the child’s gender during its formative years: little wonder then that such individuals could make a successful transition or that clinicians were able to report positive outcomes. If a person unequivocally believed they were male or female then they would always consider themselves as such, claimed Stoller. But in the case of someone who believed themselves to be both male and female - or neither - a successful transition from ambiguity to “one of the *two usual* genders” was entirely possible (1964b:165). Stoller suggested that in such cases, “the capacity to shift gender role was as much an unalterable part of the [person’s] identity as was the inability to shift [by] *normals*” (p.165, emphasis added).<sup>172</sup> These individuals constituted for Stoller, a third gender who had a hermaphroditic identity.

The reference in Stoller’s work to males and females as the *usual genders*, brings with it some acknowledgment of multiplicity (n=>2) as one would expect from someone

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<sup>172</sup> Note the slippage between role and identity in this discussion, indicating once again an internal inconsistency to Stoller’s taxonomy.

who admitted the possibility of a hermaphroditic identity. But equally, there is an implicit refusal in his work that anyone would wish to, or indeed could actually migrate from a masculine or feminine gender to (re)claim a hermaphroditic gender identity. Stoller framed 'success' in terms of a uni-directional movement between the two usual genders. In his subsequent writings, the issue of transition was framed in terms of movement between "one of only two *possible* sexes" (Stoller, 1968:34, emphasis added). The obvious slippage between gender and sex in this statement is curious since Stoller had clearly defined sex as a referent for the materiality of bodies. More important however, is the obvious discordance between Stoller's articulations of what was possible in 'sex' and his knowledge of the multiplicity of sexual variation. Within the context of this discussion Stoller effectively rendered hermaphrodites outside of the species *homo sapien* by stating that they were in "that peculiar position of agreeing with all the world that there are ... *only two* sexes, while [they] belong to neither" (p.34, emphasis added).

Stoller elaborated what he believed to be the necessary conditions for a third-gender identity to manifest. Drawing directly on Money's schema of the necessary conditions for an *un-ambiguous* identity, Stoller offered a list of five conditions diametrically opposed to the former. Ambiguous appearing genitals lead to parental uncertainty regarding the child's 'proper' anatomical sex. As a result parents would treat the child ambiguously and socialise them accordingly. This in turn led to a defective processing of parental attitudes by the child and so resulted in an incongruous gender identification (1968:23). Little wonder then that Stoller considered it extremely unlikely for someone with a hermaphroditic identity to be psychologically healthy and well-adjusted (Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1956; Stoller, 1968). Money of course

steadfastly refused even the possibility - let alone the legitimacy - of a hermaphroditic gender identity since in his view, the constructs of masculinity and femininity – while admittedly stereotyped and idealised – were ubiquitous and so the only viable alternative to masculinity was femininity (and vice versa), *not* androgyny (Money, 1988:41,81).

Despite acknowledging that a hermaphroditic subjectivity did fall within the realms of possibility, Stoller was barely able to accord such individuals their full humanity. They had in his view, three options: they could wait for the day when they could be “*fixed* so that [they] could belong” or they could:

Bow to [their] fate of *not really belonging to the human race*; or [make] the best of both worlds, as seems to occur in those rare hermaphrodites who appear to live comfortably in alternating genders (Stoller, 1968:35 emphasis added).

My reading of the options Stoller was offering to those who fell into his third-gender category is one of ‘conform or be damned’. Conformity in this context took two forms: full or partial. Full conformity required that one be ‘fixed’ or in other words undergo surgical and hormonal interventions to reconfigure their bodies to approximate to maleness or femaleness. Partial conformity on the other hand, required movement within and between the two legitimate gender categories. In speaking of the ‘best of both worlds’, Stoller betrayed his commitment to the binarian framework that renders two sexes (and consequently) two genders as mutually exclusive, oppositional types. While alternating between these two types may render an

individual human, to refuse either of the two former options renders the refuser non-human: outside of the human race. Stoller does not give any indication as to what species they might instead belong, although one may assume it would be the ‘species’ monster.

In order to talk about hermaphrodites at all requires some recognition of the material reality that human bodies come in more than two varieties. For clinicians ‘working’ with hermaphrodite individuals, to claim that there are only two *possible* sexes flies in the face of the evidence before their very eyes and betrays a commitment to what *ought* to be, rather than what *is*. This attitude indicates how the understanding that sexual differentiation produces an array of human types gets constantly subsumed by a medical discourse that continually invents and re-invents the idea that female *or* male are the only ‘natural’ conditions of the human body (Epstein, 1990).<sup>173</sup> Or as Weigman (2001) suggests in even stronger terms, the inscription of dimorphic sex onto bodies and subjectivities appears to be motivated by the “violently ironic hope of returning [hermaphrodite] bodies to ‘nature’” (p.364).

This begs the question posed by Foucault in his “Introduction” to the memoirs of Herculine Barbin: “Do we *truly* need a true sex”, when surely all that really matters is ‘the reality of the body and the intensity of its pleasures’ (Foucault, 1980:vii). The treatment protocols developed by Money and colleagues did go some way towards displacing the notion of a ‘true’ single sex hidden by an ambiguous body when they offered the idea of a ‘best’ sex. Yet the former continued (as it does to this day) to

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<sup>173</sup> The use of the present tense here is deliberate since this attitude prevails in contemporary medical discourse.

underpin medical and many cultural discourses of differently sexed bodies. The idea that every-*body* is the bearer of a single sex derives from epistemological shifts that, according to Laqueur (1990) began during the eighteenth century when a metaphysics of hierarchy (sexual sameness) was displaced by a model of incommensurable sexual difference (Laqueur, 1990; Schiebinger, 1988:221).<sup>174</sup> I would suggest that the answer to Foucault's question is likely to remain in the affirmative for as long as we continue to invest in the binary logic of sexual difference and base sexual identities on the object of desire.<sup>175</sup>

To summarise, Stoller's three privileged elements – parental expectations, genital appearance, and mysterious biological forces – were constituted as variables that, by their absence or manipulation, could provide insights into how supposed 'normal' development might be distorted. Stoller's interest in hermaphrodites - to whom he often referred as 'nature's experiments' - was motivated by his belief that such persons offered the opportunity to study "in *purser culture* than is possible in the anatomically and endocrinologically *normal*, the variables responsible for this development" (Stoller, 1964:220, emphasis added). Studying the "relative importance of each of these factors in *normals*"<sup>176</sup> was he argued, at best difficult if not impossible because of the inherent difficulty in distinguishing the influence of any

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<sup>174</sup> For elaborations of this shift see Laqueur (1990), Schiebinger (1988), Spanier (1991), Turner (1987).

<sup>175</sup> Here I use the term sexual difference to denote dichotomous sex/gender and sexual identity in the contemporary context of identifications based around sexual practices and sexual desires.

<sup>176</sup> This term was the one preferred by Stoller in much of his work. Indeed it was not until the mid 1980s that he acknowledged how value laden it was and finally abandoned it. See Stoller (1985).

one factor from the others (1968:40, emphasis added). As noted in the preceding discussion, to conceive of such an investigation, hermaphroditism (in all its possible manifestations) had to be understood to result from some form of defective development. Thus Stoller's work followed a long tradition of medical and scientific studies that have sought to demarcate the boundaries of normality by turning to those whose bodies and/or subjectivities that betray some level of anomaly (Canguilhem, 1978). It is important to note that such unruly bodies and subjectivities are never indexed in such contexts as anomalous or even nonconformist but rather as 'abnormal', 'defective', or 'unfinished'.<sup>177</sup>

### ***The sex/gender split***

I turn now to Stoller's third and most well known intervention in gender theory: the conceptual splitting of gender from sex. The first two interventions he made into 'gender' - splitting gender identity from role, and coining the outcome of Money's postnatal critical period as 'core' gender identity - can be seen as preparatory steps for the third. For Stoller the sex/gender split was a purely theoretical move that allowed him to focus more keenly on the role that postnatal environmental factors played in both normal and aberrant gender identifications. That he was unable to break the link between sex and gender is a point that seemed to escape many who went on to appropriate the gender from sexology and transform it into its contemporary meaning.

*Sex and Gender* (1968) represented the culmination of a decade's work on transsexuality and hermaphroditism by Stoller and colleagues at UCLA under the

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<sup>177</sup> Refer to Grosz' (1996) discussion of the intolerability of ambiguity.

umbrella of the *Gender Identity Project*. In laying out the parameters of his research, Stoller indicated that just as the term ‘sexuality’ was of little use to him because of the array of meanings it had accrued, the term ‘sex’ also held little appeal because of its biological connotations. That is why ‘gender’, which had been circulating in sexological discourse since the mid-1950s, offered significantly more promise to him.

Freed from the messy realities of flesh and the erotic, ‘gender’ allowed Stoller to discuss in isolation, psychological phenomena such as thoughts, behaviour, and personality. He claimed to have little to say about ‘sex’, except as a device with which to clarify what would not be covered in *Sex and Gender*. That was despite the significance he attributed to the biological with respect to gender, despite its appearance in the text’s title and despite his commitment to Freud’s belief that reproduction was the *raison detre* for all sexual (read gendered) behaviour. For the purposes of his research, considering ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ as separate orders of data allowed Stoller to demonstrate that there was no necessary one-to-one relation between them.<sup>178</sup> He wanted to show that in some instances the two functioned completely independently, despite appearing synonymous and despite their “inevitable entanglement” (p. ix).

So just as splitting gender identity out from gender role had a theoretical utility for Stoller, so did the splitting of gender from sex (Stoller, 1968). This then, was the underlying motivation for initiating what has become known as the sex/gender

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<sup>178</sup> One effect of the sex/gender split was that it enhanced the legitimacy of transsexuals’ demands for hormonal and surgical intervention to align their bodies with their gendered identities. See Bornstein (1994), Hirschauer (1997), Hausman (1995).

distinction. Stoller's primary evidence base were individuals with a hermaphroditic gender identity and transsexuals whose *pre-surgical* and *pre-hormonally* mediated bodies were at odds with their gender identifications. Repeating the idea - originally proposed in the "Contribution" article - that a gendered identity was accomplished primarily by the experiences of postnatal learning, Stoller asserted that such experiences were augmented biologically (again, despite his insistence that he had little to say about 'sex').

This third intervention into the theory of gender represented a definitive moment in the history of the concept, one that would have ramifications far exceeding what was imaginable at that time. Stoller's reformulation of gender and sex proved particularly useful to a burgeoning feminism - and to social theory more generally - because it established a dichotomous relation between the two that allowed for analyses of social and political inequalities between men and women free from the constraints (in theory at least) of biologically determinist concepts.<sup>179</sup> It is my assertion that Stoller's work had an added credibility in feminism because he recuperated from Freudian psychoanalysis a non-conflictual feminine identity in infancy and early childhood.<sup>180</sup> While the terms of the debate have shifted considerably over the past thirty years, I suggest that the sex/gender dichotomy has become as naturalised as the term gender itself. This is evidenced by the fact that the sex/gender distinction continues to be

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<sup>179</sup> I use the qualifier 'in theory' since many of the analyses to which I refer do conceptualise the body as essence. This point is taken up further in the following chapter.

<sup>180</sup> Refer to Chapter four.

hotly debated in feminism, cultural and even queer theory but remains for the most part, assumed all the same.<sup>181</sup>

Before concluding, I want to return to John Money, specifically his ongoing engagement with the work of many who have appropriated the term 'gender' over the past forty or so years. For Money, gender acquisition hinged on the idea that learning was a function of biology since it involved neural pathways mediated by the central nervous system. He remained highly critical of the reductionism that rendered sex the property of nature and gender that of nurture. As discussed in the preceding chapter, one of his aims in appropriating the concept of a critical period from embryology was to undermine the binary logic of the nature/nurture divide. While in many quarters, it is a received feminist wisdom that feminist analyses were initially responsible for developing a critique of the sex/gender distinction, recognition must be given to Money's ongoing engagement from the outset, irrespective of whether his critique was responded to, or even heard. Money has for many years now, lamented the sex/gender split, but recognised at the same time, its usefulness to a wide constituency. The sex/gender distinction:

Filled a linguistic void and satisfied a conceptual need of many people - not however, the same conceptual need for which I framed the definition [...] people adopted the term and gave it their own definition (1985a:282).

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<sup>181</sup> See Butler (1990; 1993); Edwards (1989); Gatens (1996), among others for examples of the assumption of which I speak.

While Money makes clear that this was an entirely regrettable conceptual turn, one that effectively bastardised gender, the fact that it did undergo such a significant transformation is, in my view, indicative of its power and its dynamism. Money had originally deployed the term ‘gender’ because of the verbosity of phrases he was forced to use in the absence of a singular term to refer to social inscription as a sexed being. More precisely he wanted to talk about the erotic lives of hermaphrodites (and how they were able to acquire an identity as male or female) separately from the other components that he held to be essential to the process. Hence gender was conceptualised by Money as an umbrella term that incorporated both sex and the erotic, whereby gender included, “but was not restricted to, sexuality in the sense of eroticism” (p.282). Relegating sexual practices to the category of sex as Stoller had done, effectively reinstated in Money’s view,

The metaphysical partitioning of body and mind. Sex was ceded to biology. Gender was ceded to psychology and social science. The ancient regime was restored (Money, 1985a:282).

Money remained insistent that sex and gender were neither synonyms nor antonyms, even though they were often used as such. In defining sex as what you are born with, (male or female), and gender as what you acquire, “gender becomes sex without the dirty and carnal part that belongs to the genitalia *of reproduction*” (1988:52, emphasis added).<sup>182</sup> Indeed, once sexuality was relegated to biology through sex, gender was no longer able to contain desire.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Note Money’s collapsing of genitalia with reproduction here. This seems an odd turn given that much of the considerable body of work produced between his earliest articulations during

## ***Conclusion***

Once the term gender had been stripped of all connotations to sex and the flesh, the concept was ready to be harnessed for its political utility by the women's movement in the early 1970s. During that historical period feminism was fully engaged with the work of both Money and Stoller, utilising their theories and data to support the case for women's liberation. Theorising gender as a purely social artifact was a political strategy designed to avoid the pitfalls of reductive biological analyses that had historically been invoked to justify 'Othering' whether through racism, homophobia, or the subordination of women. As a consequence, one of the central concerns in feminist theory has been to try to chart a space between sex and gender. This has served to reinforce the idea that sex is,

The relatively minimal raw material', and gender 'the more fully elaborated - and rigidly dichotomised - social production and reproduction of male and female identities and behaviours (Sedgwick, 1990:27).

As I will discuss in the following chapter, many of those who accepted 'the split' did so in a way that rendered their analyses far less critical - and less complicated - than that of Money. Stoller's work had wide appeal to an emergent second wave feminism for two key reasons: it recuperated a non-conflictual feminine identity from

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the 1950s and this text published in the late 1980s concerned sexual practices motivated by pleasure rather than reproduction.

<sup>183</sup> Haraway too, has noted that gender has "tended to be quarantined from the infections of biological sex" (1991:134).

psychoanalytic precepts on the one hand and on the other, gender separated from sex allowed for physical differences between men and women to be set aside in the fight for equality. When the category of sex became the point of departure, the sexed body was deemed to be somehow above (or beyond) critique.

Epistemologically the gender identity paradigm is one embedded in functionalism, a paradigm clearly marked by essentialising discourses (Haraway, 1991). Little wonder then that it was used to support other essentialising discourses about a universal woman (and universal man) in early second wave feminist theory. But more than this, the gender identity paradigm actually framed the terms of feminist debates, locking them tightly into a binary logic that theorists continue to try to wrest free from to this day.<sup>184</sup> Robert Stoller's interventions had a direct effect on the way in which gender came to be deployed outside of sexology. While his conceptual turn opened up what could be done with it theoretically (and indeed what *was* done with it) at the same time the sex gender split constrained how it could be thought. Moreover, the (apparent) discovery of the problems inherent in the split served to energise an entire industry within feminist theorising of the body and of sexual difference.

As I have argued, the consequence of investing in the binarian logic that saturates gender and sex necessarily renders hermaphrodites as the impossible 'other'. The intention has been in this chapter (and indeed in those that follow) to demonstrate that

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<sup>184</sup> See for example, Sedgwick et al's discussion of deploying analogue (as opposed to digital) technologies as a metaphor for thinking through and beyond the binary logic of sex and gender (Sedgwick, Frank, & Alexander, 1995).

gender is a particularly dynamic concept capable of adapting to particular theoretical, political and historical moments just as is one's embodied experience as a gender.

## Chapter 4

# Feminist (a)genders

## ***Introduction***

As discussed in the preceding chapter, Robert Stoller reformulated Money's original concept of gender in order to elaborate a theory of identity formation, specifically transsexual identity formation. As a psychoanalyst, his overarching concern had been to understand psychological processes rather than those he perceived as 'purely' physiological, hence his motivation for conceptually splitting sex from gender. The cleaving of gender from sex had a number of consequences that Stoller was unlikely to have predicted - one of which is the focus of this chapter. His work was widely received outside of psychoanalytic circles most particularly by feminists in the social sciences who were beginning to develop a corpus of work during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The sex/gender split provided a nascent women's liberation movement with a powerful "intellectual basis from which to repudiate biological determinism and to assert the possibility of sexual equality" (Curthoys, 2000:21; 1998:180).

Despite offering strong critiques of the binary logic of the nature/culture dichotomy, early second-wave feminist analyses of social and institutional structures failed to historicise the link between the category of sex and the category of nature.<sup>185</sup> In effect, sex - like nature - was rendered passive and oppositional to the active category of (cultural) gender. As a result, the essentialism inherent in the categories man and woman and male and female were left uninterrogated (Findlay, 1995; Haraway,

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<sup>185</sup> An exception was the analysis offered by Strathern (1976).

1991). Indeed, recourse to an essential 'woman-ness' lay at the heart of the reification of the sign 'Woman' in much of the work under scrutiny in the following pages.

Understandings of the term sex consolidated around the idea that it was the biological basis upon which (cultural) gender was overlaid.<sup>186</sup> As a consequence, 'sex' remained uninterrogated for many years in feminist theorising, indeed for considerably longer than was the case with gender.<sup>187</sup> The inescapability of 'sex' was assumed, as was its apparent immutability. In other words, sex equalled destiny, whereas gender offered promise to feminism precisely because it was understood at one level to be malleable and thus amenable to change.

Early feminist scholars who took up Stoller's concept of gender assumed a mind / body relation in the tradition of Cartesian dualism. Sex was grounded in and on the body and hence was seen as biological, whereas gender was equated with the mind or psyche and thus the social. This analysis made it possible to argue that the liberation of women (and men) could be achieved through programmes of social reorganisation and re-education.<sup>188</sup> As Moira Gatens (1983) has suggested, an understanding of the sex/gender distinction as a distinction of body versus consciousness necessarily committed its proponents to a Cartesian dualist idealism and an empiricism.

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<sup>186</sup> My use of the term 'sex' in this and the following discussion does not refer - unless otherwise indicated - to erotic or libidinal practices. Rather it refers to the category that is generally set up in binary opposition to the category of gender.

<sup>187</sup> For early interrogations of gender, see Raymond (1979), who correctly identified the term as a technical and therapeutic tool used by Money and Stoller in their hermaphrodite/intersex management programmes. See also Kessler and McKenna (1978).

<sup>188</sup> As I suggested in the previous chapter, Stoller's recuperation of a non-conflictual feminine identity in infancy and early childhood may well have given his work an added credibility and appeal.

John Money had argued strongly against such a position.<sup>189</sup> While wedded to the scientific method and to empirical research, he championed the idea that sex was but one element of gender rather than its opposite. Nevertheless, Money's hermaphrodite research offered empirical evidence to demonstrate that it was possible for hermaphrodites to be socialised into a gender. As I show in this chapter, that idea was seized upon by those feminists who drew directly upon his research.

To suggest that gender is indispensable to feminist theorising - both as an object of analysis and as an analytical tool - is a point that seems so self-evident that readers might well question the point of such an utterance in a scholarly work. However it is precisely because gender has achieved such a status that it is worthy of scrutiny since it has not always been so. As discussed in Chapter one, the purpose of this thesis is to historicise the concept gender, in order to demonstrate that it has a very specific and relatively recent history that is intricately linked to technological developments and political projects. Moreover, that history is not an innocent one since it is so closely tied to the exploitation and subjugation of those of us who were born neither female nor male: a population *not* bounded by class positioning, by race nor by ethnic affiliation.

Over the past twenty-five years or so, the sex/gender distinction (as facilitated by Stoller), has often been attributed to feminism as though the term had no history

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<sup>189</sup> In *The Psychologic Study of Man* (1957), Money offered a strong critique of the Cartesian dualism of body and mind and of nature and culture. Yet ironically his work relied upon binary concepts on many other levels. I would argue that this is indicative of the tension inherent in his work between what 'is' and what 'ought to be'.

outside of that tradition. It has become something of a received feminist wisdom that the concept of gender (as a human attribute), was the invention of feminism.<sup>190</sup> Haig (2004), suggests that feminists began to embrace the concept of gender as their “own contribution to discourse” around the time that gender’s earlier association with sexology began to fade into the background (p. 94).<sup>191</sup> One of the key distinctions between the derivative ‘feminist gender’ and the earliest ‘sexological gender’ was that the former was contrasted (as socially and psychologically constructed), against (a biologically determined) sex. Indeed the sex/gender distinction can be described as a leitmotif of feminist scholarship.

Relatively few feminist writers used the term gender during the 1970s, yet those who did provided some of the foundational texts of feminist theory. The first section of this chapter examines the work of four theorists who employed gender as a conceptual tool very early. Germaine Greer (1970), Kate Millett (1971), Anne Oakley (1972), and Gayle Rubin (1975), produced texts that were foundational to much of the theorising - and politicising - that followed in their wake.

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<sup>190</sup> For examples, see De Lauretis (1987), Scott (1988), Haraway (1991), Nicholson (1994), Hawkesworth (1997), Crawford (2000).

<sup>191</sup> To highlight this point I offer Hawkesworth’s claim that “although originally a linguistic category denoting a system of subdivision within a grammatical class, feminist scholars adopted the concept of gender to distinguish culturally specific characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity from biological features” (1997:651). See also Haraway citing Scott (1991:242, fn 4). Of equal but perhaps greater concern is the somewhat bizarre claim by Judith Butler that gender came out of American sociology (Rubin & Butler, 1998:41), bizarre not least because of the centrality of gender to her work (see for example, Butler, 1990; 1993; 1997; 2004).

Following the examination of how gender was put to work by the 'foundational four', the second section discusses the various ways that gender was taken up by feminist scholars across three disciplines: sociology, psychology and anthropology. I have limited the focus to these disciplines for the following reasons. Firstly, the body of knowledge that is North American feminist scholarship (of the second wave) is considerable, both in size and scope. It now comprises a corpus of over 40 years work - if one begins with Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). To attempt a thorough historiography of all that scholarship is far beyond the scope of this research. Secondly, those disciplines have a number of features in common, most particularly their object of analysis - social relations - which, in the context of the current discussion, equates to gendered relations. Ideas from each of these disciplines informed and fed into one another, as evidenced by the considerable number of anthologies published during the 1970s whose contributors came from a range of disciplines (and indeed from outside the academy). Sociology and anthropology share some similar methodological and theoretical frameworks, while psychology for its part has a particular interest in 'the masculine' and 'the feminine', and in identity and personality formation.

Since psychology was the discipline of Money's earliest training, its inclusion in this discussion is justified on that basis alone. Since gender was readily available to feminist psychologists (via Money's prolific publication record, his personal notoriety and his (then) not inconsiderable public profile), there is a case for making that field the sole focus of the discussion. Certainly I am interested in what feminists in psychology made of gender. Yet to limit the focus thus would result in a partial analysis since Money's ideas were heavily informed by anthropology and

sociology.<sup>192</sup> Before leaving New Zealand Money had immersed himself in the social anthropology of Margaret Mead and was later taught by sociologist Talcott Parsons at Harvard. This particular triangulation of thought marked Money's project from the outset, so it is fitting that a genealogy of gender follow the same lines.

The issues I tackle in the disciplinary section of this chapter relate to the usefulness of the concept of gender for feminists (across disciplines), and the precise ways in which it was put to work by those for whom it was useful. It is clear that gender did not land quietly or easily in feminist thought. Rather, gender was subject to enormous conceptual confusion over the course of the 1970s, its meaning(s) contested both within and outside of feminist scholarship. A rigorous interrogation of exactly when and how gender entered into the feminist lexicon indicates that it happened in a slow and inconsistent manner. Terms such as 'sex role' and 'sexual identity' continued to be widely used and maintained a strong currency until the early 1980s. Although gender began to appear in more and more titles of articles and book chapters throughout the 1970s, reference to the term in a title offered no guarantee that gender would be used within the text.<sup>193</sup> Indeed it would take the best part of a decade for gender to consolidate into feminist theory after its earliest appearances.

John Money has consistently engaged with feminism since the early 1970s in what became over time, a one-way conversation. The index of one of his most popular early texts, *Man and Woman, Boy and Girl* (1972), contained an entry entitled

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<sup>192</sup> Money's ideas were of course, also informed by embryology, endocrinology, and a broad range of animal studies.

<sup>193</sup> For examples, see Ginsberg, (1977) and Ullian (1976).

‘Women’s Liberation, quotable material’ which referenced over 50 items that Money deemed useful to the project of feminism. Was this an attempt on the part of Money, to frame the terms of feminist debates? Perhaps. If that were the case, then it would appear to have been at least partially successful. However, Money’s insistence that gender and sex were two sides of the same coin and his condemnation of the sex/gender distinction ultimately led feminists to disengage with his work preferring instead, Stoller’s reformulated gender.

While the focus of much of this chapter turns on the *uncritical* uptake of Money’s ideas in feminist scholarship, the discussion that forms the conversational section examines some of the earliest critiques of his work. David Tresemer (1975), Kessler and McKenna (1978), Barbara Fried (1979) and Janice Raymond (1979), were among the first to offer a specifically feminist critique of Money’s theories and methodologies. In addition to outlining the key arguments of those critiques, I address a number of specific issues that are raised by them. This leads to an analysis of the shifting relation of hermaphrodites to feminism. Where once hermaphrodite research formed a central part of the evidence base for feminist theory, by the 1980s hermaphrodites had almost entirely slipped out of the feminist frame. As I discuss in detail in chapter six, it would not be until the 1990s that any serious (re)engagement would resume.

### ***Early feminist articulations of gender***

It is noteworthy that many of the early feminist scholars who employed the term gender were not merely aware of Money’s hermaphrodite and Stoller’s transsexual research, they specifically invoked both to strengthen their own claims. Sociologist

Ann Oakley is one important example.<sup>194</sup> Oakley's intellectual tradition is a field concerned with the everyday mundane practices, belief structures and institutions of social life.<sup>195</sup> Educated at Oxford University, Oakley's work was widely cited by North American feminists who used the term gender.<sup>196</sup> Her rationale for writing *Sex Gender and Society* - first published in 1972 - was to explain inequality between the sexes by demonstrating that it was a consequence of males and females being taught from birth onwards to perform and expect, different social behaviour from one another.

Sociology had been dominated by Parsonian role theory since the 1940s, a body of knowledge that provided tacit support for the maintenance of the status quo (Martin, 2004; Schatzki, 1996; Zeitlin, 1968). Yet Oakley's ideas reflect the Parsonian tradition (refer Chapter two), rather than the more radical sub-branches of her field such as symbolic interactionism - as exemplified by the work of Erving Goffman. Indeed, Oakley and other feminist sociologists are said to have given Parsonian functionalism a new lease of life (Curthoys, 2000, 1998).

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<sup>194</sup> Two other sociologists to employ the term gender in the years prior to the publication of *Sex, Gender and Society*, were Jessie Bernard (1971) and Harriet Holter (1970). However, I have chosen to focus on Oakley's text in this section because she was the first feminist sociologist to use the term gender in a book title. See below for further discussion of Bernard and Holter's work.

<sup>195</sup> At the time of publication, Ann Oakley was Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at London University and Director of the Social Science Research Unit at the Institute of Education there.

<sup>196</sup> For examples, see Reiter (1975), Tresemer (1975), Bedell (1977), Gould and Kern-Daniels (1977), Hubbard, et al (1979).

In the introductory chapter of her text, Oakley argued that the distinction between the terms ‘male’ and ‘female’ on the one hand and ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ on the other, made it possible to clarify disagreements about sex differences. The sex/gender distinction was, in her view, a particularly important one since “the constancy of sex must be admitted, but so also must the variability of gender” (1972:16).<sup>197</sup> So for Oakley, Stoller’s sex/gender distinction provided a way to “disentangle sex from gender [so as to] replace dogmatism by insight and ... separate value-judgements from statements of fact” (p. 17). Oakley’s primary targets were those disciplines that asserted so-called natural differences between males and females.

Like many of her contemporaries, Oakley was concerned to develop and articulate alternative theories of masculinity and femininity to those that dominated the social sciences and so sought recourse in concepts that circulated throughout the physical and biological sciences. This turn to the physical sciences may also have been motivated in part, by a desire to bolster her credibility in what was then an especially hostile intellectual environment for feminist scholars. Oakley reproduced the diagrammatic representations of foetal sex differentiation that feature in many of Money’s texts (see Chapter two, Figs 1 and 2)<sup>198</sup> and reproduced almost verbatim, his theories of hermaphroditism.

Oakley asked whether biology played any part in determining a ‘normal’ individual’s gendered identity. She concluded that its role must be minimal since any

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<sup>197</sup> As part of this discussion, Oakley distinguished between the terms intersexual, transsexual and homosexual, locating the former as a biological condition and the latter two as gender ‘disorders’. I will return to this point in subsequent chapters.

<sup>198</sup> Money (1965b) is cited as the source for these diagrams (Oakley, p.223).

predisposition towards an identity as male or female could be “decisively and ineradicably overridden by a cultural learning” (1972:170). She backed this claim by pointing to the evidence provided by researchers “in the field of hermaphroditic disorders and problems of gender identity [who] seem very impressed by the power of culture to ignore biology altogether” (p.170). Citing Money, Oakley wrote that:

There are many points at which the study of intersexuals throws light on the nature-nurture controversy, and they are too valuable to be ignored. For example, intersexed patients reared as females have strong feminine fantasy lives and characteristically feminine erotic inclinations despite the virtually total absence of female hormones (1972:165).

The ‘feminine fantasy lives and erotic inclinations’, of which she wrote in this citation, were constituted by “romantic courtship, marriage and heterosexual erotic play” (p. 165). The nature-nurture controversy to which she referred, were debates on the origins of sexual difference, debates that have continued to circulate albeit in a different guise (eg, constructionism vs essentialism) in more recent times.<sup>199</sup> Oakley’s understandings of gender and the (female) body *were* those of Money: The two were but one and the same. That Oakley accepted Money’s evidence at face value is unquestionable. His work gave Oakley a means to substantiate her (or, more precisely, his) claim that one’s enactment as a gender had little to do with one’s bodily form. Citing Money, Oakley wrote,

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<sup>199</sup> More recently the overarching term essentialism has begun to give way to references to specific fields of inquiry such as genetics, evolutionary biology and/or psychology.

Biological sex can be and often is reconstructed to allow the individual to play his or her gender role without confusion and risk of social ridicule. Here it is biology that is *plastic in the literal sense and altered to conform with identity: not identity that is shaped by biology* (1972:165, emphasis added).

This statement clearly contradicted the earlier assertion Oakley had made regarding the constancy of sex and the variability of gender, yet that contradiction went unnoticed by the author. While the quotations cited indicate the value of Money's work for Oakley's project, it is equally clear that Stoller's reconfigured gender - as a cultural artefact - was also very useful to her. By reiterating both Money and Stoller's claims in an uncritical way, Oakley failed to address the inherent contradictions that resulted in her own. Thus it can be argued that Oakley failed to present a thorough challenge to the existing dogma of the social sciences that conceptualised existing social arrangements between the sexes as 'natural and inevitable'. Instead her work served to reinforce the equally dogmatic assertions of a different tradition. For Money, neither gender nor sex were inevitable on one level, since each could be manipulated by scalpel and/or acculturation. And yet both were saturated with inevitability at another level, since even at its most 'plastic', the body of which Oakley spoke was constrained by the either/or proposition that is sex, as understood by Money, his predecessors and by those who found his work useful to their own projects.

From the field of Literature, two figures stand out for their early use of gender, Kate Millet<sup>200</sup> and Germaine Greer. Millett's highly influential text, *Sexual Politics* (1971), offered an analysis of the production of knowledge as a means of justifying and maintaining women's subordination. Her contribution to feminism (and to the social sciences more generally) was significant for the way that it explicitly promoted the development of social theory from the position of 'Other'.

Millet drew directly on the work of both Money and Stoller to support her claims that gender was a cultural artefact and that social arrangements under patriarchy<sup>201</sup> were based on cultural rather than biological imperatives and thus were not inevitable.

Millet stated that she was drawing on that material because in her view, the distinctions made between the sexes by the physical sciences were infinitely more valid - and thus more credible - than those promoted by the social sciences. In her view, science offered, "clear, specific, measurable and neutral" theories, whereas those produced by the social sciences were "vague, amorphous [and] often quasi-religious" (p. 28). So confident was Millet of the objectivity of the physical and biological sciences, that she proclaimed,

Important new research not only suggests that the possibilities of innate temperamental differences seem more remote than ever but even raises

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<sup>200</sup> Sculptor, visual artist and writer Kate Millett was the first American woman to be awarded an MA (1<sup>st</sup> class) from St Hilda's College, Oxford University in 1958. She was awarded a doctorate in Comparative Literature from Columbia University in 1970 and published her dissertation as *Sexual Politics* the same year.

<sup>201</sup> Millet defined patriarchy (after Weber) as "the prevailing social relation based on the domination by men and subordination of women" (1971:25).

questions as to the validity and permanence of psycho-sexual identity<sup>202</sup> [and so] gives fairly concrete positive evidence of the overwhelmingly cultural character of gender, i.e. personality structure in terms of sexual category (p.29).

Millett's faith in science was such that, despite acknowledging a lack of clear-cut evidence, she offered her wholehearted endorsement of the idea that "gender role is determined by postnatal forces, regardless of the anatomy and physiology of the external genitalia" (Millett, p.30). A gendered identity was the most primary identity of every human being - the first, the most permanent and pervasive, she argued, offering as proof, Stoller's 'discovery' that it was easier to perform sex change surgery on intersexuals given an erroneous gender assignment at birth than to undo a lifetime of socialising into a gender. Her definitions of sex and gender echoed Stoller's distinction - that gender is social and sex biological - while her use of Money's work was more idiosyncratic, perhaps because of his rejection of the conceptual split of sex from gender (see Millett, p. 30-1).

The idea that bodily morphology was more malleable than a person's psychosocial identity indicates how pervasive Money's theories were in the early feminist notions of mind/body relations. But more importantly for the purposes of this discussion, the material I have cited continues to throw into relief an inherent contradiction unrecognised by the early feminist proponents of gender. Both Millett and Oakley promoted the idea that biological sex was immutable and cultural gender malleable,

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<sup>202</sup> As mentioned in previous chapters, 'psycho-sexual' identity was the referent for identities of masculinity/femininity prior to the availability of gender.

yet at the same time they accepted Money and Stoller's view that the bodily morphology of hermaphrodites was more readily altered (through surgery) than was an established psychosocial identity. The only explanation I can offer for the failure to attend to such a glaring contradiction is that the idea of psychosexual neutrality at birth served their political interests because it meant that gender was a culturally inscribed, learned attribute. What was learned might well be un-learned or indeed replaced by something altogether different.

The other literary scholar to deploy the concept gender was Australian born, UK based agent-provocateur and sex radical, Germaine Greer (1970).<sup>203</sup> Unlike Millet, Greer claimed to be highly suspicious of the agenda of the medical and physical sciences. In *The Female Eunuch*, Greer questioned whose interests were being served by the relentless exaggeration of differences between the sexes. For Greer,

The dogmatism of science expresses the status quo as the ineluctable result of law. ... The new assumption behind the discussion of the body is that everything that we may observe *could be otherwise* (Greer, p. 14, emphasis in original).

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<sup>203</sup> Greer had won a Commonwealth Scholarship for her MA thesis (*USyd*), which she used to fund doctoral studies at Newnham College, Cambridge University. Graduating in 1968 with a PhD in English Literature on Shakespeare's early comedies, Greer went on to teach at Warwick University (1967-1973). The publication of *The Female Eunuch* in 1970 made Greer a public figurehead for the women's liberation movement in Britain (Wallace, 1997). Greer was also, during that period, the founding European editor of the anarchist sex magazine, *Suck* (Heidenry, 1997).

Greer urged women to question the most basic of assumptions about what constituted feminine 'normality'. This she believed was vital for the successful liberation of women and necessary for expanding the possibilities of different ways of knowing and being. Yet despite Greer's distrust of science, she turned to Stoller to support her claim that sexual difference had no mandate in biology. It is noteworthy that the chapter entitled "Gender" in *The Female Eunuch* was almost exclusively devoted to a discussion of chromosomal variation that is, variation beyond the XX and XY configurations that we understand as 'female and male' chromosomal patterning. Once again variation was invoked to challenge the apparent naturalness of sexual difference. Greer sought to discredit the idea of dichotomous sex by highlighting sexual diversity across animal and plant species. With respect to human diversity, Greer referred to girls with well-developed clitori and boys with genitals that were "underdeveloped ... deformed or hidden" (p. 28). Citing Stoller, Greer suggested that medical investigations could establish the correct sex of such individuals and cosmetic surgery used to resolve "some of these difficulties" (p. 29). I would suggest that Greer's inability to escape the binary framework of male and female undermined her capacity to dismantle the notion of dichotomous sex (as gender). In light of this, what are we to make of Greer's declaration that everything which could be observed about the body "could be otherwise"?

As part of her larger project, Greer sought to discredit the idea of male superiority by pointing to the vulnerability of the Y chromosome and the plethora of medical conditions associated with it.

Along with his maleness, the foetus then inherits a number of weaknesses which are called sex-linked, because they result from genes found only in the Y-chromosome [or from] mutant gene[s] in the X-chromosome which the Y-chromosome cannot suppress, ... transmitted by females, but only effective in males (p. 26).

So while her argument did little to dismantle dichotomous sex, I would suggest that Greer was considerably more successful at observing otherwise, the sexual hierarchy. By pinning her analysis on the fragility of the Y-chromosome, she offered a convincing account that nature itself did not support male superiority.

Greer's distinction between sex and gender differed from that of her contemporaries in that sex referred exclusively to erotic behaviour and sexual practices, whereas gender - purged of its connection to the erotic - remained firmly grounded in and on the body.<sup>204</sup> For Greer, "whatever else we are or may pretend to be, we are certainly our bodies" (p. 29). This is one of the many examples I offer within this chapter of the inconsistent use of gender in feminist scholarship throughout the 1970s - before gender became the 'property' of feminism.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> The chapters 'Gender' and 'Sex' both appeared in the first section of the text under the heading, 'Body'. Sex in Greer's account related solely to erotic behaviour and sexual practices.

<sup>205</sup> This point is taken up in more detail later in the chapter.

The fourth scholar whose work was foundational to the political and theoretical projects of feminism was anthropologist Gayle Rubin (1975).<sup>206</sup> Rubin was among the first feminists to use gender as an analytical *tool* with which to examine social life. While Oakley, Millet and Greer were undoubtedly influential on subsequent feminist analyses of (gendered) social relations, it is Rubin's concept of the *sex-gender system* that arguably had the most widespread and enduring influence. Rubin defined the object of her analysis as a "systematic social apparatus that takes females as a raw material and fashions domesticated women as products" (p.158). As the title of this important work, *The Traffic In Women* suggested, her analysis turned on the commodification of the female subject - across cultures. Rubin employed a hybrid of Marxist, structuralist and psychoanalytic approaches in an attempt to get to the heart of the social conditions behind the oppression and subordination of women. For Rubin it was important to identify the root causes of women's oppression in order to determine exactly what was needed to create a society free of hierarchical gender. She argued that kinship systems that relied on the exchange of women (as gifts), lay at the heart of the issue: it was these relations that facilitated the exchange of "sexual access, genealogical statuses, lineage names and ancestors, rights and people" (p.177).

Rubin used the terminology of sex and gender somewhat differently to her contemporaries. She wrote of a sex/gender system, which she defined as "the set of

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<sup>206</sup> At the time she wrote *The Traffic in Women*, Rubin was working towards a doctorate in anthropology at the University of Michigan and teaching in the Women's Studies program there (Reiter, 1975). *The Traffic* was at one level, a response to the limits of Marxist analyses with respect to the oppression of women. Rubin cites a course taught by Marshall Sahlins at UMich on tribal economics as the "immediate precipitating factor" for the paper (Rubin & Butler, 1998:38).

arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied” (p.159). Rubin claimed (after Levi-Strauss), that the sexual division of labour functioned as a taboo against sameness. By exacerbating biological differences, males and females were rendered as two mutually exclusive categories. It was this, she suggested, that created gender. In her analysis gender was not merely a division socially imposed, it was the also the product of “the social relations of sexuality” (p.179).

The suppression of similarities between men and women served the interests of heterosexuality, Rubin argued, and it was on this point that much of her analysis rested. She believed that gender entailed much more than identification with a single sex, it also necessarily required that sexual desire be directed toward the other (one). The sexual division of labour served as a taboo against sexual arrangements that did not include a man and a woman and in this way heterosexual marriage was imposed upon cultural members. In other words, gender necessarily demanded a heterosexual outcome.

At the most general level, the social organization of sex rests upon gender, obligatory heterosexuality, and the constraint of female sexuality (p. 179).<sup>207</sup>

Rubin turned to Freud to explain the mechanisms by which children were transformed into a single sex and a single gender. For Rubin, Freud’s analysis provided “a

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<sup>207</sup> I would suggest that the obligatory heterosexuality of which Rubin spoke also rested upon gender, as does female sexuality, indeed *most* sexualities. S&M practices offer one example of sexual practices that do not rely upon gender as their organising principle.

description of the mechanisms by which the sexes were divided and deformed, [and of the means by which] bisexual, androgynous infants are transformed into boys and girls” (1975:185). Rubin explained the acculturation of children into a gender in the following way: the pre-Oedipal child’s relatively unstructured sexuality was labile and contained all the “sexual possibilities available to human expression” (p. 189). In any particular society only some of these possibilities could be expressed because those not deemed (gender) appropriate were prohibited. A child’s libido and its identity as a gender was thoroughly organised by the end of the Oedipal phase so as to conform to the rules of the domesticating culture.

By making explicit the link between gender and (hetero)sexuality, Rubin’s analysis demonstrated that she was - at some level - drawing on Money’s concept of gender yet nowhere in *The Traffic in Women* is there an indication of whence she took the term.<sup>208</sup> This is unfortunate not least because erotic and libidinal practices were so central to ‘Money’s gender’ and moreover, his embellishment of Freudian explanations of gender acquisition through the idea of complementation<sup>209</sup> offered a fuller and more holistic account of that process. By retaining the link between gender and the erotic, Rubin departed from most of her contemporaries (and many of her

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<sup>208</sup> The collection in which Rubin’s article appeared contains a single collective bibliography that included Money and Ehrhardt’s (1972) text. Although Rubin was the only author in the collection to use the term gender, the reference did not belong with her article but rather linked to the introductory chapter by editor, Rayna Reiter.

<sup>209</sup> To remind readers, complementation refers to the component of gender acquisition where a child learns which behaviours are appropriate for their gender by learning what is appropriate for the ‘other’ gender and thus inappropriate for themselves. Money referred to this component as the “negative pole” of gender coding. See for example, Money (1965a; 1995).

successors) whose use of 'Stoller's gender' effectively banished desire from the frame.

In Rubin's account of the sex-gender system, it is not always clear to the contemporary reader exactly how she was using the terms 'sexual' and 'sexuality' at any given point. In contemporary parlance, sexuality generally refers to erotic practices and identities but this was not the case during the 1970s. Rubin's reference to "biological sexuality as a product of human activity" might just as easily have referred to what is now commonly understood as gender relations. Rubin has since clarified that the term 'sexual difference' in her subsequent work *Thinking Sex* (1984/1993) served as a referent for different sexual practices rather than differences of gender (1998:41). While this clarification offers no direct clues to Rubin's use of the terms sexual and sexuality, it does lend support to the claim that concepts which appear to have stable meanings, are often liable to slippage across relatively short spaces of time.

Early feminist writers who used Stoller and Money's ideas - whether explicitly or implicitly - uncritically accepted medical explanations of dichotomous sex and so reinforced sex-gender as a binary proposition. Rubin's analysis, like the others under discussion positioned the body (as biological sex) as the raw material upon which gender was put to work. By positioning biological sex in this way, the very attempts to undermine its centrality served to invoke it (Nicholson, 1994). Nicholson suggests that Rubin's analysis offers a prime example of the way that feminists writing during the period under discussion accepted the existence of "real biological phenomena differentiating women and men that [were] used in all societies in similar ways" (p.

80), to generate a distinction between males and females and between men and women. Feminists' attempts to undermine biological determinist analyses led to the privileging of a cultural determinist model that always referenced back to a kind of "biological foundationalism" (p. 82). Effectively this conceptual move provided tacit - if not overt - support for the ongoing subjugation and exploitation of the hermaphrodite subject. I use the term exploitation deliberately for there is a long history in sexology *and* in the medical sciences to explain normality (the typical), by turning to the so-called abnormal (the atypical). This seems particularly ironic given the strong emphasis by second wave feminists on a woman's right to control her own body *and* her sexuality, a right not extended to hermaphrodites.<sup>210</sup>

### ***Feminist sociology***

These four foundational texts are still extensively known and cited since they form part of the (early) feminist canon, yet in sociology particularly, gender was gradually being picked up more widely. It is for this reason that the following discussion is devoted to gender's (uneasy) settlement into feminist sociology. A review of the sociological literature of the 1970s indicates that, as with other disciplines, gender did not integrate easily or rapidly into theory despite being used as early as 1970 (Bernard, 1971; Holter, 1970). While sociology has been credited with mainstreaming the concept gender (Curthoys, 2000:25), a Sociology of Gender did not begin to consolidate until the end of the 1970s. It developed rather slowly from courses on sex roles that began to be taught in North American universities from the late 1960s onwards (Gould & Kern-Daniels, 1977; Hughes, 1973). As sociology departments

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<sup>210</sup> I would argue the irony is doubled with respect to Greer's subsequent work. See for example Greer (1984; 1991; 1999).

began to hire and promote increasing numbers of women academics during the late sixties and early seventies, there was an attendant growth in the number of 'sex role' courses offered, a trend evident across a variety of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities (Curthoys, 1998; Gould & Kern-Daniels, 1977; Laslett & Thorne, 1997; Lopata, 1976).<sup>211</sup>

Because little attention had been paid to women's issues, there had been a huge gap in the sociological literature. Much of the material on sex differences was taken from psychoanalysis, psychology, anthropology, and sexology. Course conveners also drew on the early manifestos, anthologies and ethnographies of the women's movement. The widely cited Roszak and Roszak (1969), collection which included radical feminist material by the Redstockings, Robin Morgan, and Valerie Solanis, is one such example. Texts such as this lend substantial weight to the claim that the women's movement had a reciprocal relation to the academy, informing as well as being informed by it.<sup>212</sup>

Such divergent sources provided the mainstay of teaching material on North American campuses until the arrival of so-called bona fide sociology texts dealing specifically with sex and gender (Gould and Kern-Daniels, 1977). When those texts arrived, they continued to include contributions from other disciplines. While it has been claimed that this was a specifically feminist tendency towards cooperative

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<sup>211</sup> See also Jones' (2002) PhD thesis which offers a critical genealogy of 1970s academic feminism in the Australian context.

<sup>212</sup> See also Lasky (1975).

scholarship (Gould and Kern Daniels, 1977), it could arguably have also been ‘business as usual’ in the tradition of interdisciplinarity within the social sciences.

Parsonian role theory, as I discussed in Chapter two, had dominated the social sciences since the mid-1950s, however over the course of the 1960s, alternative theories began to make some inroads. Early feminist sociologists were among those who provided new directions for the field (Daniels, 1975). Tracing sociology back through the twentieth century, feminist critics argued that the inattention paid to women in most sociological analyses was a direct result of a masculine commitment to the apparently important stuff of social life. Women’s activities had historically been deemed unworthy of scientific enterprise as Oakley had discovered when she first proposed undertaking a sociological analysis of housework.

Increasing numbers of feminists entering sociology resulted in a corresponding increase in qualitative research. Yet it was not until the mid-1970s that the impact of feminist analyses really began to show. Making specific mention of Friedan’s (1963) *Feminine Mystique*, Daniels<sup>213</sup> noted that the subordination of women had long been on the agenda but generally ignored by (male) sociologists. In practical terms, it became increasingly difficult for the editorial boards of journals to continue to dismiss or ignore articles on women’s issues and as a result, such issues began to gain some credibility within the academy, opening the work up to a wider academic constituency. The mid-1970s represented something of a watershed in sociological

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<sup>213</sup> While Daniels is not well known outside of the US academy today, she was during the 1970s, editor of the journal *Social Problems*, President of *Sociologists for Women in Society* and Professor of Sociology at Northwestern University (Chicago), and so was in a good position to assess the impact of feminist scholarship on the field.

history since the development of a specifically feminist perspective offered an important contribution to the sociology of knowledge (Daniels, 1975). This in turn led to a whole range of new research topics such as: the distribution of economic and occupational opportunities; social policies that favoured equitable opportunity; sexism in social theory and pedagogy; and the impact of sexual stratification on quality of life (p. 349). The focus on these areas was seen as necessary in determining the shape of a social inquiry that truly reflected women's lived experiences.

Daniels urged other feminist scholars to tackle not just the sexual politics 'out there' in the social milieu but also the politics of research and the hierarchies of professional associations (1975:341, 359). Most research, she argued, reflected the fact that women were historically responsible for managing the "real world of cleaning up and caring for others" (p. 346).

Women mediate the environment for men, who may then ignore it and participate more freely in an abstract theoretical world. But such an organisation of the world alienates men from their bodily and local existence, while it chains women to that existence (p. 346).

As politicised women began to gain ground across the academy, a specifically feminist mode of inquiry led to the establishment of women's studies departments. By 1974 there were over 80 tertiary institutions in the United States offering women's studies programs complete with majors while almost 1000 institutions offered various women's studies courses (1974, 2000).

One of the first references to gender in a sociological text was in Harriet Holter's *Sex Roles and Social Structure* (1970). Holter was a sociologist based in Oslo who drew heavily on the psychological and sociological literature from North America. Holter offered an empirical account of patterns of "sex role differentiation in Norwegian society" by identifying some of the process she believed, were intrinsic to it (p. 52). While there were no direct references to either Stoller or Money in her text, Holter used the term gender liberally. She distinguished between "sex differentiation" on the one hand and "the relationships between men and women" (as gender) on the other (p. 17). Holter questioned whether biological traits were sufficient in themselves to account for gender differences since, in her view, biology always operated "in interaction with social, economic and technological factors" (p. 18).

Bernard's *Women and the Public Interest* (1971), was another of the very early sociological feminist analyses to deploy the term gender. Well known for her later work on the institution of marriage, Bernard<sup>214</sup> offered an analysis of women's relation to public policy and the inherent conflicts between women's interests and the public interest. Under the sub-heading 'Sex' in the first chapter, Bernard drew on Stoller's work to argue that while individuals with:

"Errors of the body" have alerted us to some of the anomalies possible in the sphere of sexuality ... there is no overlap between male and female populations. They are categorically different (p. 14-5).

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<sup>214</sup> At the time of publication Bernard was Research Scholar, Honoris Causa at the Pennsylvania State University (Bernard, 1971). Bernard received her doctorate in sociology from Washington University in 1935.

Such an interpretation of Stoller's work - while tending toward the extreme - should not by now, surprise the reader. Bernard's aim was to demonstrate that gender relations were a cultural - and therefore artificial - phenomenon in need of revolutionising so they might properly serve contemporary life:

The kind of life we lead in this day and age [is] a life that demands all the talents the human species can muster from its genetic pool, whatever the sex of the body which harbours them (p. 277).

In an interesting turn, Bernard referred to Money's hermaphrodite research by replicating a table from Stoller (1968), that included footnotes by Money on each of the cases. The table and notes were included to emphasise the "social and acquired nature of gender" (p. 19). Despite the usefulness of hermaphrodite research to Bernard's project, the relative rarity of 'sexual anomalies' provided a rationale for her to argue that biological factors in gender warranted no further consideration:

Although [hermaphrodites] teach us a great deal about the normal aspects of sex and gender, they cannot be invoked in sociological analyses. Further discussion would distort the picture by overemphasising rare exceptions (p. 19-20).

One reading of the subtext of Bernard's argument is that any further engagement might highlight some of the implications that people with so-called sexual anomalies held for such a rigid model of sexual difference (as utterly and mutually, exclusive).

That is, the model would fail to hold. It is noteworthy that despite her reluctance to give credence to biological factors, Bernard readily employed a genetic metaphor to call for a social revolution – “all the talents [we] can muster from the genetic pool ...” (p. 277).

Erving Goffman<sup>215</sup> (1977/1998), was one of the few male sociologists to critically engage with sexual politics during the 1970s. While he never contributed directly to feminist anthologies, it is evident from his writing that he was sympathetic to the project of women’s liberation and indeed cited many feminist sources in his notes.<sup>216</sup>

The traditional sociological position that sex is “learned, diffuse, role behaviour” – fair enough in itself – seemed to have inoculated previous generations of social scientists against understanding ... blindly supporting in their personal conduct exactly what some at least should have been studying. As usual in recent years, we have had to rely on the discontented to remind us of our subject matter (Goffman, 1977:301).

Goffman’s analysis of gender (as discussed in Chapter one) offered an explanation of how biological differences between males and females came to have immense social significance and the various means by which such differences were elaborated socially. In effect, Goffman refused the body as the natural ground for gender. This

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<sup>215</sup> Canadian born Goffman held faculty positions at the University of Chicago and UCLA, Berkley, from the early 1950s to the late 1960s before becoming the Benjamin Franklin Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania from 1968 until his death in 1982.

<sup>216</sup> See Goffman (1977/1998:655-6).

allowed him to challenge the so-called naturalness of embodied gender by demonstrating its continuous ascription and enabled an analysis of gender relations as relations of power.

Goffman argued that the differential ranking of male and female across cultures allowed industrialised societies to account for themselves by “referring back to what occurs in small non-literate societies” (p.645). This sanctioned the concept ‘society’ and encouraged comparisons with non-human primates that justified a fundamentally biological view of human nature. Moreover, he argued that the intertwining of normative understandings of gender with those of bio-medicine and science led those understandings to having a self-fulfilling effect on behaviour. Thus gendered behaviour was to a large extent driven by normative ideas about gender.

Sexual difference was elaborated by Goffman’s account, through a system of “institutional reflexivity” that involved the complex interplay of early childhood socialisation with the multitude of social contexts in which men and women enacted the “differential human nature claimed for them” (p.661). Goffman identified the family as locus of gender socialisation since its structure guaranteed that gender was performed by each sex in full sight of the other. Not only did this provide a context for modelling, it also ensured that each family member was made fully and constantly aware of the differential treatment and privileges accorded each gender. This analysis was very much in line with Money’s understanding of gender acquisition as a dual process of complementation and identification (see Chapter two).<sup>217</sup> For Goffman,

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<sup>217</sup> Goffman’s analysis is unusual in this regard since most theorists of gender continued (and *continue*) to focus on solely on the identificatory aspect (after Freud).

gender was the elaboration of sex-specific behavioural, stylistic and emotional genres that became assimilated into embodied experiences.

As discussed in Chapter one, Goffman rejected the idea that ‘the sexes’ constituted a class or category of persons, arguing instead that sex was but one of many properties of the human organism. Privileging sex (as gender) over the other elements was inherently dangerous in his view, because it served to downplay or diminish the relevance of those other properties. Yet these cautions went, by and large, unheeded by Goffman’s feminist colleagues and by other feminist throughout the academy.<sup>218</sup> There appears to have been little engagement by feminist scholars with Goffman’s work while he on the other hand, was well versed in the feminist debates of the day. That lack of engagement is lamentable since Goffman’s analysis of gender went far beyond the points raised here. He also offered an astute analysis of the mechanisms and effects of sexual hierarchies and the way in which women were separated from one another by their relative investments in the very forms of social organisation that divided them. In other words, his analysis accounted for the complexities involved in the intersections of class, race and ethnicity with gender, complexities that would come back to haunt a predominantly white middle-class feminism invested in the sign ‘Woman’, over the course of the following decades.

### ***Feminist psychology***

Since psychology was the discipline in which Money originally trained, it is not be unreasonable to expect that feminist psychologists would have been among the first to

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<sup>218</sup> An exception to this general trend was anthropologist Marilyn Strathern (1976).

adopt the term gender. Yet this does not appear to be the case. The trend in psychology during the 1970s echoed that of sociology and anthropology as feminist scholars relied on Stoller's reformulated sex/gender distinction rather than Money's original formulation. Theorists under discussion in this section include Nancy Chodorow (1974; 1978), Dorothy Dinnerstein (1976), June Singer (1976) and Rhonda Unger (1979a; 1979b). While Chodorow's academic background was sociology rather than psychology her work is included in this section because she relied so heavily on a psychoanalytic framework through which to analyse masculinity and femininity and indeed had a dual career as a psychoanalyst and an academic.

While much of the feminist scholarship undertaken by sociologists and anthropologists concerned issues of social roles and structural dynamics, in psychology issues of identity formation and personality development were - perhaps unsurprisingly - writ large. Tensions were evident between two strong theoretical traditions in this branch of feminist scholarship from the outset. Those tensions exemplified what Oakley had referred to as the "nature-nurture controversy" (Oakley, 1972:165). Batting for the primacy of nature were models based on Freudian concepts that posited anatomical difference as the primary basis for differences in male and female personality, while on the other side of the divide those differences were framed in terms of environmental conditioning (Ullian, 1976).

Some feminist psychologists did attempt to reconcile the two traditions by offering models that incorporated elements of both biological and social learning theories.

Dorothy Ullian<sup>219</sup> (1976) for example, proposed an integrated model where environmental and biological influences were differentially important at various stages of a child's development. She argued that gender identifications were inherently unstable in children precisely because the process was *developmental*. In fact Ullian's model complemented nicely the idea of critical periods that were so key to Money's model.

Rhoda Unger's *Male and Female* (1979a), attempted to synthesise a framework for examining the field of sex and gender research, a project, she said, that was motivated in part by the increasing "visibility and legitimacy of women in social science" (p.1).<sup>220</sup> One of the questions guiding Unger's project concerned the usefulness of assigning individuals to groups on the basis of sex categories rather than say, assigning people at random. Unger offered a limited critique of the compulsory sexing of infants within a broader critique of bias in 'sex-difference' research.

Exploring the question of a biological basis for sex and gender (note the distinction), Unger offered a close reading of Money's hermaphrodite research, devoting 20 pages of discussion to hermaphrodite nomenclature. She did so because she was not confident (and rightly so, in my view), that comparative studies between species could offer convincing explanations of the human condition. Better, she argued, to turn to

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<sup>219</sup> Dorothy Ullian developed this model while a faculty member of the Psychology Department at Wheelock College, Boston Massachusetts (Lloyd & Archer, 1976:v)

<sup>220</sup> Rhoda Unger gained her PhD in experimental psychology from Harvard University in 1966 and has had a long and distinguished career as Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at Montclair and Brandeis Universities (Brandeis\_University, 2003).

research on ‘clinical abnormalities’ in humans (p. 110). After assessing Money’s evidence and interpretations Unger concluded that:

The components of the female gender pattern – immaturity, decreased social and intellectual competence, decreased autonomy ... and so on – are maladaptive for any individual in our society, regardless of his or her biological sex. ... Biological sex appears to be a result of a sequence of choices, judgements about an organism’s sex are almost always dichotomous [and] distinctions are based on the presence or absence of a functional penis. ... no one is ever labelled “sex ambiguous” (p. 145).

Like many of those who relied upon Money’s work, Unger made no attempt to recuperate the humanity of those who provided her the means to challenge Money’s claims. For example, in a discussion of individuals diagnosed with Turners Syndrome, (eg individuals with a single X chromosome [signified as XO]), Unger claimed that these were “*not* aberrant females” but rather:

Essentially neuter individuals whose external genitalia are similar to females. They are defined as females because of the inadequacy of our dichotomous classification system for sex (p. 112).

This quotation clearly indicates Unger’s recognition of the inadequacy of the classificatory system itself and hence a recognition that material reality can never be fully apprehended by a binary framework. In an article published the same year (1979b), Unger took the issue up once more. She fired missives at the way that

perceived differences between the sexes were used as explanatory tools.<sup>221</sup> In her view the practice highlighted uncritical assumptions about the biological basis of sex differences and reduced the likelihood that researchers would look to environmental factors to explain behaviour:

When an assumed sex difference is investigated and found to be nonexistent, the argument simply shifts to another ground ... the fact that sex differences are frequently used as an explanation rather than as a description suggests strong underlying (and unexamined) assumptions about the biological causality of sex differences (p. 1087).

While arguing that sex should only ever be used as a descriptor, explanatory power was precisely what made gender useful for Unger. This was especially so when gender was put to work for self-understanding since in her view, it was a better predictor of behaviour. Unger justified this claim by arguing that since gender did not have the same biological implications as the term sex, it was useful for discussing characteristics and traits considered appropriate to males and females. In her view, using the term gender when discussing the non-physiological (that is, cultural) aspects of sex, made it possible to “reduce assumed parallels between biological and psychological sex” (Unger, 1979b:1086). Unger articulated the hope that gender - used together with sex - would “provide a useful tool for our ultimate understanding of people - sex unspecified” (p. 1093). Unger’s work exemplifies yet again how

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<sup>221</sup> In light of the previous discussion, it is likely that Unger’s critique was directed at Money although this is not explicitly stated.

Stoller's reformulation of gender had considerably more appeal (and thus more currency), to feminist scholarship than Money's original version.

Dorothy Dinnerstein's widely cited *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (1976), was offered as another contribution towards the feminist project.<sup>222</sup> Dinnerstein situated gender relations (rightly in my view) as the central coordinating matrix for all other social arrangements, relations that in her opinion, were impossible to sustain in light of the rapid technological changes of recent history. Dinnerstein considered that women's responsibility for the care of the young lay at the heart of social, political and personal neuroses that were endemic to contemporary life and, echoing Friedan, also formed the basis of human malaise.

Prevailing gender relations were effectively obsolete, she argued, yet they persisted because of a nostalgic attachment to "a suicidal stance toward the realities on which our collective survival hing[ed]" (p. 231). While her analysis was complex, Dinnerstein's solution for change was relatively simplistic: increase men's involvement in childrearing and reduce women's involvement correspondingly. Simplistic solutions aside, Dinnerstein's work is important to the current discussion because it offers an example of how, once it began to settle into feminist scholarship, gender became *the* signifier of the social by virtue of the sex/gender distinction. It is noteworthy that Dinnerstein did not include gender in the definitional section of her text. This would suggest that its meaning was already fully assumed by her.

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<sup>222</sup> Dinnerstein was, at the time of writing *The Mermaid*, a practising Gestalt therapist. The book, she said, had been a long time in the making and contained ideas that she had tested on her undergraduate students while teaching psychology at Rutgers University from 1966-1974 (Dinnerstein, 1976: vii-xv).

A trend evident in feminist scholarship in psychology throughout the 1970s and 1980s was the promotion of androgyny as an ideal type (Bem, 1971; Kaplan, 1980; Singer, 1976).<sup>223</sup> An example of this trend is the work of June Singer who defined androgyny as an extraordinary state of consciousness. As such, Singer believed the concept was threatening to many people - particularly those with vested interests in conventional ideas about “sex (maleness and femaleness) and gender (masculinity and femininity)” (p. 25). Singer’s analysis exemplified a utopic vision of a world free from the constraints of differentiated genders: a world where values traditionally associated with women such as cooperation, the pursuit of collective goals, intuition and an emphasis on relationship were preferable to competition, individualism, rationality and power and violence, respectively (p. 29). In other words, androgynous individuals represented a kind of reified prototypical femininity.

In order to fully elaborate her version of androgyny, Singer felt compelled to identify what it was not. It was not, hermaphroditism and nor was it bisexuality though it was, she said, often confused with either or both of these. For Singer hermaphroditism was a “*physiological abnormality in which sex characteristics of the opposite sex are found in an individual*” (p. 30, emphasis in original). She went on to argue that hermaphroditism referred primarily to genitals abnormally formed to resemble the ‘opposite’ sex, noting that in literature and mythology “hermaphrodites are [either] weaklings or monsters; in any case, *anomalies*” (p. 30, emphasis added). Bisexuality

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<sup>223</sup> I would remind the reader that androgyny as an ideal type was also popular among feminists working in other disciplines. See for example Rubin (1975) and Jaggar (1980).

on the other hand, referred to a psychological condition that Singer believed was evidenced by,

A lack of clarity in gender identification: that is, to confusion about masculinity or femininity. Bisexuality refers to people who at one time or another in their adult lives have felt strong sexual attraction for members of both sexes (p. 30).

Note how both these states of being - one framed as physiological and the other as psychological - are both pathologised in essentially the same way by this analysis. Singer's reference to *opposite sexes* in the first instance, along with the conflation of doubtful gendered identifications and confusion in the second, demonstrate the heterocentrism that informed her work. Indeed this model could only work by dismissing that which exceeded a heterosexual matrix.

The androgyny principle Singer claimed, was "intuitively experienced as the key that can unlock the prison of sex and gender" (p. 35). This key was available to anyone courageous enough and imaginative enough to use it. Lest the reader be in any doubt about where Singer's commitment lay, the following declaration made it patently clear:

The bodily experience of androgyny can find its ultimate expression through sexual intercourse when this is experienced in the spirit of evolutionary consciousness. Androgyny expresses itself through coitus in a dissolution of gender identity (p. 37).

While others who promoted androgyny as an ideal type did not fall prey to such vigorous heterosexism,<sup>224</sup> this example demonstrates some of the excesses to which Money's ideas about gender and sexuality can, and have been, deployed.<sup>225</sup> Although Money gave some credence to the possibility of an androgynous identity, his commitment to reproductive complementarity and the lack of role models, meant that androgyny was not in his view, a viable mode of being (Money, 1995).

Chodorow (1974; 1978), was another to propose that basic differences in male and female personality resulted from the differential experience of social environments. Like many of her contemporaries, she was unconvinced by biological determinist arguments and equally unconvinced by arguments that privileged patterns of socialisation. The way out of the impasse in her view was to understand how particular behaviours were given meaning via *interpersonal relationships*. For Chodorow, feminine personality came to define itself relationally in connection with others because of women's responsibility for the rearing of children.<sup>226</sup> Masculine personality, on the other hand, was structured by individuation and by a certain tension between individuation and a residual dependency. Thus for Chodorow masculine personality development was considerably more problematic than its

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<sup>224</sup> Perhaps the most well known feminist psychologist to promote a positive model of androgyny was Sandra Lipsetz Bem. Her work has not been included here because she did not employ the term gender until the 1980s, despite developing a tool to measure masculinity, femininity and androgyny in the early 1970s (Bem, 1971; 1981). See below.

<sup>225</sup> I suggest that Money would balk at such a deployment.

<sup>226</sup> Note that for Chodorow, women's responsibility for childrearing was not problematic as it was for Dinnerstein. Indeed, Chodorow saw its effects - women's relationality - as positive.

feminine counterpart. She argued the tension of which she spoke resulted in men being “psychologically defensive and insecure [despite] guaranteeing to themselves, socio-cultural superiority over women” (1974:66).

Chodorow cited “clinical and theoretical writings since Freud” to offer a model of how perceptions of gender difference are produced and reproduced (1979/1998:390). Drawing on Money’s and Stoller’s notion of a core gender identity, Chodorow defined that aspect of identity as a person’s cognitive sense of gendered self, in other words, the knowingness that one is a male or a female. Echoing Money, Chodorow stated that this core identity was established in the first two years of life and while a person’s sense of adequacy as a gender built on that core, such a sense would not and could not change that most “fundamental” of identities (p.390-391).

It was Chodorow’s argument that a core masculine identity was qualitatively different than a core feminine identity and it was that difference that lay at the heart of personality differences between men and women. This insight provided for Chodorow, the key to understanding:

The extent to which psychological and value commitments to sex differences are so emotionally laden and tenaciously maintained [and] the way gender identity and expectations about sex roles and gender consistency are so deeply central to a person’s consistent sense of self (1974:43).

Chodorow argued strongly against essentialist accounts of difference by contrasting her analysis with both the Lacanian school of thought advanced by French feminists

such as Luce Irigaray and more orthodox Freudian approaches (such as that of Juliet Mitchell (1974)). Chodorow questioned the merits for feminism of using gender differences as a central organising concept since such differences were never “absolute, abstract, or irreducible” (1979/1998:384). She believed that gender differences were created socially, experientially and psychologically in a manner that was just as situated as differences between women were. Differences between men and women in her view did not exist in and of themselves, for the precise reason that they were relational.

Chodorow maintained that male and female bodies had relevance for “the question of gender difference” since:

We live an embodied life: we live with those genital and reproductive organs and capacities, those hormones and chromosomes, that locates us physiologically as male or female (1979/1998:395).

However, she was at pains to point out that perceptions about anatomical sex differences had to be shaped by factors other than biological ones. While it was impossible to know what a child would make of their body in a genderless or “non-sexually organised world”, Chodorow argued that “it was not obvious that major significance [would be attached] to biological sex differences, to gender differences, or to different sexualities” (p. 395, *fn. 18*). While firmly grounded in psychoanalysis, Chodorow’s perspective attempted to bridge the nature/nurture dichotomy through this relational model, otherwise known as Object Relations theory. Chodorow’s analysis was, for the most part, sympathetic to Money’s account of gender, not least

because it invoked the notion of a core identity. It also recognised differential socialisation of boys and girls as a major component of gender and accounted for the complementation aspect of Money's gender through her emphasis on relationality. Moreover, Chodorow's model retained gender's relation to the body, which may go some way towards explaining the relative ease with which gender slipped into her vocabulary.

### ***Feminist anthropology***

Anthropology had long held an interest in the social relations between men and women across cultures. Texts such as Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament* (1935/1963), and *Male and Female* (1962), had gained the status of anthropological classics, yet they represented an exception rather than a rule in their analyses of the relations between men and women. For the most part anthropologists - and Mead was no exception on this count - took their cues directly from biology asserting the time-worn argument that the earliest sexual divisions of labour were a direct result of women's reproductive and nurturing capacities.<sup>227</sup> The hunter/gatherer theory of social relations was the received anthropological wisdom that explained male domination across cultures.

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<sup>227</sup> Mead's methodologies have been heavily criticised since the 1980s, as has her unwavering belief in the positive value and neutrality of science. Yet as Rayna Rapp has noted, Mead's "insistence on the plasticity of the life cycle and the cultural context within which sexuality, marriage and reproduction are structured and in turn, structure individual and group experiences" provided the ground for a feminist anthropology (Rapp, n.d). For a fascinating feminist recuperation of Mead that offers a strong critique of the new-Right agenda that is said to underpin the first and arguably most vitriolic detraction of Mead, see di Leonardo (2001).

*Toward An Anthropology of Women* (1975), was compiled in response to a growing suspicion by feminist anthropologists toward traditional anthropological discourses about women. As editor Rayner Reiter explained:

Looking for information about ourselves and about women in other societies, feminists have had to join Third World peoples, American Blacks, and Native Americans in expressing their distrust of the body of literature which mainstream anthropology has called objective (1975: 13).

Despite women's status being increasingly problematic in the western context since the 1960s, there was a dearth of material that specifically took women's perspectives into account. Those that did, argued Reiter, tended to be marginalised within mainstream anthropological research and teaching and consigned to what she termed a "feminist ghetto" (p. 13).<sup>228</sup>

By the time that Marilyn Strathern (1976)<sup>229</sup> offered her analysis of the process of stereotype-making, Stoller's reformulated gender - as the sex/gender distinction - appears to have naturalised in anthropological writing. This is evident by the way that Strathern offered gender as a referent for cultural stereotypes and sex as the "physiological basis for discrimination" (p. 49). Strathern argued that gender constructs not only drew upon sexual difference as a source of symbolism, they also

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<sup>228</sup> The insight that feminist research risked being ghettoised was of concern to feminist theorists across a range of disciplines (Gould & Kern-Daniels, 1977; Unger, 1979a; 1979b).

<sup>229</sup> Strathern was a British anthropologist who was awarded a PhD in anthropology from Girton College, Cambridge University. The article under discussion was written while Strathern was based at the University of Papua New Guinea.

operated as a mode of ordering social relations.<sup>230</sup> Gender, by her account functioned as a language tool for making sense of things over and above any *actual* differences between men and women. Moreover, gender not only set up boundaries between males and females, it also provided the rules for communication between these two apparently mutually exclusive categories.

Strathern argued that the Western preoccupation with the nature/culture divide motivated *and* underpinned scientific research and increasingly, a growing body of feminist theory. The relentless quest to understand the cultural and biological composition of maleness and femaleness always has difference at its heart. Yet it was not a difference that signified (let alone celebrated) diversity, rather it was of another order altogether. Difference was used to symbolise and reinforce a dichotomous relationship between males and females, and by extension between nature and culture.

Money's version of gender - as presumably, any other - reflected less any concrete reality and more a set (or sets) of ideas in Strathern's view.

The sex differences that ideas about gender rest upon are 'both gross anatomical characteristics and variations in quality of behaviour and mentality. [...] In most societies gender thus has the appearance of being a straightforward representation of natural sex characteristics (Strathern, 1976:50).

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<sup>230</sup> For a similar analysis, see the earlier discussion of Goffman's work.

Indeed, while Money certainly did try to reconcile the nature/culture split, his reliance on binary concepts of sexuality<sup>231</sup> and his compulsion to meta-theorising resulted in a range of theories that were indeed seemingly straightforward representations of highly complex phenomenon. As Deaux (1987), reminds us, most concepts of masculinity and femininity (Money's included) are oversimplified accounts of unstable, multi-dimensional phenomenon. Such accounts tend to convey whether intentional or not, "a sense of stability and permanence to things that are inherently fluid and inconsistent" (Deaux, 1987:301).

Notwithstanding the work of all these feminist scholars, it should be noted that many influential feminist scholars did not use the term gender at all during the 1970s. While gender has become indispensable to the way that English speakers understand 'ourselves' - individually, socially, politically and theoretically - it has clearly not always been so. The absence of gender in the early works of Sandra Bem (1971), Betty Friedan (1963), Michelle Rosaldo (1975), and Sherry Ortner (1974) for example, did not diminish the potency of their analyses. That scholarship, along with some of the more radical feminist treatise relied instead upon older terms such as sex role and sexual identity to do the work that has become gender's (almost) exclusive preserve (see for example, Firestone, 1970; Rich, 1977). This adds further weight to the argument that gender is a thoroughly historical conceptual phenomenon.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> This issue is covered in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>232</sup> This is the argument pursued by Hausman in *Changing Sex* (1995), see also Germon (1998).

### ***Conceptual confusion and contested meanings***

Research into the ways in which gender was employed outside of sexology during the 1970s indicates that the term was used inconsistently throughout the academy generally<sup>233</sup> and in feminist theory particularly. The work of sociologist, Mary Saltzman Chafetz (1974; 1978), offers a particularly salient example of the type of slippage evident in material from that era. In the introductory chapter<sup>234</sup> of the first edition of *Masculine/Feminine or Human?*, Chafetz contrasted *innate* gender with *learned* sex. She wrote:

Sex role is a different order of phenomenon than gender. The relevant terms are not “male” and “female”, which are gender terms, but “masculine” and “feminine” (1974:3).

Compare this to the same chapter of the second edition (entitled “Is Biology Destiny?”), where the terms are switched without explanation:

Gender role is a different order of phenomenon than sex. The relevant terms are not “male” and “female,” which are sex terms, but “masculine” and “feminine” (1978:3).

While the first edition contained no references to either Money or Stoller, the second included a three page of discussion devoted to potential links between hormones, chromosomes and behaviour and cited Money and Ehrhardt (1972). It was precisely

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<sup>233</sup> See for example, Ounsted and Taylor’s (1972) collection.

<sup>234</sup> The chapter was entitled “Gender or Sex Role”.

this type of slippage that inspired debates within feminist scholarship about appropriate terminology and calls for conceptual clarity. Nevertheless gender continued to be used interchangeably with sex to reference social behaviours and expectations (ie social roles), and it continued to compete with the term 'sexual identity' throughout the 1970s.<sup>235</sup>

By the mid-1970s Stoller's reformulated gender - that is, as distinct from sex - had begun to naturalise in anthropological and sociological writing, in particular. As part of the process of bedding down definitional terms, a number of scholars grappled with the conceptual difficulties of the sex/gender split. Articles appeared in feminist and more generalised academic journals and anthologies questioning the efficacy of using the terms gender, 'sex' and 'sex role' interchangeably (Gould & Kern-Daniels, 1977; Lopata, 1976; Lopata & Thorne, 1978; Strathern, 1976; Tresemer, 1975; Unger, 1979b). The debates focussed on three key areas that included: the erratic and inconsistent use of both sex and gender; the slippage between gender role and sex role (Gould & Kern-Daniels, 1977); and the relation of the term 'role' to the term 'identity' (Lopata, 1976; Lopata and Thorne, 1978). Everyone who engaged in the debates agreed on one thing: consistent terminology was important if a rigorous analysis of gender was to ever fully develop.

Gould and Kern Daniels believed terminological confusion, particularly in feminist theory, stemmed from the fact that so many of the roles assigned to women (such primary caregiver of children), derived from, or had some loose association with their

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<sup>235</sup> Once gender had consolidated as *the* 'correct' term in feminist theorising, *sexual identity* was freed up for conceptualising identities based on erotic and libidinal inclinations.

reproductive roles. Thus sex and gender seemed to blend together in apparently seamless ways. However, they cautioned that:

Perpetuating this overlap implicitly sanctions a neo-Freudian argument for the role and utility of women in society, and hence some version of anatomy as social destiny (p. 184).

The authors advocated conceptual clarity to enable a Sociology of Sex and Gender (1977:182).<sup>236</sup> Their particular version of 'correct terminology' followed Stoller's sex/gender distinction since in their analysis, biological characteristics and social-cultural differences were not interchangeable and so neither were sex and gender. Gender's inherent sociality meant that in Gould and Kern Daniels view, it could be used to encompass all behaviours and attitudes that were "socially constructed, socially perpetuated and socially *alterable*" (p. 184, emphasis added). Like Stoller, they reinforced the sex/gender split by advocating gender for everything recognised as masculine or feminine within a social context while sex stood for everything recognised as outside of the social and therefore relegated to biology.

Still others weighed into the terminology debates by taking issue with the semantics of terms such as 'role'. Lopata (1976; Lopata & Thorne, 1978), for example, articulated a preference for the term 'sexual identity' over 'sex roles' (1976:172) In Lopata's view, social roles referred to social functions such as parenting, friendship

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<sup>236</sup> As is turned out a 'Sociology of Sex' did not eventuate, perhaps in part for the reason offered by Money: that *sex* was a dirty three letter word, whereas gender was a clean six letter word stripped of any connection to carnality (Money, 1985b, 1995). A Sociology of Gender however, did develop and is now a common sub branch of sociology.

and the professions (such as those performed by doctors and teachers, for example). In an interesting turn, Lopata argued that role was not altogether applicable to gender, since the latter described “learned behaviour differentiated along the lines of biological sex” (1978:719). She did not deny the salience of maleness or femaleness in social interactions but suggested that what was at stake was “a pervasive sexual identity” that underpinned almost all social roles (1976:172; 1978:719). For Lopata, gender was of another order altogether, something fundamental (and so less changeable) that infused specific social roles engaged in by individuals.

Effectively Lopata was cleaving identity from role rather than simply drawing a distinction between sex and gender, just as Stoller had done. Lopata situated gender roles as sets of relations rather than sets of expectations, arguing that the use of the term ‘sex role’ masked issues of power and inequality by inevitably focusing on individual socialisation rather than on larger social structures. For Lopata, the only redeeming feature of the term ‘role’ was its ability to evoke a sense of enculturation rather than say, biologism. Her analysis can be read in part as a critique of the Parsonian tradition that had for so long dominated the social sciences.

Nancy Chodorow (1979/1998), identified gender roles as instruments of oppression and equated male-female relations with the relations of colonialism. Expressing a growing unease about feminists using gender as a central organising category, Chodorow suggested that the Western preoccupation with the nature/culture divide was increasingly providing the ground for a (then) growing body of feminist theory. The relentless quest to understand the cultural and biological composition of maleness and femaleness invoked sex differences to both reinforce and to symbolise a

dichotomous relationship between nature and culture. Sexual difference, in her view underpinned a search for self-identity.<sup>237</sup>

Anthropologist Marilyn Strathern (1976) had expressed similar concerns. While conceding that the manipulation of gender had enabled feminists to make rights claims, she remained highly critical of the way that some feminists were deploying the concept. Attempts to undermine the legitimacy of patriarchy by showing it had no mandate in biology, rendered culture an instrument of oppression that could offer no real vehicle for reform. Reformist or revolutionary aims that challenged the very notion of social relations would be forever limited to social forms whose “basis for legitimacy were so-called immutable biological facts” (p. 65). In other words, such strategies could only lead back to the very essentialism that revolutionists and reformists sought to overthrow.

So while some of these critiques focussed on the sex/gender distinction and others on a distinction between role and identity, still others sought to distinguish gender roles (as learned behaviour and expectations), from sex roles in the context of erotic activities (Tresemer, 1975). While many of these debates centred around a concern with semantics, there was also some debate as to the appropriateness for feminism of using gender as an organising principle. The debates themselves were perhaps necessary to the process of gender bedding down in the feminist lexicon, thus the degree of contestation may well have been reflective of the importance of gender to feminist discourse.

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<sup>237</sup> This is most evident in the work of feminist psychologists. See for example, Unger (1979b).

### ***Setting the terms, biting the hand***

I turn now to Money's long engagement with feminism, an engagement that was for a time reciprocal, though often uncomfortable. Indeed, with the passing of time feminism's relation to the work of Money could well be described as biting the hand that fed it. While Money initially offered himself as an ally of the feminist project, over the years he became increasingly critical of its direction and alienated from its foci.

In the index of one of Money's most widely cited texts, *Man, Woman, Boy, Girl* (1972), is the heading "Women's Liberation, quotable material" (p. 310). Under this heading is a raft of entries that direct readers to specific material in the text: material that Money clearly viewed as useful to a liberationist agenda. The index entries offer perhaps the most explicit example of how Money attempted to influence feminist debates. Among the entries to which I refer is the rather provocatively entitled "Priority of the Female in Differentiation".<sup>238</sup> Turning to the relevant page, the reader will find the following statement:

Stated in non-technical terms, the lesson of embryonic anatomy is that it is easier for nature to make a female than a male. The familiar embryonic and foetal rule is that something must be added to produce a male. Quite possibly, the same paradigm may apply also to gender-identity differentiation, though there is yet no conclusive proof of this hypothesis (Money, 1972:147).

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<sup>238</sup> This entry is cross-referenced to the equally provocative 'Psycho-sexual Frailty of the Male.'

This theory, coined in the late 1980s by Money as the “Eve/Adam principle” (1972:14-15, 19) gained considerable traction in medical and psychological circles over the course of the 1950s and 1960s before being promoted enthusiastically within feminism.<sup>239</sup> Citing an earlier work of Money’s (1965a), Millet for example, stated decisively in *Sexual Politics* that:

It is now believed that the human foetus is originally physically female until the operation of androgen at a certain stage of gestation causes those with Y-chromosomes to develop into males’ (1971:30).<sup>240</sup>

Indeed this understanding of foetal development has gained axiomatic status and remains to this day, a given. The idea that all human embryos begin life as female (rather than say, hermaphrodite), provided compelling evidence for feminists to repudiate biologically determinist claims that male superiority was natural. It also served the interests of those feminists who sought to invert the hierarchical relation of man/woman through the reification of values traditionally associated with ‘Woman-ness’. Unfortunately there are a number of problems with appealing to theories such as this.

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<sup>239</sup> The ‘female as default’ theory came from embryological research (on rabbits), and was first proposed by Alfred Jost (1953). Jost went on to become a collaborator of Lawson Wilkins, who as readers may recall was an early patron of John Money (refer to Chapter two). For an astute critique of this particular received wisdom, see Fausto-Sterling (1985; 1997; 2000c:197-205).

<sup>240</sup> See also Sherfey (1972).

Firstly, the concept of female as default is underpinned by the time-worn assumption that links activity to maleness (eg. something happens to 'make' a male), and passivity to femaleness (eg. female bodies are the result of *nothing* happening, hence the 'default sex') (Fausto-Sterling, 2000c:197-205). Secondly, inverting a hierarchy does little to disrupt or challenge it in any significant way because the power relations inherent to it are maintained. Consequently, the hierarchy remains vulnerable to further reversals. Thirdly, the appeal itself reinforces the binary opposition of male/female that not only obscures any similarities between the sexes at a physiological level - of which there are many - but serves to further de-legitimate, and thus vanquish those that fall outside of the binary structure. My point in offering this particular example is to illustrate just how complicated and often contradictory the relation between feminist and medico-scientific understandings of bodies and subjectivities were, and continue to be.

Money's initial support for the emancipatory project of women's liberation gave way over time, to increasing frustration - and indeed vitriol - about the way that gender was put to work in feminist scholarship and activism. His frustration centred around the consolidation of the sex/gender split which he has always contended to be a false dichotomy that fails to account for mechanisms of learning mediated by the central nervous system. But more than this, the sex/gender distinction severed lust and sex from gender, effectively neutering the latter. It was Money's view that gender in its neutered form fed into a sex-negative neo-Puritanism (See for example, Money, 1985b; 1986b; 1995; 1998).

The neutering of gender is part of a tidal wave of antisexualism that spreads its octopus tentacles into the politics of what could become a new and dictatorial era of antisexualism. America is, by reason of its historical roots in the antisexualism of Puritanism, vulnerable in this respect (Money, 1985b:287).

Money had become increasingly dismayed with the radical feminist analysis of pornography as articulated by groups such as Women Against Pornography (WAP), and individuals such as Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon. An analysis of all pornography as violent and degrading to women was in his view, particularly crude and itself demeaning to women. Money believed it to be a crude analysis because it failed to recognise the specificity of different forms of pornography and the corresponding specificity of the audience. More importantly, he believed this analysis was degrading to women because it rendered all women as victims - or potential victims - of a rampant (and inevitably violent) male sexuality.

In one school of social dogma [...] pioneered by militant women against pornography, all erotic imagery, not only that of sadomasochistic violence or rape, is equated with pornography; all pornography is, by their own definition, equated with the subjugation of women as men's sex objects and the victims of their power and violence (1985b:287).

Money's dismay - manifest as fury - led him to blame feminism (along with social constructionism), for enabling a sex negative culture that positioned women as hapless victims and ultimately served to undermine gender equality.

In radical feminism, rape was radically redefined, as if by fiat, as being not an act of sexual assault or coercion, but an act of male violence and aggression perpetrated against women. ... The feminist movement had given its opponents ... the first inch of the mile they would need to defend the continuance of the tradition that woman, the weaker sex, is dependent on man's power of protection. Woman's role was surreptitiously being reiterated as the role of martyrdom, and of being helpless victims of the men who sacrificed them, incompetent to fend for themselves (1995:74-5).

As Bockting (1997) has commented, Money's fury made all feminists "scapegoats of America's sexual crisis" (p. 413). Moreover, it blinded Money to a raft of sex-positive poststructuralist feminist analyses that in many respects complemented his own (Bockting, 1997).

### ***Early feminist critiques of ICM and binary sex-gender***

I turn now to some of the earliest feminist critiques of Money's theories that together represent a body of work (however small) that truly engaged with his ideas (and hence in a form of dialogue) rather than simply replicating them. I do so to indicate feminism's shifting and contested relation to hermaphrodites over the past three and half decades. What is noteworthy about these critiques is the way in which some attempted to recuperate the hermaphrodite subject. As I have demonstrated in the preceding pages, none of the feminists who drew on Money's work during the first half of the 1970s did so in a particularly critical way. Yet as the decade progressed, that began to change as a handful of critiques began to appear before the hermaphrodite subject almost completely slipped out of the feminist frame during the

1980s.<sup>241</sup> Tresemer (1975), Kessler and McKenna (1978), Raymond (1979) and Fried's (1979) offered specifically feminist analyses that each challenged the hegemonic status of Money's ideas - to varying degrees.

The very first substantive feminist critique of hermaphrodite case management appeared in 1975. Social psychologist, David Tresemer (1975), offered an astute and sensitive reading of the prevailing treatment model that most other feminists had overlooked.<sup>242</sup> Tresemer, like many of his peers, was concerned to dismantle the assumption that observed differences between the sexes were reflected in, and hence mandated by, biology. He recognised that an assumption of bi-polarity demanded an exaggeration of perceived differences between the sexes. In a scorching critique, Tresemer suggested that in spite of influential social theorists such as Levi-Strauss and Piaget pointing to the primitiveness of binary concepts:

It is our more advanced civilisation that treats the intersexual as an unclassifiable monster and tries, through surgical and /or behavioural engineering to fit the person into one role or the other. Thus bipolarity better describes what we think about sex differences rather than what they necessarily are (p. 314-5).

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<sup>241</sup> The 'almost' of this claim references a sole piece of work that addressed the figure of the hermaphrodite during the 1980s, Anne Fausto-Sterling's *Myths of Gender* (1985).

<sup>242</sup> Tresemer was writing at a time when there was such a thing as the male feminist subject. It appears that extinction of this subject paralleled the shift from a rights based politics toward an epistemology of sexual difference. Tresemer received his doctorate from Harvard University and was at the time he wrote this piece, practising as a therapist and consultant in the state of Vermont.

Tresemmer was articulating the is/ought distinction that drives so much of the work of the biomedical sciences. Bipolarity of gender, he argued, was an issue that had to be discussed rather than assumed precisely because such ideas denied legitimacy to those who were born hermaphrodite. Moreover, he argued that:

The dual-role system is affirmed in the case of biological hermaphrodites when physicians are enjoined to help the horrific 'it' become at least a partially acceptable 'him' or 'her' (p. 326).

Another analysis to tackle the implications of binary constructs of gender for hermaphrodite subjects offered by Unger (1979a), who noted that in western societies (at least), only two sexes were socially defined so effectively "only two sexes really exist" (p.12). The birth of a child inevitably required the adults around it to "engage in a kind of 'construct-a-sex' game" (p. 12). Unger noted that because gender was always linked to genital appearance, never randomly assigned, there was little or no allowance for ambiguity. A child whose anatomy fell outside the parameters of what was constituted as *normal* was faced with the prospect of surgical reconstruction to create the appearance of either maleness or femaleness.

One of the first feminist texts to use a social constructionist methodology was Kessler and McKenna's *Gender: An ethnomethodological approach* (1978).<sup>243</sup> While 'social

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<sup>243</sup> Kessler and McKenna began writing this book while both were graduate students in the Social-Personality doctoral program at the City University of New York. They received their earliest training in social psychology under the guidance of Stanley Milgram who they credit

constructionism' had been circulating in sociology for over a decade when Kessler and McKenna wrote this text it was not then a favoured methodology in feminism.<sup>244</sup> Kessler and McKenna used it to show that "a world of two 'sexes' [was] the result of the socially shared, taken-for-granted methods which members use to construct reality" (p.vii). This perspective located social members (including researchers and theorists), firmly within the social interactions of everyday life.

A crucial part of Kessler and McKenna's argument hinged on the fact that gendering was never a one-off event at birth but functioned as a ritualistic process of daily life. The very first instance of gendering they called gender 'assignment,' in order to differentiate it from all subsequent occurrences. The idea of gendering as a process generated their primary research questions, which included the following: "How, in any interaction, is a sense of the reality of a world of two, and only two, genders constructed?" (1978:5) and moreover,

What kinds of rules do we apply to what kinds of displays, such that in every concrete instance we produce a sense that there are only men and women, and that this is an objective fact, not dependent on a particular instance? (p. 5-6).

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with teaching them to study phenomenon for its own sake rather than wedding themselves to particular theories (McKenna & Kessler, 2000:66). When *Gender* was published in 1978, McKenna was teaching at Sarah Lawrence College (and promptly lost her job because of it), while Kessler was a faculty member at the more progressive Purchase College, State University of New York (p.67)

<sup>244</sup> Social constructionism was originally offered as a methodological framework by British sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967).

In order to tackle those questions, Kessler and McKenna proposed the idea of gender attribution, defined as a complex interactive process. They noted that in most interactions, participants were simultaneously involved in both attributing gender and having gender attributed to them. An individual's identity as a gender was referred to as self-attribution.

Kessler and McKenna were particularly concerned with how gender was constructed conceptually (and literally) by members of the scientific community and so turned to medical and biological research on hermaphrodites. Indeed a great deal of the text is dedicated to the subject. In order to highlight the constructedness of the ideas that they were concerned to dismantle, Kessler and McKenna stated that they would use the term gender, "even when referring to those aspects of being a woman (girl) or man (boy) that have traditionally been viewed as biological" such as chromosomally or hormonally (1978:7).

They offered a convincing account of the way that the *idea* of dichotomous sex – as mutually exclusive and oppositional categories - led those who worked with hermaphrodites to believe in the idea that hermaphrodites were *really* male or *really* female. That is, hermaphrodites could only be conceptualised as a blend or combination of the two existing categories, rather than as members of another category altogether. Kessler and McKenna argued that the facticity of hermaphrodites brought the process of gender attribution to the fore. To that I would add that the concept of sexual *ambiguity* only has meaning within a conceptual framework constituted by two - and *only* two - legitimate categories.

While Kessler and McKenna's analysis was for the most part an astute and highly critical analysis of the production of dichotomous sex within the sciences, their methodological framework did not prevent them from relying on the very material of whose production they were so critical. That is, Money's explanations of so-called normal human development which rendered hermaphrodites as those "born with various ... biological *abnormalities*" (Kessler and McKenna, 1978:47, *emphasis added*). Kessler and McKenna linked different forms of 'abnormality' to chromosomes, the internal organs associated with reproduction, the external genitalia and hormones.<sup>245</sup> A considerable proportion of their discussion amounted to an uncritical reading of Money and Stoller's ideas about gender - presented as 'fact' - to refute the idea that biology determined a person's gender identity or role. What evidence did they draw upon? The evidence offered by Money that individuals diagnosed as hermaphrodite grow up to be 'normal' males or 'normal' females. In their discussion of the role of chromosomes, Kessler and McKenna asserted that "there [had] been no report of AIS affected individuals developing anything other than normal female gender identities" (p. 50). Kessler and McKenna's reliance on the ideas whose production they were critiquing had two consequences. Not only did it undermine their analysis, it also served to highlight once more that the relation of feminist scholarship to those who fall outside of the binary categories of sex-gender has never been an innocent one.

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<sup>245</sup> Readers may recall that it was these very same elements that Money used to discredit the role of biology in gender formation in his earliest works. Kessler and McKenna's argument therefore, replicated Money's on a number of levels.

Another feminist scholar to offer a strong critique of Money's work was medical ethicist, Janice Raymond (1979). As part of her denunciation of transsexualism, Raymond argued that Money's interactionist approach was merely a ruse that masked an inherent biological determinism. In her view Money's claim that the nature/nurture debate was obsolete merely served to shift the terms of the debate from the idea that biology equalled destiny, to the idea that socialisation equalled destiny. Moreover, she was critical of the way that the idea that socialisation mapped onto prenatal hormonal influences had taken on the force of a natural law. While conceding the power of socialisation in constituting gendered identities, under Money's paradigm Raymond believed it became both absolute and static.

Raymond believed Money's work to be dangerous on two levels: firstly, because it had become a "kind of bible on sex differences" and secondly, because it enjoyed such wide acceptance among feminists (1979:132). For Raymond, transsexual surgery operated on a historical continuum of medical practices that legitimated surgical intervention as a form of behaviour modification. She cited the 19<sup>th</sup> century practice of clitoridectomy and its contemporary equivalent in North Africa yet remained strangely silent about the place of clitoridectomy in contemporary ICM despite being fully conversant with its centrality through her reading of Money.

In a collection entitled *Women Look at Biology Looking at Women* (1979), Barbara Fried<sup>246</sup> examined the way that language use shapes perceptions of reality and

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<sup>246</sup> Fried was a doctoral candidate in English Literature at Harvard when she wrote this piece. Active in the women's movement, she was also an established freelance editor, writer and organizer of various feminist 'cultural events' (Fried, 1979:59).

moreover, shapes descriptions of reality - particularly the 'reality' of sex and gender. Fried turned to Money's theory of gender acquisition and his linking of gender to native language acquisition. She used that connection to demonstrate the means by which language not only "communicates the link between one's sex and one's gender identity [but actually] *constitutes* that link" (p. 39, emphasis in original). For Fried,

The fundamental problem with accepting *a priori* sexual duality as a primary construct of reality is that all of our discussions about sex and gender must then take place *within* this construct. All that the work on the relationship of sex to gender has done is move us from a consideration of human activity in two categories (male and female) to one in two pairs (male, masculine; female, feminine) (p. 52).

Fried made the point that, despite the relationship between biology and environment being extremely complex and on many levels unfathomable, researchers like Money et al framed those relationships in terms of simple and accessible dichotomies. In her view, Money disregarded the internal mechanisms that influence how so-called facts come to be perceived, both by him and by 'us'. Her close reading of the way Money interpreted the evidence before him was intended to demonstrate just how culture bound his scientific interpretations were.

Fried went on to strike at the heart of Money's methodologies (and by extension, the scientific method itself), by asking how useful it was to compare hermaphrodite

individuals with ‘controls’ who shared with the former, some characteristics<sup>247</sup> but did not share any of those associated with hermaphroditism. Fried argued that the presumption that any behavioural differences between such groups were attributable to biological differences was a fallacious claim that ignored human consciousness and moreover, merely implied rather than proved such differences.

Not only did Fried tackle Money at a methodological level, her analysis also took aim at the tautological structure of the English language itself: a language differentiated according to sex by gender.<sup>248</sup> For Fried, gender was by definition:

A dualistic concept, since the word is merely the symbol for our belief in a dualistic world.<sup>249</sup> That belief has played a role so fundamental in ordering human experience that, in general, the lives of women and men in this and every other known society are undeniably different (1979:55).

That Fried should address the way that language shapes and constrains the very possibilities of what can be thought, in her discussion of Money, is not insignificant

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<sup>247</sup> Both groups were matched for family situation, class and IQ levels.

<sup>248</sup> Indeed, it is that tautology and the duality underpinning the English language that presents one of the greatest challenges to writing a history of the concept gender and to a critique of the sex/gender distinction.

<sup>249</sup> Philosopher Alison Jaggar (1977) offered a similar analysis of how we ‘know’ the body and how we ‘know’ nature. Arguing for a radical restructuring of language by adopting gender neutral pronouns and proper nouns, Jaggar adopted a form of generic pronoun derived from plural forms: namely, ‘tey’, ‘tem’, and ‘ter(s)’ (1977:95).

given how intricately gender was tied to language in his account.<sup>250</sup> Yet Fried's critique of Money's work was itself not altogether unproblematic. Her reading of Money suggested that if something wasn't sex then it must be gender and vice versa. This, I suggest, is an example of a misperception of Money's ideas that might well be read as an early precursor to the now common claim that 'Money's gender' is all about 'nurture'.

Before concluding the discussion of these early critiques it is worth noting that Erving Goffman's analysis addressed gender's relation to the hermaphrodite subject.

Goffman argued that the imperative to sort infants into one of two classes at birth on the basis of the visual appearance of the genitals (perceived to be di-morphic), was what allowed a sex-linked label of identification. For Goffman, gender was a "remarkable organisational device" because, despite the existence of those who did not fit neatly into the two legitimate sex classes, sex-class placement continued to be rigorously achieved (Goffman, 1977:302).

Goffman's analysis stands in stark contrast to Oakley and Millet's work and highlights how the uncritical acceptance of a binary model of sex by feminists equated to a form of complicity in the ongoing subjugation of hermaphrodite subjects. It is somewhat paradoxical that the lack of attention paid in most of the early feminist scholarship to the plight of the medically-mediated hermaphrodite was paralleled by a utopic vision of an androgynous, genderless (or gender-free) world. Rubin for example, believed that the whole point of a feminist revolution was the opportunity to

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<sup>250</sup> Recall that Money had taken gender from philology in the first instance, and linked gender acquisition to language acquisition in the second.

liberate *all* of humanity from the 'straightjacket of gender' as the following quotation makes clear.

If the sexual division of labour were such that adults of both sexes cared for children equally, primary object choice would be bisexual. If heterosexuality were not obligatory, this early love would not have to be suppressed, and the penis would not be overvalued. If the sexual property system were reorganised in such a way that men did not have overriding rights in women (if there was no exchange of women) and if there were no gender, the entire oedipal drama would be a relic (1975:199-200).

For Rubin, androgyny represented a nostalgic yearning, since in her analysis it was the original, untainted, pure state of childhood, a state that preexisted the "division and deformity" (p.185) of androgynous infants into boys and girls. Philosopher Alison Jaggar (1977) was another who appealed to an androgynous sensibility, calling for the creation of a culture that incorporated the most positive aspects of "both the present male and present female cultures" (p.105).

Tresemmer was one of the few feminist scholars to recognise the link between a utopias of androgyny and the figure of the hermaphrodite when he commented that, in spite of all the negative connotations associated with hermaphroditism as 'anomalous or 'freakish', there was evidence of a strong tradition of "reverence and awe for the biological hermaphrodite as a metaphor of psychological androgyny" in the work of Jung and others (1975:326).

## ***Conclusion***

Gender finally settled into the feminist lexicon during a historical period of great change in political and academic feminism.<sup>251</sup> What had begun as a predominantly white middle-class movement was faced throughout the 1980s with challenges from within, most particularly from women of colour over the politics of representation under the reified sign of 'Woman' (Moore, 1994).<sup>252</sup> Those challenges occurred in tandem with a transition in political strategy: from a politics of equality towards one of difference. The 1980s also saw the beginning of a turn towards post-structuralism in feminist theory, a turn that was to have significant theoretical ramifications.<sup>253</sup>

The epistemological debates that resulted went to the very heart of what was being struggled over and indeed structured the terms of those debates with respect to how it was possible to 'know' nature, to know sex and indeed to know 'the body'. Feminist philosophers weighed into the debates by arguing that it was not possible to know 'nature', a perspective that provided the thrust of many of the feminist critiques of the body during the 1980s and 1990s. The apparent naturalness of sex - a category once beyond interrogation - was put under the spotlight placing the sex/gender distinction itself under scrutiny. The distinction that had once been so fruitful for feminist

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<sup>251</sup> This very distinction is itself arbitrary.

<sup>252</sup> For a range of critiques on the politics of race see for example, hooks (1981; 1984; 1989), Davis (1981), Collins (2001).

<sup>253</sup> Arguably an upsurge of interest in psychoanalysis (in the Lacanian tradition) paralleled an interest in the implications of a Foucauldian analysis for feminism.

analyses at one level, become more and more constraining precisely because it was so thoroughly saturated in a binary logic.<sup>254</sup>

Yet at the same time, it cannot be denied that those constraints were at some level productive, as manifest through the (apparent) discovery of the problems inherent in the distinction. That 'discovery' served to energise an entire industry within feminist theorising of the body and of sexual difference. By the 1990s, a central concern of feminist scholarship was the 'problematic space' created by the sex/gender distinction (Butler, 1990; Gatens, 1983, 1996; Nicholson, 1994; Sedgwick, 1991).<sup>255</sup> In a sense, by grappling with the very issue of access to reality (a thoroughly philosophical pursuit), and by seeking to manipulate the English language, these theorists were grappling with similar issues to those faced by Money in his quest to find a concept to account for identities that did not appear to have any straightforward relation to bodily formations.

It was during that same period (at the end of the twentieth century), that a number of feminist scholars began to re-engage with the plight of medically mediated hermaphrodites. Academic feminists once again turned their gaze toward a mainstreamed medical practice that had for the most part, escaped questioning (See Kessler 1990, 1998; Epstein 1990, 1995; Fausto-Sterling 1995, 2000; Dreger 1997, 1998, 2000, Angier 2000; Hausman 1995). In Chapter six I turn to those engagements when I explore theories of gender articulated by individual hermaphrodites and

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<sup>254</sup> The awareness of the constraints imposed by a binary logic with respect to debates about the body, sex and gender has not, I suggest prevented them from collapsing into one or other form of circularity or reversal.

<sup>255</sup> Gatens (1983) critique was exceptional since it represents a precursor to the later analyses.

intersex advocacy groups and by the academics who serve as their allies. As I will demonstrate, within that domain, gender is just as highly charged and contested as it has been in feminism.

One of the key aims of this thesis is to show that gender - as currently understood - has a very recent history. In this chapter I have examined one episode of that history in order to highlight some of the ways that gender was put to work in academic feminism. In order to do that, it has been necessary to make visible the irregular and inconsistent use of the concept by feminists throughout the 1970s. Although gender first entered feminist discourse at the beginning of the 1970s, calls for conceptual clarity and consistency in use were still being made as late as 1979 (Lopata and Thorne, 1979). This provides compelling evidence that the settlement of gender in feminism was not unproblematic.

The work of Money and Stoller served as an evidence base to repudiate the naturalness of gendered social relations and most particularly, the unequal status of women. Despite a number of early critiques of Money's theories and methodologies, and despite a certain unease articulated by some feminists very early on about relying on gender as a central organising principle, the usefulness of the concept to the theoretical and political projects of feminism eventually outweighed any such concerns – at least for a time. It has been the intention in this, as it has been in the previous and subsequent chapters, to show the dynamic character of the concept gender by tracing its history through various bodies of knowledge. I would suggest that gender is in a constant state of flux in much the same way that one's embodied experience as a gender is – subject to the vagaries of particular historical and political

moments. The fact that gender has become so indispensable to a huge body of feminist scholarship - arguably the site of some of genders' most avid interpellators over the past 35 or so years - is nothing short of phenomenal given that the concept was not used at all by feminist scholars until some 15 years after it was initially introduced by Money and did not settle into feminist discourse for a further 10 years. Yet within just five years of that settlement, gender was being written about and talked about as if it had *always* existed; as if its meaning was universal; and as if gender was the invention of feminism itself.

While feminism has been called upon to acknowledge and engage with how class, race, age, and context intersect with the sign of 'Woman', until recently it did not have to directly confront or engage with the multiplicity of sex. Ironically this was precisely what Money himself confronted and engaged with all along. What seems increasingly obvious is that feminism's tendency to fetishise sexual difference reinforced the binary logic so central to sexological and medico-scientific understandings of sex, gender - and sexuality. As Bidy Martin (1994), has noted,

Gender has come to do the work of stabilising and universalising binary oppositions at other levels including male and female sexuality, the work once done by the assumption of biological sex difference (p.104).

As I have argued throughout this thesis, a consequence of investing in the binary logics that imbue gender and sex is that hermaphrodite bodies are rendered abject: the impossible 'Other'. I want to suggest that an engagement with the reality of multiple types of bodies may well offer a means to break free of the circularity that continues

to haunt contemporary debates around sexual difference. In the chapter that follows, I turn to the issue of desire (in the sense of the erotic) in order to examine the relation of gender to sexuality on the one hand and to the way that hermaphrodites have historically been invoked by conceptualisations of sexuality - particularly aberrant desire - on the other.

## Chapter 5

*“I’m obliged to conform to someone else’s kinky fantasy – namely that sexualities come in neatly dividable identities that can be assigned and aligned by the bent world as well as the straight”*

*McKenzie Wark (1997:64)*

# 'Lovemaps': Desire for Money

## ***Introduction***

This chapter is concerned with the issue of desire. It is organised around an analysis of the erotic component of Money's 'gender'. I return to Money's work for a number of reasons. Firstly, many of the current axioms regarding both gender and sexuality can be traced directly to Money and secondly because desire is, and always has been, central to his theorising of gender. Recall that by Money's account, gender operates as an overarching term that includes, but is not limited to, the erotic:

Used strictly and correctly, gender is conceptually more inclusive than sex. It is an umbrella under which are sheltered all the different components of sex difference, including the sex-genital, sex-erotic, and sex-procreative components (1988:52-3).

Thus to write a genealogy of the concept of gender without taking into account a consideration of the erotic would effectively neuter gender by removing in Money's words, any association with the 'dirty carnalities of lust' (Money, 1988:52; 1995).<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> I remain highly cognisant of the potential dangers of separating the sexuo-erotic component of Money's gender from its other components, given the centrality Money accorded the former in his overall theorising of the latter. At the same time I am aware of the impossibility of doing justice to either within the space of a single chapter.

Such an omission would serve also to reinforce the sex/gender distinction, a distinction that I have attempted throughout this thesis to both analyse and refuse.

The previous two chapters have followed a temporal trajectory by focussing on various interventions made by others into the concept of gender after its introduction by Money in the mid-1950s. In Chapter three I examined the multiple interventions of psychoanalyst, Robert Stoller who, in the mid-1960s, made a distinction between gender identity and gender role but more importantly, was the first to conceptually split sex from gender. Making those distinctions allowed Stoller to develop an account of people whose gender was at odds with their (apparently 'normal') morphological status. The impact of the sex/gender distinction was enormous. Sex - itself once an umbrella term that incorporated the physiological, psychological, sexual and cultural components of selfhood - became the referent for all things biological ('nature') and gender the referent for the socio-cultural ('nurture') elements of subjectivity. While theoretically useful for Stoller, the sex/gender distinction would circumscribe the ways in which its proponents were able to address the sexual.

In Chapter four, I examined how Stoller's interventions into gender provided the women's movement of the late 1960s with a means of articulating a theoretical and political position regarding male-female relations. The concept of gender allowed feminism to repudiate biologically determinist explanations for women's inferior social, economic and political status. Sex was seen as the raw biological material upon which gender did its work: the former was rendered passive, subservient even, to its socio-cultural counterpart. Stripped of its connotations to sex and to the flesh, gender became a potent conceptual tool as well as a central object of analysis. Even though it

took almost a decade for 'gender' to bed down in the feminist lexicon, it soon became seemingly indispensable to that project: so indispensable in fact, that feminism began to claim gender as its own 'invention' during the 1980s and 1990s. With time the sex/gender distinction became increasingly constraining to feminist theorising because it was so heavily imbued with binary logic. Yet those very constraints served to energise an entire field of scholarship that took as its object the problematic space *between* sex and gender.

In both preceding chapters I have been concerned to highlight the consequences of the sex/gender distinction with respect to understandings of what it means to be human. Stoller effectively reinstated the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, a dualism that Money has steadfastly refused to entertain in all of his theorising over the past fifty years. Feminism for its part reinforced and reinscribed that duality through its investment in the sex/gender distinction. By bracketing off the sexual as somehow outside the horizon of gender, neither Stoller nor the majority of feminist theorists<sup>257</sup> throughout the 1970s and 1980s had a great deal to say about what *constituted* the sexual. Such investments have had significant implications for hermaphrodites since gender - in all its manifestations - has served to consolidate the debasement of hermaphrodites as not fully human. This is in spite of the fact that hermaphrodites form one of the grounds from which non-hermaphrodites have and continue to be, rendered by contrast, as fully human.

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<sup>257</sup> This is not to suggest that there were no feminist scholars who addressed this issue as the work of Rubin (1984/1993) attests. However, Rubin's work falls under the rubric of gay and lesbian studies as much as it does under feminism. Indeed she made a strong case that gay and lesbian studies was more appropriate forum for sexual theory than was feminism (Rubin, 1984).

The current chapter turns on Money's theorising of human sexuality (as a component of gender) and begins from the premise that understandings of human sexuality are integral to understandings of what it means to be human. That premise provides context for why so much of Money's work centres around the sexual. By taking an interactionist approach that necessarily refuses the dualisms of sex/gender and nature/nurture, Money was able to address the sexueroptic component of human subjectivity in ways foreclosed by dualistic accounts that strip gender of its associations to the erotic.

I analyse Money's (1988) text, *Gay, Straight and Inbetween* because it provides an account of his more fully elaborated theories of gender with respect to desire.<sup>258</sup>

Money has been theorising now for over five decades, continually refining and complicating his original ideas. While Chapter two looked at his very earliest theorising – of which the erotic was an integral component – this chapter focuses on the erotosexual component of Money's gender after he had extrapolated his ideas to the wider population. The first section of this chapter situates hermaphrodites in relation to early theories of sexuality, just as previous chapters have located them in relation to the wider concept of gender. The figure of the hermaphrodite has fulfilled a

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<sup>258</sup> I draw on a number of Money's other texts to supplement the discussion. My rationale for concentrating on one central text is because, for the most part, Money's published works serve as vehicles for the continual reiteration of his central ideas. The primary differences between texts published in the 1970s for example, and his most recent (Money, 2002) reflect aspects of temporal socio-cultural change. Note: Money's latest publication includes a response to the journalist John Colapinto's so-called expose of the story of the late David Reimer.

vital role in the development of theory and taxonomies in the sexual sciences, since the very earliest application of the scientific method to issues of desire.

Hermaphrodites are everywhere implicated in gender and by extension sexuality, since historically they have provided the sexual sciences with an evidence base for the ubiquity of dimorphic sex - paradoxical as that may seem.

The second section considers how desire – particularly same sex and so-called abberant desire – has historically been theorised in sexology. Money’s ideas did not come to life in a vacuum and so his theories must be situated within the broader context of the history of sexological thought. Gallagher and Laqueur (1987) have suggested that while the content of early discourses on sexuality may seem to contemporary eyes ‘bizarre, outrageous, or even comically absurd’, they nonetheless reveal a continuity of governing assumptions that permeate contemporary sexological research (p.xv).<sup>259</sup> A close reading of Money’s work supports that claim.

I begin by examining some of the methodological hallmarks of the sexual sciences before turning to five enduring (and problematic) principles that are woven through sexual theory. All of the methodologies and principles under discussion are the legacy of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs<sup>260</sup> who began publishing his ideas in pamphlet form in the

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<sup>259</sup> See also Garton (2004).

<sup>260</sup> Ulrichs was by trade a Hanoverian legal official who conducted a lifelong campaign for the decriminalisation of same sex desire. Much of his work was written during the period of unification of the Germanic states and was a direct appeal against the adoption of section 143 of the Prussian legal code which criminalised same-sex practices throughout Germany. The section was passed into law in 1871 as section 175 of the German Imperial legal code (Bullough, 1976, 1994)

late 1860s. Ulrichs' work prefigured the development of the sexual sciences since he was the first to apply the scientific method to the study of the erotic, although he was not himself medically or scientifically trained (Bullough, 1976; Kennedy, 1997, 1997a).

Money's theories offered a range of new terminologies and invigorated systems of classification but the foundational principles that underpin those theories (and methodologies) are not, by any means, new. In keeping with the tradition of the sexual sciences, Money has devoted much of his career to mapping and naming all manner of aberrant desires,<sup>261</sup> just as he attempted to provide an exhaustive nomenclature of various forms of hermaphroditism or intersexuality. Despite Money's attempts to recognise and legitimate desires previously categorised as 'perverse', his work remains underpinned by a framework of sexual dimorphism (that is, the idea that there are two and only two human sexes) that has reproduction as its touchstone. As a result, Money's theories of sexual desire fall under the rubric of inversion theory. The idea that one's anatomy equates to one's psychology and the idea that an individual's erotic orientations have some kind of constitutional basis are evident throughout his work, notwithstanding his tendency to refuse the nature/nurture distinction.

The final section of this chapter draws on specific critiques of many of the assumptions upon which Money's theories rest. Those critiques draw on the analyses of contemporary sexologists William Simon (1996) Edward Stein (1999), Michael Bockting (1997) and Deborah Tolman and Lisa Diamond (2001) all of whom have

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<sup>261</sup> Money is responsible for the development of a revised nomenclature of non-normative desires previously known as the perversions.

engaged with Money's concepts of the sexual. These theorists highlight by various means, the conceptual corner that Money paints himself into by grounding his understandings of desire in sexual dimorphism. These critiques serve as the springboard for an alternative framework through which to examine the sexual that I offer in the concluding chapter.

### ***Hermaphrodites in sexological thought***

The late nineteenth century is the period that marked the birth of the sexual sciences. While some historians have credited sexologists with the invention of the homosexual subject (see for example, Foucault, 1990),<sup>262</sup> others have suggested that the historical record does not support such a claim (Bristow, 1997; Garton, 2004; Greenburg, 1997). Rather, they argue, the medical and psychiatric discourses were appropriations of the discourses offered by the sexual reformers, and put to work within a clinical frame of reference (Bristow, 1997:179). By this account it was the official medical and scientific discourses that constituted a *counter*-discourse to that offered by those who dared speak in their own name.

During the nineteenth century various representations of deviant bodies converged with representations of deviant sexualities. The figure of the hermaphrodite provided an evidence base from which the early sexual scientists generated a plethora of classifications and theories of sex and desire. The embryological literature of the mid to late nineteenth century offered theorists a useful analogy for their concepts. That

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<sup>262</sup> In his discussion of reverse discourse Foucault asserts that "there is no question" that the ability for homosexuality "to speak in its own name" was enabled by the establishment of psychiatric, legal and other 'official' discourses of aberrant desires (1990:101).

analogy derived from the understanding that all human embryos began life in sexually undifferentiated form and from the fact that the penis and the clitoris<sup>263</sup> - like the ovaries and testes - developed from homologous structures: in other words, from identical tissue. The idea of an original underlying foetal bisexuality or bipotentiality offered early sex researchers a means by which to comprehend how aberrant desires (including same-sex desire) developed, and where their origins lay (Bullough, 2000; Hekma, 1994; Herdt, 1994; Kennedy, 1997; Reed, 2001; Rowold, 1998).<sup>264</sup>

The embryological analogy also functioned at another level. Hermaphroditism was understood then - as it today - as a mixture of features considered the exclusive property of males or of females. Comparisons between hermaphrodites and same-sex desiring non-hermaphrodites would have seemed entirely appropriate since sexual attraction to men was deemed to be an irrevocably feminine desire regardless of whether the bearer inhabited a male or a female body (and vice versa) (Stein, 1999). As mentioned above, the very first attempt at a scientific account of sexuality was conducted by Ulrichs who made explicit the link between hermaphroditism and same-sex desire by proposing that the latter constituted a hermaphroditism of the soul.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> The reproductive paradigm of sexuality promotes the complementarity of the penis and vagina as if it were they were the 'natural' homologues of each other. See Fausto-Sterling (2000c) for a critique of this perspective.

<sup>264</sup> Rowold suggests that the theory of original bisexuality was arguably the most important principle of sexological theories of congenital sexuality (1998:158).

<sup>265</sup> Ulrich's biographer Hubert Kennedy suggests that during the nineteenth century, it was commonly understood that a person's sexual instinct was located in the soul (Kennedy, 1997, 1997a). Note: I have been unable to locate English translations of Ulrichs' original texts and so here rely upon secondary sources including Kennedy for this information.

This enabled him to propose the existence of a 'third sex' that, while equivalent to men and women, was qualitatively different from them.

The idea of a 'third sex'<sup>266</sup> was not a new one at that time since it has a long history reaching back to the work of Plato, albeit with diverse meanings in different historical contexts.<sup>267</sup> While the earliest references to a 'third sex' marked deviant *bodies*, from the late nineteenth century on, the term became increasingly used to signify deviant *sexualities*. Ulrichs' called his 'third sexes' 'Uranians', a term he appropriated from Plato's *Symposium*. For Ulrichs' the existence of hermaphrodites offered proof that Uranians were a product of nature. His theories were not without controversy, however.

Some of the controversy generated by Ulrichs' work arose from the fact that he was not medically trained. Many within the psychiatric and medical fraternity dismissed his ideas because of that, but more importantly because he himself was a self-declared Uranian (Bullough, 1976; Kennedy, 1997, 1997a). This rendered him in the eyes of many critics as someone in need of treatment. Ulrichs' ideas were also attacked by the likes of Karl Maria Benkert (the earliest proponent of the term homosexual [c.1869]) because by Ulrichs' account, the male Urning possessed a 'feminine soul'. During the

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<sup>266</sup> I place the term in brackets as a means of distancing myself from the implicit hierarchical order of the term. To call hermaphrodites a third sex necessarily implies that males constitute a first sex, and females a second. I believe there is a strong case to be made that the embryological evidence supports the idea that hermaphrodites constitute a first sex from which the others derive.

<sup>267</sup> This tradition was refused by Money for reasons that will become apparent in the discussion that follows.

period marking the unification of the Germanic states, a specifically masculinist culture had developed whose proponents were hostile to the feminisation of male to male desire. From the outset then, a tension existed between concepts of same-sex desire that relied on a notion of transposition or crossing and those that promoted male to male desire as a pure and idealised form of male bonding (Bullough, 2000; Hekma, 1994).

Others to conflate hermaphroditism with non-normative desires and subjectivities in the early sexological literature included Magnus Hirschfeld and Richard von Krafft-Ebing. In Hirschfeld's work this is evidenced by the four categories which comprised his classification schema of aberrant sexualities and subjectivities. Hirschfeld's schema, developed in the early 1900s, was conceptualised as a continuum that comprised: a *genital type* that referred to genital ambiguity; a *somatic type* that referred to ambiguity at the level of secondary sex characteristics (distribution of adipose tissue and facial hair, etcetera); a *psychic type*, in contemporary parlance transsexuality; and, a *psychosexual type* representing those with same-sex desires (Bullough, 1976, 1994; Hirschfeld, 1914/2000; Steakley, 1995; Wolff, 1986).

Richard von Krafft-Ebing, author of *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1965/1998)<sup>268</sup> was another who turned to embryological understandings of foetal development to explain sexual variance.<sup>269</sup> His work differed markedly from that of the sexologists and

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<sup>268</sup> The first of the twelve editions of *Psychopathia Sexualis* was published in 1886, and the last shortly before his death in 1902 (Wolff, 1986).

<sup>269</sup> It was not just the sexual scientists however, that turned to the figure of the hermaphrodite. Sigmund Freud who wrote against much sexological theory also made reference to the

reformers mentioned above because it was grounded within the clinical frame of psychiatric medicine.<sup>270</sup> The dominant paradigm in that field at the end of the nineteenth century regarding sexual behaviours and subjectivities turned on notions of degeneration that were part and parcel of a larger colonial anxiety regarding progress and race.<sup>271</sup> It was in this climate that the locus of medicine shifted from the body to incorporate the self, even as the organic inherited body remained as the theoretical foundation upon which psychiatrists like Krafft-Ebing based their claims, as the following quotation makes evident:

Intermediary gradations between the pure type of man and woman [are] possible, quite in accordance with the original bisexual predispositions of the foetus. These grades may be due to some interference in the evolution of our present mono-sexuality (corresponding physical and psychical sexual characteristics) based upon degenerative, especially hereditary degeneration conditions (Krafft-Ebbing, 1965/1998:30).

By Krafft-Ebing's account, sexuality referred to so much more than desire and sexual orientation: it also incorporated character, thought, will and feeling. His classificatory system offered progressive degrees of development relating to desire with a four stage

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bisexual potential of the foetus and the physiological "residua of the 'other'" that remained in the body following differentiation (Freud, 1905/1953:7).

<sup>270</sup> See Reed (2001) for an analysis of the historical conditions that led to the displacement of organic theories of sexuality by those of degeneration.

<sup>271</sup> For further analyses of the intersection of race and sexuality in nineteenth century sexological discourse, see Bleys (1995), Halperin (1990), Herdt (1994), Reed (2001), and Somerville (1998).

schema that included the predominantly homosexual individual with a trace of heterosexual inclination (the psychosexual hermaphrodite) through to the most extreme type whose full fledged 'abnormal sexual instinct' as paralleled by a physiological transformation. Individuals who fell into that category were said not only to embody the character and emotions of 'the other', also were thought to undergo a bodily transformation so that they came to resemble the "opposite sex anthropologically" (Krafft-Ebing, 1965/1998:258).<sup>272</sup>

The above quotation provides an exquisite example of the way in which the aspects of the erotic and what we now know as gender were conflated with notions of progress, purity and taint. Recourse to foetal development offered something of a dilemma for many of the sexologists and sexual reformers of the late nineteenth century precisely because their theories were developed within the sociopolitical climate of colonialism. Sexual dimorphism was believed to be a mark of advanced racial development: the more sexually dimorphic a population, the more 'civilised' that population was said to be. According to Bleys (1995), this resulted in the emergence of an ambiguous image<sup>273</sup> of same sex desire represented on the one hand, in terms of a degeneration

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<sup>272</sup> The physical transformations that Krafft-Ebing identified refer to body shape, adipose distribution, the pitch and timbre of the voice, and complexion among others (see Krafft-Ebing, 1965/1998:258), and thus were analogous to Hirschfeld's somatic type.

<sup>273</sup> It should be noted that today little trace of that contradiction remains. Rather, throughout the twentieth century medical and sexological discourses presuppose the 'monstrous' rather than the 'mythic' and through their practices attempt to liberate the subject from the stigma of physical 'ambiguity'. Ironically it is contemporary medical practices that relegate the very idea of human hermaphroditism to the realms of myth by attempting to transform unruly bodies into simulant male or female ones.

away from an *original* heterosexuality and on the other hand, as an atavistic<sup>274</sup> regression towards a polymorphous sexuality. Contradictory representations of the hermaphrodite figure had, since classical antiquity, alternated between a mythic idea representing the union of all that was good in the male and female sexes and hermaphrodites as teratological monsters of excess. As noted by Grosz (1996:46) throughout history all the major terata have tended to be monsters of excess: that is people "with two or more heads, bodies, or limbs, or with duplicate sexual organs". Foucault registered that excess at another level with his suggestion that historically, those deemed terata represented a double violation of the natural order, that is half human and half animal and so constituted both "the impossible and the forbidden" (Foucault, 1997:51).

By the early twentieth century advances in medical technologies had begun to complicate hegemonic understandings of bodily sex. As it became increasingly clear that a person's somatic sex could not be relied upon as an absolute, it became harder for clinicians to justify the sex assignment of hermaphrodites on physiological grounds alone (refer to Chapter two). This is the context in which increasing emphasis began to be placed on psychosocial factors such as social identity and sexual orientation in assigning a sex (Hausman, 1995). By the mid-1940s, that emphasis had thoroughly consolidated, as the work of psychologist Albert Ellis (1945) makes clear:

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<sup>274</sup> Atavism refers to the recurrence of "constitutional symptoms of an ancestor after the intermission of one or more generations", in other words, a congenital heredity (Onions, 1973:124).

[A] *heterosexual hermaphrodite* is one whose sexual desires are directed towards members of the other sex to which he or she has been *raised*. A *homosexual hermaphrodite* is one whose libidinous desires are directed toward members of the same sex in which he or she has been *raised*. A *bisexual hermaphrodite* is one, no matter how reared, whose sex desires are directed towards both males and females (1945:109, emphasis in original).

Ellis was of the view that an individual's erotic inclinations and orientations were not only a consequence of their upbringing, they were also an inseparable part of a person's psychosocial masculinity or femininity. It was this that led him to frame hermaphrodites as heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual (or alternatively, as "psychosexually immature") (p.109).

Clearly Ellis' understanding of psychosocial status was fully saturated in a binary logic but that in itself was not as significant for hermaphrodites as his framing of them as hetero- homo- and bi-sexual. That is because, by apprehending hermaphrodites' erotosexual status within the logic of a bipolar framework of sexuality, Ellis effectively made redundant the figure of a 'third sex'. In other words, this conceptual move resulted in the ontological erasure of the hermaphrodite subject. The significance of Ellis' ideas for John Money's theorising of the erotic will become evident when the discussion turns to Money's work later in the chapter.

### ***Methodological considerations in sexology***

As well as articulating what would become enduring themes in the sexual sciences, the early sex researchers employed various methodologies that became deeply embedded in the sexological tradition. While Ulrichs' work prefigured the development of sexology as a discipline, the historical record makes clear that the field remains indebted to him on many counts. Ulrichs gathered information in the form of case studies; he developed and refined a comprehensive classification schema; made a distinction between acts and identities; and accumulated data in a way that was devoid of moral approbation (Bristow, 1997; Bullough, 1976; Kennedy, 1997, 1997a).

Case studies became a hallmark of sexological enquiry and continue to be so to this day. A specific form of documentation, the case study is often marked by an exquisite detail regarding the presentation of the individual subject, their medical diagnoses, personal histories and so on. A notable feature of case studies is the opportunity afforded individual subjects to contribute their own autobiographical statements, many of which are presented verbatim in case notes. While in some instances, autobiographical statements were interspersed with the clinician's commentary, it was not unusual for them to also be presented in stand-alone form.<sup>275</sup>

The second methodological hallmark of the sexual sciences is the ongoing development of comprehensive classifications of sexual types. Proponents of the

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<sup>275</sup> See for example Case 129 in Krafft-Ebing (1965/1998:200). For examples in John Money's work, see Money and Tucker (1977:156-8), Money, Hampson, & Hampson (1955a:310-317; 1955b:296-8).

scientific method expect that its application can and will reveal the mysteries of sex in all their glory since one of the central demands of the scientific method is that its subject matter yield to taxonomic classification and categorisation. By developing and continually refining classification systems, sexologists attempt to capture in their entirety fully exhaustive categories of non-normative or aberrant desires and in many instances, exhaustive categories of sexual types or characters. While Ulrichs was scorned by many of his contemporaries, his schemas remain significant for their detail and complexity (Bristow, 1997, 1998).

A distinction between acts and orientations is the third hallmark. Such a distinction was articulated by Ulrichs as early as 1868.<sup>276</sup> It is perhaps most evident in his discussion regarding men whose primary attractions were directed towards women but who sometimes had sex with other men. 'Uraniasters' as he called them, were altogether different from Uranians because the former, "is and remains a man. His nature as a man is only temporarily driven into the background. His male susceptibility to the love of women never ceases" (cited in Hirshfeld, 1914/2000:40).<sup>277</sup> This distinction is evident also in the work of Krafft-Ebing who stressed the need for clinicians to make clear distinctions between 'perversity' and 'perversion', in order to maintain the integrity of their diagnoses as the following quotation indicates:

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<sup>276</sup> This distinction continues to be made in social as well as sexological research. For example, HIV/AIDS researchers have found that making clear distinctions between gay men and 'men who have sex with men' is particularly fruitful for safe sex research and educational programmes (see for example, Saxton et al, 1997). See also Weeks (1996).

<sup>277</sup> As the subsequent discussion will show there are direct parallels between Ulrichs' Uriniaster and one of Money's bisexual types.

*Perversion* of the sexual instinct, [...], is not to be confounded with *perversity* in the sexual act; since the latter may be induced by conditions other than psycho-pathological. The concrete perverse act, monstrous as it may be, is clinically not decisive. In order to differentiate between disease (*perversion*) and vice (*perversity*), one must investigate the whole personality of the individual and the original motive leading to the perverse act. Therein will be found the key to the diagnosis (Krafft-Ebbing, 1965/1998:53).

The fourth legacy that Ulrichs' provided the early sexual scientists was the idea that there was no place for moral judgements in the collection of data. Many sexologists - although clearly not Krafft-Ebing - took seriously Ulrichs' view that as professionals they had a responsibility, indeed an obligation, to document human sexuality in all of its manifestations without taint of moral judgement. Havelock Ellis and Magnus Hirschfeld for example, were among those who devoted their careers to amassing considerable amounts of data on sexual 'anomalies' (read non-procreative sexual behaviours) without pathologising either the behaviours or their protagonists.<sup>278</sup>

Hirschfeld articulated his position on the matter in the following way:

The first commandment is to represent in a truly factual manner without any emotional expression; to be as objective as possible, to weigh the facts as far as possible, and in every respect to be without prejudice (1914/2000:27).

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<sup>278</sup> Krafft-Ebing on the other hand, embraced the notion of sexual deviance as pathology as evident in the title (and the content) of his most well known text *Psychopathia Sexualis* (c.1886).

Despite the efforts of Ulrichs', Ellis and Hirschfeld to resist the pathologisation of non-normative desires, they were unable to control how their work was used by other sexologists. Indeed their data was appropriated by psychiatrists and by physicians to supplement the existing range of diagnostic options available at that time (Bleys, 1995). Nonetheless this particular legacy saturates the work of successive generations of sex researchers, as evidenced by Kinsey for example, who firmly believed that sex research involved the "accumulation of scientific fact completely divorced from questions of moral value and social custom" (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948:3). Money took a similar approach, most notably realised through his renaming (and reclassifying) of the nomenclature of perversion. Replacing the term 'perversion' with 'paraphilia' was a deliberate attempt on his part to circumvent the moral overtones associated with the former.<sup>279</sup>

### ***Sexological axioms***

I turn now to five key axioms that have persisted in sexological thought from its inception and remain, even today, rarely, if ever questioned by those working in the field. It is my argument that each one underpins understandings of gender as much as they do sexuality. The first, and arguably the most fundamental of these, is the idea that the reproduction of the species is the ultimate aim of human existence. In accordance with this principle, sexual practices are driven by a reproduction imperative rather than by any pursuit of pleasure. This premise not only fails to account for forms of sexual expression that fall outside of a heterosexual matrix, it

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<sup>279</sup> "In legal terminology, a paraphilia is a perversion or [sexual] deviancy; and in the vernacular it is kinky or bizarre sex" (Money, 1995:120).

also fails to account for the (hetero)sexual expression of say, older people, the ‘infertile’, hysterectomised women and vasectomised men.

The ascension of Darwinism in the mid to late nineteenth century and its subsequent application to human social existence had a profound effect on the way the corporeal body was understood in relation to the social body. Effectively the Darwinian revolution served to institutionalise a reproductive paradigm that remains to this day at the centre of biological and social inquiry (Herdt, 1994). Its “totalising effects” transformed sexual dimorphism into a binary principle considered stable across time and space (p. 32). This had a number of significant consequences, two of which have particular relevance to the current discussion. The first was that all non-procreative (hetero-)sexual behaviours were cast as preliminary to the ‘main event’ as evidenced by the term foreplay. The effect, as Carol Vance (1999) so eloquently suggests is that:

Reproductive sexuality (glossed as heterosexual intercourse) appears as the meat and potatoes in the sexual menu, with other forms, [...] arranged as appetizers, vegetables, and desserts (1994:44).

A second (flow-on) effect was that all non-procreative sexual behaviours became a set of symptoms located on a continuum between normality and pathology. With reproduction as the touchstone of normative sexuality, every subject was potentially vulnerable to the taint of perversion.<sup>280</sup> As a result, the line between normality and deviance became increasingly blurred because ‘normal’ sexuality always contained

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<sup>280</sup> Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* is an exemplar of sexological texts premised on this idea.

within its elements of perverse desire (Padgug, 1999). As medical science became increasingly credited with the ability to provide insights into the 'truth' of nature through its exclusive access to the "unassailable reality of bones and organs", such truths were upheld as the legitimate foundation of moral order (Laqueur, 1990:239).<sup>281</sup> Among those 'unassailable truths' was the principle of sexual dimorphism: that is, the idea that there are two and only two human sexes, male and female.

The idea that sex in all its guises was binary or dimorphic is the second maxim that has lain at the heart of the sexological project from the outset. Here I refer to 'sex' indexed to bodies in terms of discrete categories of maleness or femaleness and as indexed to erotic practices, desires, fantasies and tastes.<sup>282</sup> The assumption that all forms of life were grounded in sexual dimorphism saturated the early classification systems since understandings of sexual desire were predicated on the notion that opposites attract (Bristow, 1997; Herdt, 1994; Kennedy, 1997, 1997a). Again Karl Ulrichs' nomenclature served as a prototype of subsequent classification schemas grounded in this principle. Ulrichs proposed that in the case of Uranians, the virile Mannlinge's attractions were always directed toward the effeminate Weiblinge, just as men's attractions were always directed toward women.

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<sup>281</sup> Contemporary scholarship in gay and lesbian studies has also identified eighteenth century industrialisation with its emphasis on production as an important factor leading to the reorganisation of non-procreative (hetero-)sexual behaviours (Abelove, 1992; D'Emilio, 1997; Weeks, 1985, 1996)

<sup>282</sup> As I go on to argue in my examination of Money's concepts of desire, despite the recognition that one's desires could be directed towards both males and females, his account of bisexuality(s) ultimately yielded to a binary logic.

Over time this assumption proved increasingly problematic for Ulrichs' theories but rather than abandoning sexual dimorphism as a central principle, his response was to create "a dizzying array of categories" of sexual variance (Kennedy, 1997a:33). At the same time, his reading of the embryological literature convinced Ulrichs that too much emphasis was placed upon differences between the sexes, male and female. The existence of rudimentary physical structures (specifically, the Mullerian and Wolffian ducts) of the 'other' in males and females offered support for his belief that an individual with the body of one sex could have the soul of the 'other' (Bullough, 1976). Despite such insights, the tenacity of sexual dimorphism continues unabated in contemporary sexology, even (or especially) among those whose clinical work brings them into contact with hermaphrodites and with people, whose desires and sexual practices cannot be apprehended through such a simplistic model. For generations now sex researchers and theorists have tended to interpret their data to 'fit' the principle of sexual dimorphism (however awkwardly), rather than questioning or abandoning this principle when faced with evidence that calls the idea into question, as previous chapters have shown.

The third tenet woven through the history of sexological thought is the idea that the desire (or orientation) towards one's 'own sex' was an inverted form of normative desire. Normative in this context constituted desire for males as a necessarily feminine trait and therefore the rightful property of female persons and conversely, desire for females as a masculine trait and thus the rightful property of male persons. Ulrichs' theories provided a prototype of the inversion model and while his neologisms failed to stand the test of time, the legacy of his ideas (and methods) remain.

While not the only model used by the early sexual scientists, the inversion model came to dominate the field as evident in the work of Hirschfeld, Ellis and Edward Carpenter, among others. It is important to note at this point (as a number of historians and critics of the sexual sciences have), that the invert was not the equivalent of the contemporary homosexual. Rather, inversion functioned - like gender - as an umbrella term that incorporated a range of deviant sexualities with homosexuality just one sub-category (Bleys, 1995; Hirschfeld, 1914/2000; Prosser, 1998b; Storr, 1998). As I will demonstrate below, the spectre of inversion continues to underpin contemporary theories of human sexuality and gender<sup>283</sup> particularly those seeking to explain same-sex desire.

The fourth axiom evident throughout sexological thought is the idea that deviant (that is, non-normative) desires have some sort of constitutional or inherent basis. This principle is generally articulated through the idea that sexuality - like gender - has its origins during the first three months of embryonic development. Recourse to prenatal development carries with it a potency not dissimilar to that offered by recourse to genetic explanations, since implicit to both is a sense of the immutable. Ulrichs was arguably the first to draw an analogy with the undifferentiated foetus. Differentiation in-utero was for him, a process that led to three possible outcomes: male, female and Uranian. Invoking the figure of the hermaphrodite allowed Ulrichs to argue that the Uranian foetus developed a hermaphroditic soul (Bleys, 1995; Bristow, 1998; Hekma, 1994; Herdt, 1994; Kennedy, 1997, 1997a). According to Katz (1995), those labelled

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<sup>283</sup> It is important to remember that the term 'gender' was not available to the early sexual scientists. This explains its absence in sexual theory as either a descriptive or a conceptual device prior to the 1950s (See Chapter two).

perverts were considered by the doctors and psychiatrists of the day to be suffering from a congenital rather than an acquired condition. More progressive doctors asserted that certain deviant sexual practices once regarded as the choices of sinners or criminals, were in fact, the involuntary symptoms of an individual's entire personality. In other words, they were 'born that way'. By claiming that the treatment of perverts was a medical rather than a criminal issue doctors were able to enlarge medicine's terrain (p. 92). Moreover, the emphasis on personality paved the way for the then nascent field of psychoanalysis (and later psychology) to take on a significant role in the management of aberrant desire.

The fifth persistent maxim evident in the sexological literature is the idea that genital morphology determined the sex of one's feelings. The development of a biology of binary sexual difference offered the means through which differences between the sexes could be reliably represented (Katz, 1995).<sup>284</sup> An effect of conflation of psychologies and anatomies was that "feelings [came to be] thought of as female or male in exactly the same sense as [a] penis or clitoris: anatomy equalled psychology" (p. 51-2). According to Herdt (1994) the issue of anomalous individuals had become a primary preoccupation of both the sexual scientists and sexual reformers during the late Victorian period. Such preoccupations led to the proliferation of classificatory schemata designed to identify and account for those whose minds, behaviours and/or bodies defied the principle of sexual dimorphism.<sup>285</sup> Krafft-Ebing's work

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<sup>284</sup> For analyses of the shift in interpretations of maleness and femaleness in scientific thought see for example, Schiebinger (1988; 1993) and Spanier (1991).

<sup>285</sup> Recognition must also be given to the fact that these principles consolidated in the sexual sciences during a period in history when "the forces of modernisation and urbanisation altered the organisation of men's and women's work [and] domestic economies [...] reshaping

particularly, is notable for its attempt to demonstrate a link between "morbid love" and anatomical anomaly (McLaren, 1999:91).

The legacy of conflating psychologies and anatomies remains evident today in the way that personality traits and characteristics – human characteristics – are promoted as specifically gendered in psychological theory and practice, in medical, sexological and biological research and throughout many disciplines within the social sciences (including a considerable amount of feminist theorising). The media and populist literature also contribute towards the dissemination of this idea - albeit in more simplistic forms - through television and film, the print media, and in literature generated by the self-help industry, for example. The net effect of such widespread reinforcement and support from so many quarters has been that this conflation has taken on the guise of an eternal verity. Similarly, the principles of sexual dimorphism, reproduction as the *raison d'être* of human existence, inversion, and the normal/pathological continuum of non-procreative sexual behaviours are all continually reproduced and reinforced from those same quarters. In the following section I look at how the conflation of psychologies and anatomies plays out in Money's theorising of sex and desire, as do all the other foundational principles discussed above.

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familial relations and boundaries marking the public and private spheres" (Angelides, 2001:35).

### ***Money's theorising of sex and desire***

John Money's theories of sexuality - like those of gender - were developed from his hermaphrodite research. He argued that while a hermaphrodite's nonconformity to their sex of assignment could manifest in a multitude of ways (including a compulsion to change sex), it was most likely to manifest through their sexual lives as a bisexual or homosexual status. While insistent that *most* case-managed or 'clinically habilitated' hermaphrodites raised as girls grew up to have an unambivalent heterosexual status<sup>286</sup> Money claimed that those with a bisexual or lesbian orientation must have been subject to pre-natal masculinisation of their brains (Money, 1988, 1995; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972). On this point I would remind the reader of the discussion in Chapter two regarding an hermaphrodite's psychological health status in the early work of Money and the Hampsons (Hampson, 1955; Money, Hampson, & Hampson, 1955a, 1955b, 1956). Successful adaptation to a sex of assignment (as a gender) was measured in no small part by Money and his colleagues on the basis of an individual's expressed and/or actualised 'heterosexual' orientation.<sup>287</sup> A bisexual or homosexual status indicated to the researchers, evidence of some degree of maladaptation and thus of compromised psychological health. Clearly Money, as the architect of intersex case management protocols, had a vested interest in the capacity for those protocols to produce so-called heterosexual hermaphrodites since above all, a heterosexual status provided evidence of the veracity of the treatment model.<sup>288</sup> Not

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<sup>286</sup> Many of the narrative accounts of contemporary intersex activists assigned as female tell rather a different story (Refer to Chapter six).

<sup>287</sup> The quotation marks here are deliberate, for it is for it is only by interpreting hermaphrodites' erotic orientations and practices through a lens of dimorphism, I argue, that they make sense.

<sup>288</sup> Refer Hausman (2000) where the same conclusion is drawn.

only were hermaphrodites expected to be(come) exemplary males and females, they were also expected to become exemplary heterosexuals.

Just as Money insisted that gender was neither the product of nature or culture but rather a complex interaction of both, so too in his view, was sexuality.<sup>289</sup> Ever critical of both social and biological determinist arguments,<sup>290</sup> Money argued for the merits of a different form of determinism - a developmental determinism. For Money the key to a person's sexual status or orientation lay in their developmental history (pre- and post-natal). What mattered was not whether determinants were innate or acquired but rather that they *were* determinants. Why? Because of Money's unwavering commitment to the idea that one's sexual status and orientation, like gender, became hardwired in the brain. That commitment necessitated an account of how it happened and when.

Almost all of the fundamental tenets and methodologies developed in the first instance by Ulrichs almost one hundred and forty years ago are writ large in Money's theories of sexuality, just as they are evident in his theories of gender more generally. For example, Money proposed that in addition to possessing a gendermap which hardwired into the brain,<sup>291</sup> every individual possessed a similar structure upon which the gender template overlaid, that coded for a person's sexuality. In the mid-1980s, Money offered a term for this template, coining it a 'lovemap'. This structure served

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<sup>289</sup> This is because - after Ellis - Money insisted that sexuality was a component of gender rather than a separate element of subjectivity (Refer Chapter two).

<sup>290</sup> Recall from the discussion in Chapter two that Money has always refused the mind/body split even as he embraced other binary constructs.

<sup>291</sup> Refer to Chapter two.

as the very first determinant of a person's future sexual styles and erotic preferences, in his view (Money, 1986).<sup>292</sup> The definition he offered for this structure is as follows:

A personalised, developmental representation or template in the mind and in the brain that depicts the idealised lover and the idealised program of sexueroetic activity with that lover as projected in imagery and ideation, or actually engaged in with that lover (1988:127).

Here we have an example of the way in which the idea that one's sexuality had a constitutional basis played out in Money's theories. Not only did a lovemap develop in-utero, it became hardwired into the brain after being acted upon by postnatal environmental stimuli. As with the map that coded for gender, once a person's lovemap became hardwired, it was not amenable to alteration (or cure) by Money's account. As previously mentioned, for Money postnatal learning was a function of biology since all external stimuli were mediated by the central nervous system before becoming irrevocably imprinted on the brain.

Money's theories of sexuality turned on the concept of critical periods, a reliance that makes perfect sense given that he framed sexuality as one of a number of components of gender. As mentioned earlier, Money was effectively reproducing an elaborated version of Albert Ellis' (1945) concepts.<sup>293</sup> Money's developmental explanation of

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<sup>292</sup> See also Money (1999); Money and Lamacz (1989).

<sup>293</sup> A note handwritten by Money, attached to a draft manuscript in the Money Collection at the Kinsey Institute, confirms this claim "I had completely forgotten that I wrote the review of

erotosexual status involved a series of stages or sequences that began in pre-natal life. The most likely explanation of the homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual component of gender identity was that at some time during prenatal development, a range of sexually dimorphic traits bedded down in the brain, predisposing a person towards a particular erotosexual orientation (1988). Citing experimental animal research and "people with a known history of abnormal hormone levels in prenatal development" (eg hermaphrodites) as "direct evidence", Money extrapolated his ideas to account for how everybody acquired their sexual orientation (p.123). I would remind the reader that this is another example of the 'abnormal' to 'normal' trajectory that underpins Money's claims. The prenatal phase was not in Money's view, an exclusive determinant and nor was it the primary (read, most important) stage in this process. Rather, the primary origins of one's sexual orientation were to be found in the same developmental period of late infancy and early childhood when gender identity was supposed to differentiate as male or female. Once established, hormonal changes at puberty served to bring that orientation into full expression.

So how did Money define what constituted a person's sexual status? The following quotation offers the answer to that question:

The definitive characteristic of a homosexual or heterosexual gender identity is whether the sex of the body morphology and of the external genital anatomy

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Albert Ellis's paper. In fact, many years ago when I found a bibliographic reference to the Ellis paper, I did not recall ever having seen it, and was vexed that I had not used it as a reference in my 1955 hermaphroditic papers!" (Money, n.d. John Money Collection, The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction).

of the partner with whom one is capable of falling in love is, respectively, the same as or different than one's own. For the bisexual, either may qualify (1998:32).

Money's rationale for this definition was the widespread acceptance both in the life sciences and in the wider social domain, that "the criterion of an *sexuoerotically uncrossed* gender coding was that the prevalence of male and female as sexual partnerships exceeded the prevalence of males and males or females and females as sexual partners" (1988:103). In other words, the crossing involved in crosscoding referred to the transgression of extrinsic socially mandated norms. In making the claim that heterosexuality was the outcome of uncrossed coding and homosexuality the reverse, Money was adamant that the crossing referred only to the *sexuoerotic* component of a person's gender coding - that is, to their *lovemaps* - because:

There may be very little that is crosscoded in homophilia, which is indeed the case in gay men whose gender coding is all masculine, except for the sex of the partner with whom they fall in love [and vice-versa for lesbians] (1988:103).

For that reason, Money asserted that a person's sexual status had to be considered independently from any and all other components of gender (such as an occupation, recreational and/or intellectual interests and their domestic lives etc). In Chapter two I offered a critique of the dangers inherent in using these types of variables to evaluate the degree of a person's adaptation to a gender. Here I remind the reader that the use of these kinds of variables as measuring tools not only rely upon the subjective

judgements of the assessors, they already presuppose that one knows categorically what masculine and feminine behaviours, occupations, recreational and intellectual interests and domestic roles are. This leaves little latitude for forms of expression that fall outside of stereotypical gender roles. Moreover, it necessarily frames *all* non-stereotypical behaviours and interests as manifestations of crosscoding or transposition.<sup>294</sup>

As was his wont, Money did not let a lack of conclusive evidence get in the way of postulating causal explanations. The weight Money ascribed to hormones – prenatal and pubertal – as determinants of sexual orientation is one such example. To make this claim is not to deny that hormones are implicated in either the quality or general direction of a person's sexuality. Rather, it is to highlight one of the characteristics of Money's work: his propensity to make strong assertions based on conjecture and speculation in the absence of concrete evidence.<sup>295</sup> For example, Money concurred that endocrinological research into sexual orientation had failed to produce any conclusive evidence as to which stage of development hormones triggered sexual dimorphism nor sexual orientation, even as he made assertions like that in the previous paragraph. He did the same with respect to postnatal environmental determinants.

Money acknowledged that the sexological knowledge of the day did not allow for any hypotheses to be made regarding the types of biographical conditions that might facilitate heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality in non-hermaphrodite

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<sup>294</sup> This is precisely how Money framed all so-called non-traditional gendered behaviours.

<sup>295</sup> See Simon (1996) for a similar critique.

children. However, he proceeded to offer a range of conditions that he suggested were *likely* determinants: conditions that rely upon the tenets of sexual dimorphism and anatomies equal psychology: or in today's terms, one's genitalia determines one's gender. When desire for women is understood as male desire and desire for men as female desire, same-sex attractions and orientations are necessarily figured as a form of crossing. Indeed that is precisely the terminology that Money employed to explain male to male and female to female eroticism. He offered three possible scenarios to explain what he referred to as 'crosscoding' (or 'transposition') in non-hermaphrodites and two for 'clinically habilitated' hermaphrodites. For the former demographic these included: societal prohibitions on juvenile sexual rehearsal play; stigmatisation by the peer group; and, adversarial parental relations. For the latter group, he posited as necessary conditions: peer stigmatisation for those reared as boys; and, prenatal masculinisation of the brain for those reared as girls. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

According to Money, the period at which young children engaged in juvenile sexual rehearsal play was critical to a person's future sexual status. In his view, a major feature of child-rearing practices in Western societies was the mismanagement of this phase of child's life through prohibition, censure and punishment. When not mismanaged, juvenile sexual rehearsal play inevitably evolved into heterosexual rehearsal play, he argued. Moreover, children in such environments were said to "fraternise heterosocially rather than homosocially at puberty" (1988:114). The implication of such a claim is that juvenile sexual rehearsal play serves to augment gender identity. Of course, whether there was any direct causative relation between the suppression of such play and a homo- or bi-sexual orientation he was not able to

say with any certainty. What led Money to believe that there may well be one, was information gleaned from the ethnographic record,<sup>296</sup> which indicated to him that:

In societies where boy-girl sexual rehearsal play is not punished or prevented, adult homosexuality is absent or rare. Boy-boy or girl-girl sexual rehearsal play, where it is by custom not illicit, does not lead to homosexuality in adulthood, although it may lead to bisexual adaptability (1988:124).

This line of reasoning begs the question: if the child-rearing practices of Western societies contribute towards same-sex desire in the way Money suggests (through mismanagement), why does it not produce a considerably higher prevalence of people with homo- or bi-sexual orientations, since most children raised in such contexts are subject to the very prohibitions of which he spoke.

Money's second hypothesis focussed on the influence of peer groups in determining a child's future sexuality. Recall the role of peer groups in the establishment of a gendered identity with respect to identification and complementation discussed in Chapter two. Money claimed that one could infer from animal studies and hermaphrodite research that:

Genitally normal boys and girls who develop as prehomosexuals had a prenatal hormonal history that produced a proclivity toward, but not a

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<sup>296</sup> The ethnographic record to which he referred included his own explorations into anthropological fieldwork conducted amongst the indigenous people of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, Australia during the late 1960s. See Money et al, (1970).

predestined certainty of developing a postnatal homosexual history  
(1988:123).

From this perspective something in a person's biography had to work upon the 'prenatal proclivity' of which he spoke. That something was in all likelihood, connected to the influence of a child's peers.

Peer influence operated both positively and negatively said Money, by setting "fashions and standards of conformity, impos[ing] sanctions, and stigmatis[ing] nonconformists" (1988:72). In the case of children with 'anatomically normal genitals', the stigmatisation to which Money referred concerned nonconformity to gender stereotypical behaviours. Stigmatisation for these children became, in his view, "a determinant of future development toward gender transposition" (p. 73). In the case of hermaphrodite children, Money made a direct correlation between differently formed genitalia and nonconformity when he suggested that the former might well:

Disqualify them from being either *properly* a boy, or *properly* a girl. In such cases, a childhood history of stigmatisation correlates with the development of a gender transposition manifested as bisexuality, or as homosexuality within the sex of rearing (1988:72-3, emphasis added).

Here is a clear articulation of the idea that one requires the 'correct' genitalia in order to properly be a gender which is in keeping with the nineteenth century principle that sex physiology determined the sex of one's feelings. In most Western contexts (at

least), girls are extended considerably more latitude with respect to gendered behaviours than are boys. As a result 'tomboyism' is tolerated in girls in ways that its male equivalent, 'sissiness', is not in boys. Nonetheless, both are implicated in discourses as evidence to account for 'queerness'. The discourses to which I refer include, but are certainly not limited to, the discursive formations of the sexual scientists since they are also deployed in the narrative accounts of many gay men and lesbians, their parents and siblings and by wider culture.

The third explanation offered by Money for the origins of crosscoding in young boys concerned the role of the father in facilitating a proto-homosexuality. A clinical consultation with the parents of a five year old boy who would today be considered as gender dysphoric inspired Money to develop a new hypothesis on a father's contribution toward "the genesis of feminism in a son's G-I/R (gender-identity/role)" (1988:82). By this account, an adversarial relationship between a little boy's parents was a necessary environmental condition that led the child's father to court his son's allegiance, casting the child in the role of a "wife substitute - if not for the present - then for the future" (1988:82). This particular hypothesis reveals Money at his creative best and for that reason I quote at length his view on a little boy's response to marital disharmony:

The son, for his part, may solicit his father's allegiance as a formula for keeping him in the household, and for preventing a parental separation. If the father has already gone, or even if he had died, the son's gender transposition may serve to solicit his daddy's miraculous return. His life becomes a living fable of the boy who will become daddy's bride, for the evidence is plentiful

that a daddy can be counted on to return to the home that his wife keeps ready for him. [...] The young son who becomes self-allocated to the role of *daughter* [as wife-in-waiting], and thereby becomes a bonding agent who keeps the family intact, is likely to keep that role of bonding agent intact in perpetuity [reaching] adulthood with a gender status that is homosexual or, maybe, in a rare minority of cases, transexual [sic] or transvestophile (p. 82-3, emphasis added).<sup>297</sup>

Money went on to cite "new preliminary evidence, unpublished", that suggested that crosscoding of this sort could be rectified if the child was able to be relieved of the responsibility (self-imposed) of holding the family together (p.83). In other words, it was possible to redirect the child towards normality, eg, toward heterosexuality. This rather florid hypothesis as noted above, was devised on the basis of a single case. Yet its implications are enormous particularly in light of what can only be described as a growth industry in the United States of therapeutic interventions on children considered to have a gender identity disorder (or dysphoria). These interventions are specifically designed to ensure that children do not 'grow up gay' (Burke, 1996; Sedgwick, 1993).

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<sup>297</sup> Recall Robert Stoller's aetiology of transsexualism that cast the mother or more specifically, the mother/son relationship as causative agent. Money believed that his hypothesis upended "Freudian Oedipal orthodoxy", by replacing the seduction of the mother with that of the father (Money, 1988:83)

## ***Relativity in sex***

While clearly cognisant of the dangers of cultural relativity, Money was of the view that his theories had universal application, despite any cross-cultural variation. Cultural relativity could be circumvented, he argued, simply by tolerating it. In genetics for example, XX signified femaleness and XY, maleness despite the 'undisputed evidence' of many other configurations such as XXY, XYY and XO, for example.<sup>298</sup> Similarly in human sexology, the idea that men have penises and women have vulvas was tolerated despite their relativity with respect to hermaphrodites (1988:80). He argued that the penis/vulva criterion was a "good enough approximation for stipulating that masculine is what males do and feminine is what females do" (p.80), despite recognising that such approximations were far from ideal.

Again it is clear that the sexological principles of sexual dimorphism and anatomies determine psychology are embedded in the above claims. Money's assertion that relativity was tolerable<sup>299</sup> lends weight to one of the strongest criticisms regarding the application of the scientific method to human social existence: that complex unstable phenomena - as the sexual surely is - become reduced and homogenised in the interests of analytical convenience (Simon, 1996). Consequently, the "multiple meaning of all sexualities [become] dissolved into global identities that [obscure] more than they reveal, beyond the social responses" they often legitimate (Simon,

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<sup>298</sup> Note: While it is possible to have a single X chromosome, a single 'Y' chromosome is not viable.

<sup>299</sup> Money cast a broadside at both poststructuralism and feminism in *Gendermaps* (1995), for their anti-medical stance and for their use of the idea of relativity, referring to Foucault as the "high priest [of] politically correct scholarship" (p.27-30).

1996:21). Moreover, taxonomies by their very nature, assume a degree of permanence or stability of objects that tends to render them somehow ahistorical.

It is clear in his writing that Money was just as cognisant of the effects of what he referred to as the "cultural fixation" on sexual difference (1998:52). Indeed he argued that this fixation had, "insidiously infected sexual science so as to ensure that its focus is on explaining sex difference, not sex similarity" (p.52). Yet despite that awareness and critique, Money's own work has served to reinforce those very differences. This, I would argue, is an inevitable result of Money's unwavering commitment to the idea that there are only two human sexes. An is/ought distinction plays out in the statement above: "if males do it, it is masculine and if females do it, it is feminine". Such criteria are clearly based on ideological norms that reflect what people *ought* to do rather than reflecting accurately what people *actually* do. Money recognised that ideological norms rely upon criteria that, while appearing to be based on "eternal verities ... are actually culture-bound dogmas of history, authority, and the cultural heritage" (1988:52), all the while creating theories that augmented and reproduced those very dogmas.

Another longstanding sexological principle discussed above is that of a distinction between acts and identities. In Money's work, this point is most evident in his theorising of same-sex sexual practices. Money has devoted a considerable amount of his career to mapping out and accounting for sexuality in all its manifestations. His nomenclature of sexuality was multi-layered and included a range of sub-categories, one of which was designed to account for those whose sexual behaviours were out of step with their (inevitably hetero-) sexual identities: for example, a heterosexually

identified male who, in varying contexts, engaged in sexual behaviours with other men. Money, like many of his predecessors argued that:

A sexual status (or orientation) is not the same as a sexual act. It is possible to participate in homosexual acts, and even to be cajoled or coerced into participation without becoming predestined to have a permanent homosexual status – and vice versa for heterosexuality (1988:12)

Money offered as examples, people confined to sex-segregated institutions such as prisons or boarding schools who engaged in sexual acts with their cohorts during the period of their 'confinement' all the while retaining their heterosexual identifications. Once outside of that context such individuals were said to resume, exclusively heterosexual behaviours.

### ***Monosexuality***

During the course of developing his theories on sexuality Money found value in framing sexual status in terms of mono- versus ambi- (or bi-) sexuality. This allowed him to map postnatal heterosexuality and homosexuality in a relatively straightforward manner. It is to monosexuality that I turn in the first instance. By Money's account "a strong prenatal proclivity reinforced postnatally" would increase the odds of a monosexual outcome (1988:81). In the case of a heterosexual outcome, this process would occur "with or without a weak deflection towards homosexuality, and vice versa for homosexuality" (p. 81). Being normative – both statistically and ideologically – heterosexuality warranted no more than a straightforward and

uncomplicated developmental explanation. Homosexuality on the other hand was a little more complicated by Money's account, precisely because it was non-normative.

Money argued that a homosexual outcome required postnatal reinforcement in the form of an endorsement of gender crosscoding. He qualified that statement by stressing that that endorsement could function at any number of levels and did not necessarily equate to children's engagement in genital same-sex practices, although of course it might, since 'genital sex' was one of the many components of Money's gender.<sup>300</sup> By the same token, where early genital contact with other males did take place, Money argued that, that in itself, did not necessarily constitute the basis of a homosexual status in adult life:

Boys who in late childhood establish an explicitly sexual and genital relationship with an older, pedophilic male lover are not inevitably foreordained to have a homosexual status in adolescence and adulthood (1988:81).

Yet this sits at odds with Money's earlier statement that in a homosexual individual, crosscoding of the sexueroetic component of gender had to be considered "alone and independently of all the other components" (Money, 1988:103). The above quotation links directly to one of Money's more controversial assertions: namely that intergenerational sex in and of itself was not harmful to children. Rather in his view, harm in such contexts was a direct result of coercion or force, but not of sex (see Money, 1988:135).

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<sup>300</sup> Recall the earlier discussion regarding childhood sexual rehearsal play.

It was entirely possible in Money's view that endorsement of crosscoding might involve a sensuous and/or affectionate (that is, a non-sexual) closeness between the child and another male, particularly the father. By positioning a boy's affectational relationship with his father in this way, Money accorded such relationships the power to produce same-sex desire. It is noteworthy that since the late 1990s, much emphasis has been placed on what has been referred to as a 'crisis of masculinities'. One of the most oft cited strategies for circumventing or relieving such a crisis is the promotion of precisely that type of relation between fathers<sup>301</sup> and sons (See for example, Lashlie, 2005; Lashlie & Pivac, 2004). Applying Money's logic to the current context, one could postulate that the promotion of such affectational relations between fathers and sons would have the effect of producing a higher prevalence of homosexual and/or bisexual men. There is however, no evidence to support that idea.

### ***Bisexuality***

I turn now to the issue of ambi- or bi-sexuality. Money offered a series of distinctions based on degree or ratio, and on the basis of temporality. It appears that these distinctions were in part, a response or rebuttal of the work of Kinsey, a point I take up towards the end of this section. In Money's view, very few bisexuals were attracted in equal proportions to both men and women. While he thought it possible for a person to have a prenatal proclivity towards bisexuality where masculinity and femininity were equitably proportioned, that proclivity would need to be worked upon by postnatal forces of similarly equal proportions. This was in his view, highly

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<sup>301</sup> In this context, 'father' should be read as 'father-figure' or male role model.

unlikely. In those very rare cases, Money suggested that the capacity for an erotic response (of equal measure) for both men and women 'was designed into them' (1988:107). For Money the yardstick of a truly (50:50) bisexual orientation was the capacity not just to engage in sexual acts with both sexes but the capacity to fall in love equally with both men and with women. Yet Money did not stipulate what he meant by 'equally' nor how it might be measured. Was it necessary to have an equal number of limerent experiences with men and with women over the life span? Even on the basis of this criteria it is unclear how one might determine equalness, since just as no two sexual experiences can be said to be exactly the same, neither can one's experiences of falling in love be said to be qualitatively the same experience.

Money believed that people whose sexual status was ambisexual were more likely to be *disproportionately* attracted to men or to women, respectively. His 'recipe' for disproportional bisexuality was as follows:

A strong prenatal proclivity towards heterosexuality and a strong postnatal defection towards homosexuality would lead to a predominantly heterosexual form of bisexuality and vice versa for a predominantly homosexual bisexuality (1988:81).

Money also suggested that for the disproportionate bisexual, their capacity to fall in love was limited to that sex that they were predominantly attracted to (p.107). This would seem to suggest if we were to extend Money's logic, that such persons were 'really' either homosexual or heterosexual, since the capacity to fall in love was for him, the ultimate criteria of a person's sexual status. This type of explanation lends

weight to Angelides' (2001) claim that within a modernist epistemology of sexuality, bisexuality serves to structure the homo/hetero opposition. So too of course, does gender.

With respect to temporality, Money made a distinction between concurrent and sequential bisexuality. Concurrent bisexuality, as the name suggests, references sexual expression and/or desire towards males and females in a simultaneous fashion. While some might consider this form of bisexuality to offer "the best of both worlds", for Money it had a dark underbelly since the spectre of malignancy was ever present (1988:108). That malignancy played out in Money's view, through a vociferous homophobia. He went on to offer examples of malignant bisexuals in the North American context and included in his list the likes of J. Edgar Hoover, Joseph McCarthy's legal counsel Ray Cohn, politicians whom he described as "fanatical homophobic ultraconservatives of the religious new right", and many conservative religious leaders (1988:109-10).

Others to qualify as malignant bisexuals were gaybashers, those ostensibly 'straight' men who pick up gay men, engage in sexual acts with them (be they consensual or non-consensual) and then, in Money's words, "exorcise their own homosexual guilt" by assaulting or murdering their victims (p.110). Malignant bisexuals suffered from what Money called an *exorcist syndrome* where a person's internalised "homophobic war against their own homosexuality [became] externalised into a war against homosexuality in others" (p.109). In Money's view society at large showed evidence of lesser degrees of this very same syndrome. Why else, he asked, would "otherwise-decent people" persecute or tolerate the persecution of gays and lesbians, rather than

tolerating instead, those who “are destined to have a different way of being human in love and sex” (110). Indeed, it was precisely this form of intolerance that he believed served as a breeding ground for generation after generation of malignant bisexuals, a point that is surely difficult to argue against.

The counterpart to concurrent bisexuality was its sequential form that compared to the former, was remarkably benign in Money’s account. What was problematic about it however, was the fact that its prevalence was very hard to determine. Money argued that its pervasiveness in “contemporary western cultures [was] masked behind the prevalence statistics of homosexuality” (1988:107).<sup>302</sup> To this I would add the effects of the folklore that operates within gay and lesbian communities whereby people who come out after living as heterosexuals were previously ‘in denial’ or were ‘*really* gay all along’.

Money took the opportunity in the context of this discussion to roundly criticise the work of Kinsey et al (1948, 1953). Money castigated Kinsey for failing to provide information on the number of same-sex encounters and whether such encounters were sequential or concurrent with an individual’s heterosexual encounters. Thus for Money, Kinsey’s surveys were a blunt instrument that revealed little about people’s sexual status as homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual (see Money, 1988:107). While Kinsey’s work can certainly be critiqued on a number of levels (for example, his reliance upon a uni-dimensional rather than a multi-dimensional continuum), it was precisely his point that sexual practices and behaviours did not constitute particular types (eg, the homosexual, the heterosexual). It was for that reason that Kinsey argued

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<sup>302</sup> See also Money (1977).

strongly that one should not use the terms as substantive nouns since one could only really speak of homosexual or heterosexual acts, fantasies and/or erotic conduct (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948:617).

In the previous paragraph I suggested that for Money, sequential bisexuality was relatively benign, however it was not completely so. Despite Money's claim that homoeroticism was not pathological or paraphilic in and of itself, the explanations he offered drip with implications of failure and in many instances, trauma. For example, Money suggested that while the transition from one form of monosexuality to the other could occur autonomously, it might equally result from a broken home environment, the death of a parent or "sexual apathy in the marriage" (1988:108). The later expression of homosexuality (following a heterosexual phase) may, claimed Money be "associated with the recovery from illness or debilitation (eg, recovery from alcoholism) that had masked the homosexual potential" (1988:108). He noted that a transition in the other direction (that is, toward heterosexuality) was more likely to be regarded (and recorded) as a successful outcome of therapeutic intervention precisely because it was a movement toward a norm (p.108). Yet it is noteworthy that in Money's model same-sex desire was conceived as a condition that could not or should not be cured: even if it was a condition to be averted in the young.

Money was particularly contemptuous of those who claimed to have successfully cured homosexuality: a contempt I suggest that was an effect of his commitment to the hardwiring thesis. Money was adamant that claims of successful outcomes (posited by their interlocuters as cures) were illusory or fallacious in much the same way that claims of curing left-handedness were. In both cases, the appearance of a

successful reorientation to heterosexuality indicated to him an ever-present underlying bisexuality (or in the case of handedness, ambidexterity). Thus any shift in one's sexual status was in reality a shift from ambi- to mono-sexuality (1988).

Because Money's theories of sexuality were grounded in a determinist frame,<sup>303</sup> he was particularly critical of the concept of object choice in sex. A determinist perspective stands as the antithesis to the idea of 'choice'. Object choice represented he argued, the scientific fallacy that hetero- and homo- sexuality were the result of voluntary choice. The danger of recourse to voluntarism in sex for Money was that sexuality was then explained by fiat and so "constitute[d] the fallacy of scientific nihilism" (1988:85).

Being homosexual (or bisexual or heterosexual) is not a preference or choice. It is a status ... concordant or discordant with the reproductive status of the genitalia, or an androgynous combination of both possibilities. The ultimate criterion of homosexuality, bisexuality, or heterosexuality is not simply the sex of the partner with whom one's own sex organs are shared, but the sex of the partner toward whom one undergoes the experience of being love-smitten (p.70).

To speak of genitals in terms of their reproductive status is to privilege reproduction as the *raison d'être* of human existence, and moreover as *the* primary goal of sexual practices. Yet what of those who for one reason or another are unable to (or indeed

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<sup>303</sup> While today determinism is most usually associated with either the biological or the cultural, Money's form of determinism incorporated both.

have no desire to) reproduce? And what of those whose sexual practices, tastes and capacity to fall in love with people whose bodies resemble their own ‘genitally’? In Money’s opinion, differentiating object choice from gender identity and gender role, as many social scientists and therapists did, allowed them to say that a person was for example, “masculine in their gender identity and gender role, but homosexual in their sexual orientation and object choice” (p.85). It was more correct, he argued, to say that a person had a masculine (or feminine) gender identity and role except with respect to their “sexuoerotic imagery, ideation” and their translation into practices (p.85). This he believed circumvented the scientific fallacy that one could *choose* one’s sexuality.

### ***Paraphilic desire***

Space does not permit an in-depth investigation of the multitude of paraphilias (formerly perversions) that Money categorised and classified. Yet it would be remiss to examine Money’s models of sexuality without reference to them, given the status he accorded them in relation to sexual orientation(s). Money argued that the past classification of same-sex desire as paraphilic was scientifically untenable because, “paraphilia is an opportunistic trespasser into the lovemaps of either heterophilia or homophilia, or of those lovemaps that combine both, bisexuality” (1988:131). Thus everyone was susceptible to paraphilic tendencies since they constituted an effect of a warped or “vandalised gendermap and/or lovemap” (Money, 1988:134,169,173; 1995:131; See also Money & Lamacz, 1989).

Just as there was no conclusive evidence for the precise role hormones played in a determining a person’s (homo) sexual orientation, neither was there any conclusive

evidence about what physiological factors might account for a paraphilic sexuality. Nonetheless Money suggested that the “best present hypothesis” was that it somehow related to “temporal lobe or limbic brain epileptic dysfunction” acted upon by postnatal developmental factors (1988:133). Alternatively, it might result from biographical experiences such as humiliation and trauma resulting from being punished for engaging in sexual rehearsal play. Just as Krafft-Ebing had insisted on a distinction between perversion (as sexual instinct) and perversity (as sexual acts), so too did Money.

It was Money’s view that unusual sexual activities expressed as an embellishment of one’s more regular sexual activities, did not in themselves constitute a paraphilia. In order for such activities to be paraphilic there needed to be an obsessive, compulsive or addictive element to them that foreclosed the capacity for orgasm by any other means. Paraphilias served, he said, as ruses to “separate defiling lust from purifying love” and while they could be ameliorated, Money did not believe they could be cured *per se* (1988:172). Again, that assertion is a consequence of Money’s belief that one’s sexual tastes were generally bedded down prior to adolescence to become hardwired in the brain.

Money reconfigured the century old categories of perversion by organising them into six meta-categories that he referred to as “grand paraphilic stratagems” (1988:136-8, 182-4). Within those six categories he distributed more than 50 distinct types (Money, 1980, 1988). Yet is noteworthy that not one of those types refers to or accounts for an attraction (or *philia*) directed towards intersex or hermaphrodite persons. While that absence could be read to mean that such an attraction was not considered paraphilic, I

argue a more likely explanation is that such an attraction exceeds the parameters of erotic desire as currently understood. As William Simon (1996) argues:

Perversion [paraphilia] can be thought of as a disease of desire, not only in the sense that it appears to violate the sexual practices of a time and place, but also because it constitutes a violation of common understandings that render current sexual practice plausible (p.118).

Money's ideas of the sexual - as a component of gender - fall prey to the logic of a binary framework, just as his understandings of 'the body' do. In the following chapter I raise the idea of a specifically hermaphroditic eroticism in part to demonstrate the impossibility of such a thing within current conceptions of the sexual. But more than this, I do so because growing numbers of hermaphrodites are demanding that we expand our understandings of the sexual in order to create a space to think about and talk about forms of eroticism that that cannot be apprehended - let alone comprehended - within the existing epistemological frameworks we have at our disposal.

### ***Exploring the limits of Money's 'sex'***

A number of contemporary theorists of sexuality have entered into a critical dialogue with Money's ideas as part of a broader engagement with the sexual sciences. All are concerned with the consequences of Money's commitment to the fundamental sexological principles identified in the first sections of this chapter. What these critiques all share is a recognition of the extraordinary complexity of erotic desires, tastes and styles and the vital importance of factoring in context and the meanings people give to their sexual experiences and relations.

In the sexual sciences generally there has been scant recognition given to the existence of a plurality of homosexualities and even less to a plurality of heterosexualities. While Money's understandings of same sex desire recognise a certain degree of plurality in sex,<sup>304</sup> his ideas nonetheless fall prey to the homogenising impulses of taxonomy that are part and parcel of the scientific method. For William Simon (1996), one of the major obstacles to recognising the plurality of sex has been the "naturalisation of [the sexual] with its commitment to concepts of the sexual as a matter of organs, orifices, and phylogenetic legacies" (p.27). Indeed Money's work is saturated in all three of those concepts.

Money's account of a person's sexual status focuses on the body morphology of the sorts of people with whom a person is able to fall in love, but as Edward Stein (1999) argues, it is not clear that Money's focus on genital and body morphology can do the work he believes that it can. Stein asks pointedly, what exactly does Money mean by 'same', and moreover, how similar do two bodies have to be to qualify as being of the same morphology? For Money the answer to both those questions is straightforward, since he believes that all bodies can, and so should be, divided into two distinct types. Money's account of sexual orientation is problematic for the very reason that people's tastes in terms of body morphology vary dramatically and more importantly, they do so independently of sexual orientation(s). Thus there is a case to be made that bodily and genital morphology represent just the tip of the iceberg with respect to the melange of sexual tastes (Stein, 1997).

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<sup>304</sup> That accounting of plurality is most evident in Money's theorising of bisexuality and the paraphilias.

The concept of phylogenetic legacies makes its appearance in Money's work to explain sexual dimorphism with respect to masculine and feminine roles (including but not limited to eroto-sexual and reproductive roles).<sup>305</sup> Walter Bockting (1997) argues that Money's developmental framework reveals its limits through his framing of same sex desire as a form of transposition or crosscoding. Money's commitment to the idea of reciprocity between men and women in sex (and in gender) is of course grounded in his commitment to sexual dimorphism and reproductive imperatives in sex. As a result, same sex relationships - like their heterosexual 'equivalents' - are figured in Money's work in terms of complementarity with respect to role: one partner is cast in the role of 'the man' and the other, in the role of 'the woman' - irrespective of what 'bodily sex' each party possesses. Yet as Bockting (1997) notes, over forty years of research has produced little evidence to support gender role complementarity in gay male relationships. This is not to deny that this may be one model in same sex relations, but rather to suggest that it is certainly not the only model, nor is it necessarily the dominant one. Similarly, while heterosexual reproductive sex may lie at the heart of many individuals' sexual and gendered identities, it cannot be said to be true for all.

As to the third concept, Money bemoaned a lack of reasonable theories of orifices in sex and indeed of scientific explanations regarding "oral sex, nipple sex ... clitoral sex and vaginal sex, or penile sex and scrotal sex" (Money, 1988:104). Money believed

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<sup>305</sup> "That which is phylogenetic is given to each member of our species and is shared by everyone as part of our species' history" (Money, 1995:36). In other words, it is it refers to that which is genealogically shared by all members of a species (Money, 1988).

that such work was necessary in order to determine "how many different orgasmic spectrums there are, and how to fit each person on the right one with a matching partner" (p.104). While this statement smacks of social engineering, it is motivated by Money's view that appropriately matched lovemaps (of whatever 'flavour') were essential to the sexual health and wellbeing of individuals, and therefore to the wellbeing of the wider populous. Yet one must ask, is the issue actually one of information: that is, of the gathering of more and more data? Is it not the case that in order to deepen our understanding of the complexities of 'the sexual' we need to take a long hard look at the ways in which we understand what 'the sexual' is?

Tolman and Diamond (2001) argue strongly - as did Money - for the merits of an interactionist approach in sex research against the more usual bifurcation of nature versus nurture. In theory interactionism offers a useful means of accounting for the ways in which physiological, sociocultural and political factors work together to produce and shape subjective sexual desires, styles and practices. Yet Money's work must surely serve as a caution that even when the interactions of the biological and the socio-cultural are taken into account, there is no guarantee that such an approach will achieve the work that Tolman and Diamond believe that it will.

Mid-career, Money tackled the issue of quality in desire through a discussion of the cyclicity of female sexual response (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972). His argument turned on a comparison between the ovulatory and menstrual phases of a woman's cycle. On examination however, his commitment to sexual dimorphism reduced that comparison to one of *type* rather than of quality by framing the two phases in terms of active and passive. Money speculated that during the ovulatory phase it was likely that a

woman's desire was to surrender and be occupied sexually whereas during the latter period her desire was likely to involve a compulsion to capture and envelop (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:233). In other words, Money posited ovulatory desire as passive and thus fully feminine and menstrual desire as active and thus fully masculine.

### ***Conclusion***

Attending to how meaning is made by sexual 'actors' may well create opportunities for the development of more sophisticated understandings of the erotic (Simon, 1996; Stein, 1999; Bockting, 1997; Tolman & Diamond, 2001). Sexology has been roundly castigated for its failure to explore not only how people make such meaning, but also for its failure to attend to the issue of subjective experience.<sup>306</sup> It is Bockting's (1997) argument that descriptive rather than developmental models offer a more productive means to understanding the interrelatedness (or otherwise) between one's gender identity and sexual orientation(s). Descriptive models can also be put to work to develop richer and more fruitful understandings of how different forms of sexual desire are dependent upon different kinds of interactions between the physiological and the contextual (Tolman and Diamond, 2001). Examining the role of context and its interplay with physiological processes and temporal changes makes intuitive sense in thinking through the very messy and complex business that is the sexual.

Money's commitment to binary sex-gender and reciprocity, along with his fixation on prevalence and frequency leads to at best a limited, and at worst an impoverished,

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<sup>306</sup> In the concluding chapter, I draw on Geertz' (1983) work on local cultural knowledges together with Keane and Rosengarten's work on local biologies (2002), in order to explore ways in which Money's work can be revitalised.

understanding of human sexuality. Together those commitments lead Money to oversimplify relations of infinite complexity, even though his explanations are far from simple, as I have demonstrated throughout this chapter. Simon (1997) argues that Money's entangling of intrapsychic experience (as identity) with observable behaviour (role) necessarily assumes a direct parallel between social reality and psychic reality which allows him to:

Ignore the complexity of links between the sexual aspects of self and all other aspects of self and the ways in which gender roles reflect the linking of individual history with that of surrounding social life (Simon, 1997:25).

Money's theorising of the sexual is also compromised by the degree of faith he bestowed in the explanatory powers of neurophysiology and bodily chemistry - sans direct evidence. Despite being unable to offer any solid data to support his claims Money has never shied away from postulating causative theories that rely upon those two factors. It is noteworthy that he was at the same time highly critical – dismissive even - of psychological explanations of sexuality grounded in the concept of motivation (Stein, 1999).

In many of Money's texts, lengthy autobiographical accounts taken from case notes shed some light on the subjective quality and the meaning of sexuality for a number of his patients, yet most of his writing fails to explore those elements in any depth. This may well be an effect of his use of that material to support and confirm the veracity of his theoretical position, rather exploring the ways in which they complicate (that is, both strengthen and/or weaken) that position. Yet Stein suggests that Money's

account does offers room for an alternative reading of sexual orientation, one that is not based on sex-gender as discrete (binary) categories.

By Stein's account Money's reference to mentality (identity) and behaviour (role) appears to move him toward a focus on how the social overlays the body rather than to the body itself. Stein suggests that a straightforward one-dimensional view of sexual orientation that Money seeks to retain is undermined precisely because he links it to gender. This he says, results in sexual orientation falling into the study of culture not the study of anatomy and physiology, which is "where Money would prefer it to be" (Stein, 1997:63). The fact that Money asserted that the prenatal phase of development was the first but *not* the primary (or most important) determinant of sexual orientation appears to lend weight to Stein's claim. Yet as I argue in the concluding chapter, the value of Money's conceptualisation of gender lies precisely in his understanding that the body is always in *interactive* relation with the socio-cultural environment(s) it inhabits, rather than a passive recipient of cultural inscription as Stein's analysis suggests.

In keeping with the parallel trajectories of the overall thesis, this chapter began by demonstrating the historical role of the hermaphrodite figure in the sexual scientific thought. This allowed me to demonstrate the various ways that hermaphrodites have historically figured in sexological understandings of human subjectivity. Some of the sexologists of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century drew on embryological understandings of foetal development and the phenomenon of hermaphroditism to develop expansive classification systems of non-normative subjectivities. By contrast, the work of sexologists such as Albert Ellis during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century led to the conceptual and

ontological erasure of a 'third sex' and thus to the ontological erasure of the hermaphrodite subject. By the time that Money began his research, hermaphrodites had become 'human paradoxes' as indicated by the title of Money's doctoral thesis.<sup>307</sup>

The apprehension of hermaphrodites' erotosexual status within a normative (bipolar) framework of homo-, hetero- and bi- sexual made possible their conceptualisation as paradoxical. That same normative framework - underpinned as it is by the axioms of sexual dimorphism and reproductive imperatives - also enabled an apparently unproblematic understanding of hermaphrodites as partial or unfinished males or females. It is to the implications of these factors that I turn in the following chapter where I introduce an altogether different form of expertise on gender. Chapter six turns on the articulations of intersexuals and hermaphrodites in order to explore how gender is theorised by those from whom the concept was originally derived.

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<sup>307</sup> The title of the thesis was *Hermaphroditism: An inquiry into the nature of a human paradox* (Money, 1952).

## Chapter 6

*We've been led to believe that [...] somehow we exist outside of nature. Its like we've been told that the Emperor is wearing clothes and we really believe he's not naked and we don't believe our own two eyes. But we were born that way.*

*Interview with 'Jesse'*

# Dangerous desire: hermaphroditism as subjectivity

I like the word hermaphrodite - that is my sex. I don't have an illness, it's my sex (Interview with 'Kelly').

## ***Introduction***

In previous chapters I examined the ideas of a range of gender theorists, sexological, medical and feminist. This chapter is concerned with a different form of expertise altogether. I turn now to the discursive formations of contemporary hermaphrodites/intersexuals and do so for a number of reasons. Firstly, John Money's original gender theories were derived from these people's historical equivalent.<sup>308</sup> Secondly, some of the individuals whose voices feature in the following pages were among the first and second generations to be subject to the, then new, intersex case management (ICM) protocols devised by Money. Thirdly, hermaphrodites/intersexuals provided an object of analysis for Money's research and while their voices were sometimes presented verbatim in published case notes (interspersed with Money's commentary), never did he afford them the position of subjects or the status of gender theorists.

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<sup>308</sup> In his earliest research Money used 248 case studies from the historical medical record and supplemented them with a further ten case studies of his own. Refer to Chapter two.

As a burgeoning body of knowledge, intersex (IS) discourse cannot be read without reference to medical understandings of differently-sexed (in medical terms, ambiguously sexed) bodies, since medical science has privileged status as the arbiter of the truth of hermaphroditism. Throughout the twentieth century a wealth of material has been produced in the medical and sexological literature regarding hermaphroditism, some of which has been elaborated in the preceding chapters. That literature betrays an unwavering commitment on the part of clinicians involved in Intersex case management (ICM) to the idea that the human species (along with most other species)<sup>309</sup> is sexually dimorphic. This commitment is not grounded in any biological ‘reality’ but rather, in concepts of social and/or cultural necessity. Interpreting hermaphroditism through sexual dimorphism reinscribes and reproduces the terms of binary logic even when offering models that are potentially expansive, as Money’s own work demonstrates.

The very idea of ambiguous sex is a paradoxical one since it involves the morphological characteristics of two norms (female and male) in such a way as to transcend the norms themselves (Epstein, 1995). Embryologists have long known that before seven weeks, foetuses are not differentiated as male or female but exist in what can be described as a hermaphroditic state. It is my argument that the undifferentiated foetus is an entity of multi-potentiality. It is, at the very least, bi-potential and so there

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<sup>309</sup> I base the bracketed claim on the widespread use of animal research to evidence medical and sexological theories of human development and behaviour, particularly sexual behaviour.

is a strong case to be made – as Arlene Epstein does<sup>310</sup> - that hermaphrodites are the norm from which all typical male and typical female forms derive.<sup>311</sup> From about seven weeks onwards, most of us began to differentiate into male or female form and some of us continued to develop as hermaphrodites.

Yet this is not the way that embryological development is understood in the medical and biological sciences, nor by extension, within the broader social domain. Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the female form has been understood as the ‘default sex’, an entity born of inactivity and absence.<sup>312</sup> Recall that this idea derived from Alfred Jost’s embryological research on rabbits. Jost identified pre-natal androgenic surges as a critical factor in male differentiation and development (Refer to Chapter four). The development of the female foetus by contrast, appeared to have no such dramatic equivalent - it just seemed to happen – and hence became known in embryological theory as the default sex.<sup>313</sup> Jost initially offered a caution that more subtle processes were likely to be involved in female development, though he did not explore the issue

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<sup>310</sup> This is the case made by Epstein (1995) in her substantive account of the ways in which disease and disorder (including the ‘dis-order’ of intersexuality) come to be framed in medical accounts.

<sup>311</sup> Freud alluded to this idea in the first of his three essays on sexuality when he suggested that a degree of hermaphroditism “really belongs to the normal” (Freud, 1905/1953). Refer to Chapter two.

<sup>312</sup> The idea that an entity can come into existence by inactivity or absence seems itself a paradoxical notion.

<sup>313</sup> Money promoted this idea in much of his published work, referring to the principle as “Eve first, then Adam”. See Money (1988:13-4, 18-20).

further in his own research.<sup>314</sup> Ascribing passivity to the female foetus not only reinforces the male/female binary, it also reproduces the hierarchical dominant/subordinate relation of the pairing. More importantly, for the purposes of the current discussion, the default sex hypothesis situates femaleness as the ground of humanness rather than as one deviation from the norm I have invoked here.<sup>315</sup>

Despite the historical persistence of hermaphrodites across time, place and cultures, there is a dearth of material that addresses the ontology of the hermaphrodite subject.<sup>316</sup> There is even less that allows the possibility that an hermaphrodite subjectivity could be anything other than pathological. As I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this thesis, this is a direct effect of three interconnected ideas that are as persistent it seems, as hermaphrodites themselves. They include firstly, the idea that hermaphroditism is a purely physical or physiological state and secondly, the idea that each body should contain just a singular sex. The one sex per body model links in turn to the idea that there are only two social sexes (or genders). An ontological hermaphroditism is rendered impossible under the terms of this logic: the same logic that frames how we currently understand gendered and sexual subjectivity. An ontological hermaphroditism after all, undermines the apparent naturalness of the categories man, woman, male, female, heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual (Kessler, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 1993, 2000; Wilchins, 2002b).

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<sup>314</sup> Female development remains, to this day, an area seriously under-researched precisely because the default hypothesis renders it already fully accounted for, even as it explains so little.

<sup>315</sup> This idea has of course, a very specific cultural and epistemological history. Refer to the more elaborated discussion in Chapter four.

<sup>316</sup> Notable exceptions include the memoirs of Herculine Barbin (Foucault, 1980).

Yet there are people who are actively engaged<sup>317</sup> in making sense of their embodied experience of physical forms that exceed cultural intelligibility (although clearly not medical intelligibility).<sup>318</sup> They form part of a broad-based political movement known as Intersex (IS) activism and are the subject of the following pages. This is a form of politics generated by particular medical practices unique to the late twentieth century: one of its key concerns is to call to account those very practices, as well as their theoretical underpinnings.

Intersex politics is informed by various bodies of knowledge that themselves continuously shape - and are shaped by - the multitude of ways that gender is constituted. While the influence of medical and sexological discourses is clearly evident in the discursive formations of IS activism, so too is the influence of feminist and gay and lesbian theories of gender,<sup>319</sup> along with feminist critiques of the medicalisation of women's bodies. In the following pages I demonstrate how the

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<sup>317</sup> It is important to note that not all people diagnosed as intersexed are unhappy with the treatments received, nor indeed their gender assignments. Because so many are reported in the medical literature as 'lost to follow-up', there is no way of accurately assessing the number of 'successful' outcomes' or 'satisfied customers'. Clearly those lobbying for changes to ICM implementation *do* have a problem with it. This includes individuals who, for one reason or another, were never subject to medical interventions themselves. It is also worth noting that there is no way of estimating how many people there are who remain unaware that they were diagnosed as intersexed. That lack of knowledge cannot be simply taken to mean such people are fully habilitated into the gender they were reared.

<sup>318</sup> All of the respondents in this study identified the process as ongoing rather than something that was or could be, already achieved.

<sup>319</sup> Cheryl Chase founder of ISNA sees many parallels between the struggles of gay activists and those of intersexuals particularly their respective pathologisation and subjection to medical practices motivated by social intolerance.

epistemological and ontological boundaries of sex-gender are being pushed to greater or lesser degrees by IS activists who draw upon all of these political, analytical and discursive technologies.

Given this project is a genealogy of gender I am particularly interested in the types of ideas circulating in Intersex discourse about it. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the ways in which 'gender' is understood by that segment of the population from whom the concept derived. It is particularly concerned with the ways in which adults engage in the project of making sense of the intricate relation between their (differently) embodied experiences and ways of being in the world. The narrative accounts and organisational discourses that feature throughout this chapter are the articulations of gender theorists. Thus as a site of theorising gender, this is equivalent to the other expertise that has been analysed in earlier chapters and so is subject to as close a scrutiny as those other bodies of knowledge.

The fieldwork for this chapter consisted of a series of face-to-face interviews conducted between December 2001 and February 2002, with intersex and hermaphrodite<sup>320</sup> individuals residing in various locations in North America, Australasia and India.<sup>321</sup> The interview data is supplemented by material gathered in follow-up discussions by email, telephone and in person.<sup>322</sup> I juxtapose this material

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<sup>320</sup> Note: I use both terms here to acknowledge the varying identifications of those who participated in this research.

<sup>321</sup> Refer pp. 45-7 for detailed elaboration of data collection.

<sup>322</sup> Three of the six interviewees are quoted at length since their articulations diverge significantly from the dominant narrative of IS discourse. As the remaining interviewees tended to echo the dominant narrative, they are not elaborated in as great a detail.

with organisational texts produced and distributed by intersex advocacy groups via sites on the World Wide Web, along with the writings of individuals who have made public their stories, on websites and in academic journals (GLQ, special issue 1999) and in monographs and scholarly texts (Chase, 1996/1998; Dreger, 1998b, 2000; Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Holmes, 1994, 1995, 1998; Kaldera, 1998; Kessler, 1998). In these different texts we can see the confluence of a range of medical, theoretical and political discourses on gender.

The first section of this chapter begins with an overview of the historical conditions in which a broad based intersex politics began in North America in 1993. This is a political movement that has gained momentum over a short period, aided in no small part by the relatively wide reach of the Internet.<sup>323</sup> It is necessary therefore, to trace its development over the course of the past twelve years. The organisational discourses produced by groups like the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) and Intersex Initiative (IPDX) represent the dominant voice of this political movement, especially in locations where English is the first language. ISNA's ideas particularly, have achieved such status through the reproduction and dissemination of its ideas (and ideals) by other IS advocacy groups as well as many LGBT organisations (in both print media and via websites). Because of this, a somewhat disproportionate amount of the discussion turns on the ideas of gender generated by ISNA and IPDX.

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<sup>323</sup> In making this claim I am cognisant of Stephanie Turner's point that despite its name, the World Wide Web is not global in its reach and is thus limited to those with the economic means to access the technology (Turner, 1999). This raises questions regarding the representivity of intersex persons on the Internet.

In the second section I identify the various types of knowledge that inform IS notions of gender and the specific ways in which they do so. While traces of medical knowledge can be found everywhere in IS discourse, so too can the discursive tools of feminism, gay and lesbian theory and the more recent project of queer. Within this discussion I explore some of the tensions produced by the resultant mix of competing ideas and interests. That necessarily demands an examination of some of the consequences of putting medical knowledge to work for political purposes. Such examination brings to light particular constraints which are endemic to such a strategy, because of the normalising tendencies that lay at the heart of the medical model.

That the broad project of IS politics is continually wrestling with the idea of 'gender' is a consequence, I argue, of it being the most recent domain to be theoretically concerned with this concept.<sup>324</sup> It is important to note that historically, hermaphrodites/intersexuals have had their genders managed and/or regulated by others. As a result, self-determination is one of the central themes of this particular political project. While there is no singular or unified voice in intersex/hermaphrodite discourse, there *is* consensus on the need for an end to mandatory infant genital surgery.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> As discussed in chapter four, feminism wrestled with 'gender' for the best part of a decade before the term settled into the feminist lexicon and before there was any widespread agreement among feminists as to its conceptual and political utility.

<sup>325</sup> See Germon (1998) and Hird and Germon (2001) for earlier (and specific) analyses of ICM.

But what of the fate of adult hermaphrodites? ISNA's focus on infants and children is such that there appears ironically to be no space for an adult selfhood as hermaphrodite (see Hinkle, 2006). One of the pressing issues for those who took part in this research involved making sense of their sexual selves. The task is rendered all the more challenging since the only available framework with which to do so - sexuality referenced to sexual object - is unable to either contain or explain, an erotosexual status *as* hermaphrodite. Hence the discussion turns once more to the issue of desire, an issue writ large in the process of 'making sense' of oneself, not least because it is one of the most fundamental ways in which hermaphrodites threaten the apparent seamless logic of the tripartite relation between gender, sex and sexuality. Building on the analysis of the previous chapter, I raise the notion of a specifically hermaphroditic eroticism. I do so to explore the ways in which the very idea of it complicates current conceptions of desire (and gender). A hermaphroditic eroticism exceeds uni-dimensional constructs that rely upon maleness and femaleness as their reference points and upon homosexuality and heterosexuality as their end points.

In the final section I turn to the issue of bodily integrity using Elizabeth Grosz' reading of Merleau-Ponty's corporeal phenomenology. Grosz' analysis provides a means to think through hermaphroditism in ways that refuse any separation between one's body, the degree of intactness of that body and one's being in the world. Situating the body as the primary instrument or medium through which we experience the world offers possibilities for thinking differently about what constitutes sex-

gender and sexuality in ways that open spaces for those most marginalised by such regimes.<sup>326</sup>

Three arguments are woven through this chapter. Firstly, Cartesian dualism continues to play out - not just on medical understandings and practices relating to hermaphrodite bodies - but also in the way that advocacy groups and some intersex individuals understand themselves as subjects. The second related argument concerns the extraordinary resilience of the sex/gender distinction. That is, even for many of these liminally placed people, sex remains the signifier of the 'natural' body against a socially and culturally constructed gender. The third argument is that binary gender categories are reinforced, yet at the same time, complicated by those who exceed them.

### ***ISNA's History: From small beginnings***

During the late 1950s, an infant assigned male and given the name Charlie, had his sex reassigned at age 18 months. He was renamed Cheryl and suddenly *his* small penis became in the eyes of the attendant physicians, *her* enlarged - and thus unacceptably sized - clitoris (Chase, 1996/1998). At the age of 21, Cheryl Chase accessed some of her medical records<sup>327</sup> in order to find out why she had been

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<sup>326</sup> This is precisely how Money conceptualised gender, although as I have demonstrated, he did so for very different ends.

<sup>327</sup> As many others have reported, Chase had difficulty accessing all her medical records. Many physicians are reluctant to release full details of people's medical histories because they believe the information too confronting for the individual to bear.

clitoridectomised.<sup>328</sup> It would be another fifteen years before she began dealing with the information contained within those case notes, information that included a clinical diagnosis of ‘true hermaphrodite’. The term disturbed Chase greatly with its connotations of monstrosity and freakishness. Her discovery of a medical article written in the late 1950s that claimed just 12 cases of true hermaphroditism had *ever* been recorded only served to reinforce her distress. It is hardly surprising then, that Chase wondered if there might be anyone else in the world like her, or indeed anyone whose experiences were similar to her own (1996/1998:212).

But find others, she did. Chase recounts telling her story to friends and acquaintances and within the space of a year had established contact with half a dozen others, two thirds of whom had been surgically mediated, or in her words, “genitally mutilated” (1996/1998:213). And so it was that the Intersex Society of North America came into being.<sup>329</sup> Initially ISNA was set up by Chase as a peer support group to provide a sense of connection, if not community, for a segment of the population rendered all but invisible by the treatment model designed to ‘fix’ their intersex ‘condition’. In 1993, Chase wrote to the editor of *The Sciences* announcing the ISNA’s formation in response to an article by Anne Fausto-Sterling (1993) which asserted that the

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<sup>328</sup> Chase recounts that at the age of ten, her parents disclosed some of her medical history to her, telling her that she had been sick as a baby and had had to go to hospital to have her clitoris removed because it was too large. They advised that she should never share this information with anyone else (1996/1998:211).

<sup>329</sup> The formation of the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) in 1993 has been well documented elsewhere (see for example, Chase, 1996/1998; Dreger, 1997a, 2000; Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Hegarty & Chase, 2000; Kessler, 1998; Nestle, Howell, & Wilchins, 2002).

imposition of genital surgery on intersex infants was misguided.<sup>330</sup> That letter resulted in other intersex individuals contacting Chase, each recounting stories of isolation and shame - stories that resonated with her own.<sup>331</sup> Before long, ISNA extended its focus from peer support to advocacy in a tactical response to the attitudes of clinicians convinced of the rightfulness of their motivations and material practices.

Over the course of the subsequent decade ISNA's political energies have focussed on bringing an end to "unwanted [infant] genital surgeries" ([www.isna.org](http://www.isna.org) Last accessed 8 March, 2006), although not to the exclusion of peer support. Initially, it was ISNA's claim that if a person was to have surgery, the decision should be theirs to make once they reached an age at which they were able to weigh up the risks and benefits and thus make an informed decision. Yet in order for a shift of that magnitude to occur in the patient's relation to surgery, a shift was first needed in the attitudes of clinicians who supported and rationalised the surgical interventions in the first place.

ISNA understood that if it were to effect any change on medical practice, building strategic alliances and opening lines of communication with the medical community was vital. Thus ISNA's primary source of engagement in the past few years has been

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<sup>330</sup> In Britain, an informal peer support group for parents of AIS children began in 1998. Initially it functioned as a one-woman telephone support service but later expanded and formalised itself as the AIS Support Group (AISSG) in 1993. This organisation now has many branches across Europe, Canada, North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa.

<sup>331</sup> A thorough analysis of the effect of multiple genital examinations by teams of clinicians is beyond the scope of this chapter. (see Alexander, 1997; Preves, 2000). For a more general analysis of the impact of others' unfettered access to one's body (particularly by those in positions of authority) and on the issue of stigma, see Goffman (1968).

with medicine. ISNA has positioned itself against current clinical practice in a number of ways, most obviously by developing an alternate model of care that it calls the ‘patient centred’ model. This model was pitched against the current standard in care, dubbed by ISNA as the “concealment centred model” (Dreger, n.d.; [www.isna.org/faq/patient-centered](http://www.isna.org/faq/patient-centered) Last accessed 8 March, 2006)

During the mid-1990s, medical practitioners, for the most part, shunned invitations to engage in dialogue with ISNA. One of the ways that some professional medical bodies and individual clinicians dealt with ISNA’s challenge to their practices was to refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the organisation’s claims. Early on, Chase spurned the idea of picketing. She believed that doctors were more likely to listen to reasoned debate and respond to first person accounts rather than to demonstrating activists. However, ISNA did take to the picket line after learning that the US Congress had passed legislation that banned the practice of clitoridectomy for cultural or religious purposes in the United States, but exempted intersex children from protection by this law (Hegarty & Chase, 2000:11). Intersex activists and supporters picketed the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) in Boston on October 25, 1996 ([www.isna.org/books/chrysalis/beck](http://www.isna.org/books/chrysalis/beck) Last accessed 7 March, 2006). ISNA had sent a letter to AAP officials prior to the convention inviting clinicians to talk with members of ISNA before, during, or after the convention, but the AAP did not respond. Instead a public relations representative of the convention distributed a press release stating that the optimal time for intersex surgery was six weeks to 15 months of age and that while officials would meet privately with the

press, they would not be meeting with “any Hermaphrodites with Attitude”

([www.isna.org/books/chrysalis/beck](http://www.isna.org/books/chrysalis/beck) Last accessed 7 March, 2006).<sup>332</sup>

From that point on, whenever dialogue was possible, ISNA engaged in it and when their claims fell on deaf ears, ISNA demonstrated. Today the organisation can rightly claim to have “gone from [the] picket lines to having a seat at the table in medical conferences” ([www.isna.org/faq/history](http://www.isna.org/faq/history) Last accessed 8 March, 2006). ISNA representatives also give presentations at Grand Rounds, lecture medical students and assist with curricular development at various medical schools across the USA. In 2003 ISNA formed its own Medical Advisory Board from which it takes counsel. Board members include pediatric endocrinologists, medical ethicists, geneticists, psychiatrists and others sympathetic to the ISNA’s aims.<sup>333</sup>

ISNA’s unwavering commitment to ending mandatory genital surgery on intersex infants and newborns, has resulted in the development of a two-pronged approach. As well as directing their educational materials towards the medical profession, ISNA also provides guidance and recommendations for parents of IS children. Over time, that material has increasingly focussed on diagnostic categories, a shift that is perhaps not surprising in light of ISNA’s ever-closer alliances with the medical profession. ISNA’s success is due, in no small part, to a strategic shift away from trying to

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<sup>332</sup> ‘Hermaphrodites with Attitude’ was the original title of ISNA’s newsletter (changed to ISNA News in 2001). The phrase also became the motto of early IS activism, employed in the same defiant sense in which Queer Nation used the now infamous slogan ‘we’re here, we’re queer, get used to it!’ (Stein, 1999).

<sup>333</sup> Other initiatives include an Intersex Studies course run at University of Portland, Oregon by Emi Koyama founder of IPDX and colleagues.

radically destabilise the hegemonic status of medicine, towards an engagement with medicine on its own terms.

### ***How to raise your kids***

In its formative years ISNA sought to challenge normative concepts of sex-gender (Turner, 1999), while today the organisation argues for gender as a strictly binary category comprised of men/boys on the one hand and women/girls on the other. This is most obvious in the organisation's informational material for parents, which includes recommendations on how best to raise an intersex child. Those articulations are perhaps clearest in two virtual documents on ISNA's website. The first is the FAQ section of the site and the second, a downloadable brochure entitled *Tips For Parents* (hereafter referred to as *Tips*) that provides guidelines on how to gender an IS child.<sup>334</sup>

Early on, ISNA conceptualised intersexuality quite differently as evident in their claim that "intersexed people are not 'both sexes in one' but are a biological uniqueness of their own form" (ISNA, *FAQ* 1996). Intersexuals were positioned as one of three types of humans within a discrete model of difference, a model comparable with that used to classify blood groups for example where there is no obvious sense of ordering, even though they fall along a single axis (Stein, 1999). Today however, much has changed.

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<sup>334</sup> Both of these documents are designed to lay to rest a range of misconceptions about intersexuality and to clarify the organisation's position on current medical practices, as well as acceptable forms of terminology.

ISNA argue that all children be assigned a male or female gender after hormonal, chromatin and other diagnostic tests have been conducted to determine what sex the child is most likely to be(come). According to ISNA, assignment decisions are for parents and extended family members to make, in consultation with doctors (Dreger, n.d.). While parents appear to take the driver's seat in this model, they remain reliant upon clinicians for the information on which they base their decisions. By framing intersexuality as a medical issue, three of the central mechanisms that sustain medicine's power base can be seen in ISNA's model of care. Firstly, gender assignment serves as a form of preventative care (against stigma and teasing); secondly intersexuality continues to be framed in medico-jurisdictive terms as a medical problem; and so the issue remains, not whether to deal with intersexuality but rather, *how* and *when* to deal with it (Zola, 1972). In effect ISNA's model leaves intact, the belief that being otherly sexed warrants medicalisation to habituate to a gender. Binary gender is assumed, so the body remains the key site of knowledge for the 'problem' of intersexuality and by extension, the key site for its amelioration.

ISNA then, is not offering any radical (re)articulation of sex-gender, but rather one constrained by a bipolar logic at the level of sex and a binary logic at the level of gender. In other words, ISNA's rhetoric uncritically assumes and reproduces the sex/gender distinction, as well as Cartesian notions of mind and body as separate entities. Yet clearly, this has not always been ISNA's position. It is my argument that these different types of logic carry with them very real constraints. They also stand in a dominant/subordinate relation to each other, with bipolarity subordinate to the binary. It is to the problems of each of those logics and to tensions borne of that

relation that I turn next. My point of entry into the discussion is through the liberatory promise of 'choice' that ISNA articulate in relation to surgery.

ISNA's recommendations for intersex case management (ICM) support freedom of choice with respect to treatment options for adult intersex persons, one of which might be the option of no intervention.<sup>335</sup> Addressing how to determine the appropriate gender assignment of an intersex child, many (but not all) of the IS advocacy groups suggest that the morphology of the child's genitals, current knowledge about the various conditions that constitute intersexuality and the culture the child is born into, must all be taken into account. A number of issues are raised by this advice.

Two things remain unquestioned in such advice. First is the Hobson's choice involved in binary gender - if you are not happy being one, the only legitimate option is to be(come) the other, since under the terms of the current gender system an individual's gender must be stabilised. Stabilisation necessarily requires any movement from one gender to the other to be both uni-directional and a singular event. In addition, by this account, the surgical technologies themselves are not problematic and nor is medical mediation. Intersexuality remains a 'condition' in need of therapeutic management. While there are certain instances where a degree of intervention is required in order to stabilise, for example, electrolyte levels or renal function, intersexuality/ hermaphroditism in itself is not life-threatening. Rather it poses a threaten to the culture(s) (Epstein, 1990, 1995). Despite ISNA's awareness of the latter point, the

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<sup>335</sup> As elaborated in the following discussion, even the 'no intervention' option presumes a (binary) gendered subject.

organisational discourse offers no indication of the dual problems perpetuated by the poisoned chalice of a binary gender supported by medical technologies.

Underpinning this discourse is a bipolar or continuum model of physical morphology that operates alongside a binary model of gender. By this account, females and males occupy the end points on the morphological continuum and intersexuals occupy points along the space between. Recourse to this model is evident in ISNA's claim that "intersex is not, and will never be, a discreet biological category any more than male or female is" ([www.isna.org/faq/gender\\_assignment](http://www.isna.org/faq/gender_assignment) Last accessed 8 March, 2006). The obvious appeal of a bipolar model lies in its ability to account for variation in ways that binary models preclude, since the latter is only able to account for n=two.

While a bipolar model might seem to offer a way to account for sexual variation, it is not without problems. The task of plotting the space between gives one pause for thought, for it quickly becomes clear that a single axis cannot account for, or contain, all the possible variants of intersexuality at a physiological level. As mentioned in earlier chapters, developments in medical technologies have allowed for increasing access to the innermost workings of the body. Yet at the same time, they have created more uncertainty, rather than less, with respect to 'sex'. That is because there are no uni-dimensional markers of sex at a corporeal level, but rather a range of markers that may or may not align. The question then becomes, which dimension of morphological sex should be used to interpret sex here, since a uni-dimensional model can only deal with a single variable at a time. What is actually required is a multi-dimensional model that recognises clusters of categories, some discreet and some continuous that are all - at some level – interrelated (Stein, 1999).

Epstein (1995) suggests that the ability of physicians to manipulate anatomical sex renders intersexuality (problematically) akin “to a harelip or supernumerary toe. [That is,] something to be fixed and then forgotten” (p.116). Indeed ISNA has, in recent years, consolidated around a politics of sameness where difference is increasingly downplayed and intersexuality reduced to the point of inconsequential variation. ISNA emphasises intersexual’s similarity to so-called regular males and females. The following quotation is an example of the type of reduction to which I refer. Since approximately 2001, ISNA has asserted that intersexuality is nothing more than:

An anatomical variation from the ‘standard’ male and female types; just as skin and hair color varies along a wide spectrum, so does sexual anatomy (ISNA 2001).

This articulation turns on the idea of sameness to, rather than difference from. Arguably it represents a repudiation of one of the cornerstones of *identity politics* that has, in the past, proved politically useful to other identity movements. The cornerstone to which I refer is known as a politics of difference (also referred to, as the ethnic minority model).<sup>336</sup> By appealing to the liberal tradition of fair treatment for all, the particular difference of intersexuality is rendered benign. Intersexuals then, are just like ‘the people next door’ (Turner, 1999); just like the metaphorical (unmarked) ‘you and me’. The quotation marks around the term ‘standard’ in the above quotation are noteworthy. Yet how are they to be read? They might well represent an

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<sup>336</sup> For analyses of various modes of identity politics, see for example, Gamson (1996) and Whisman (1996).

acknowledgment of variation within the categories of male and female (recall ISNA's statement above that maleness and femaleness are not discrete categories). Yet the quotation marks may also represent an acknowledgment that variation is a fact of life: a condition of being human. Read in this way, they serve to reinforce the idea that 'we' are just like 'you'.

The tensions inherent between bipolarity and binary constructs, when used in tandem, are such that the former gives way to, and is thus subsumed by, the latter. As I have suggested, ISNA's articulations of sex-gender inevitably fall prey to binary logic even as they understand physicality through a bipolar model. While there are clearly limitations in seeking recourse to dimorphism, there is also a payoff because it allows for the articulation of a politics of sameness. Indeed, that is the vehicle that ISNA have chosen, a vehicle that is considerably less threatening to the wider culture than that posed by an irreducibly different hermaphrodite subjectivity. As to how these theoretical and political strategies operate discursively, I turn again to ISNA's advice to parents in the *Tips* document, on how to bring up an intersex child.

*Tips* provides caregivers with the types of questions they will need to put to doctors, in order to be able to make decisions on behalf of their offspring. The brochure's introduction situates ISNA as "the premier resource for people seeking information and advice about atypical reproductive anatomies" (ISNA, 2004 ). This document is intended as a resource to the parents of intersex infants/children. It provides ten questions that parents are advised to ask physicians, with accompanying notes and advice. One of those questions is of particular relevance to the current discussion. Question seven advises parents to ask the attendant clinicians, "which gender identity

(boy or girl) should this child be given – that is which gender is my child most likely to feel as she or he grows up?” (*Tips*, 2004). Doctors, according to the brochure, are able to use current knowledge about intersex conditions to “help you figure out if your child is likely to feel like a girl or a boy in the long run” (*Tips*, 2004). The target readership is also advised that doctors should take into account the extent to which “your child’s brain was exposed to androgens before birth [because] evidence suggests that children exposed to higher levels of androgens are more likely to grow up to feel masculine” (*Tips*, 2004). Last but not least, the item strongly advises parents *not* to take seriously, any suggestion that delaying surgery is akin to raising the child as a third gender. Why? Because “choosing a gender – boy or girl – for your child is like choosing a gender for any child; you use what is known to make an informed choice”. Should the child grow up to “act gender atypical”, parents are not to blame themselves for “it just means your child is a little different from the statistical average” and no less in need of love and support for their individuality (*Tips*, 2004).

A number of issues are raised by the above advice. Firstly, it reiterates the idea that gender is an either/or proposition. Gender is referenced to boys and girls twice in the (relatively short) accompanying text and so is reduced to a discrete category made up of two classes: men/boys and women/girls. In other words, gender is understood as strictly binary. The slippage in the above articulation between gender role and identity, between the idea of ‘feeling like’ a boy or a girl (sense of self) and acting in gender ‘atypical’ ways (behaviours and presentation of self) is noteworthy also. The statement implicitly accepts that certain behaviours are the property of males and others the property of females. Furthermore it implies that there is an inverse relation between the two. Gender is reinscribed tautologically as a binary proposition

consisting of two discrete categories. It is but a short step from there to the idea that males/men and females/women constitute opposite sexes.

This effectively means that there is no place in gender for intersex persons (as another category). It is my argument that articulations such as ISNA's bring to light the way that binary gender intersects with the sex/gender distinction and indeed, relies upon it. However ISNA use the distinction somewhat differently than its more usual conceptualisation of sex as biological and gender as social or cultural. In making such a claim I am not denying that this more common usage underpins ISNA's ideas rather, that the usefulness of the distinction for ISNA, lies elsewhere.

The sex/gender distinction allows ISNA to conceptualise gender as a completely different order to that of sex, since the former is framed as binary and the latter as bipolar. While the end points of a continuum are privileged (hence bipolar), there are no clear or obvious points of demarcation as there are in a binary model. Thus the sex/gender distinction serves as the ground for ISNA to make such parallel constructions. This reduces hermaphroditism once again to the level of the body and *only* the body. John Money argued as much.

The second issue raised by ISNA's advice to parents concerns the inordinate amount of faith given to the predictive power of clinicians: that is, their ability to predict (accurately, one would assume) what gender the child will become as they grow up. This is what clinicians currently do by following (most of) Money's ICM protocols, since gender assignments are made on the basis of a predictive 'best sex' (see Chapter two). Such advice reinforces the authority of the medical profession (along with

psychoanalysts) as the experts of gender and indeed takes that authority to a new level by vesting in doctors, the capacity of soothsayer.

Thirdly, the advice to parents with respect to prenatal androgen exposure (that is, surges of testosterone that occur in utero effect a masculinisation of the brain), draws upon Milton Diamond's theory of gender.<sup>337</sup> Counter to Money, Diamond argues that gender acquisition occurs in-utero as a product of prenatal androgenic surges. For Diamond, gender is all about nature not nurture.<sup>338</sup> This account is underpinned by the testes-centric notion that male differentiation and sexual differentiation are but one and the same thing. Furthermore, it equates maleness to presence (androgens) and femaleness to absence (no androgens).<sup>339</sup> This is not to suggest that ISNA wittingly promotes the presence/absence model of sex-gender. The organisation has been particularly strident in condemning the high percentage of intersexuals assigned as female because their phalluses fail to measure up - literally - to what clinicians consider an appropriately sized penis. Such assignments are considered by ISNA to be the product of an intrinsic sexism. In addition, Chase has explicitly condemned the presence/absence model in her published writing, in ways that make clear the influence of feminism on her perspective:

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<sup>337</sup> Diamond is a long-time rival of Money who has achieved notoriety in recent years for whistle-blowing the so-called 'John/Joan case'. He positions himself as an ally of IS advocacy groups and has devised an alternate model of ICM that argues for, a) minimal intervention and b) gender assignments based on chromosomes and gonads (Diamond & Sigmundsen, 1997).

<sup>338</sup> Recall that for Money, gender was all about nature working in concert with nurture, which I argue is a considerably more sophisticated analysis than those offered by the time-worn nature/nurture debates.

<sup>339</sup> Moreover, this idea feeds into and supports the female as default idea.

If I label my post-surgical anatomy female, I ascribe to surgeons the power to create a *woman* by *removing* body parts; I accede to their agenda of “woman as lack”, I collaborate in the prohibition of my intersexual identity (Chase, 1996/1998:214, emphasis in original).

Fourthly, the claim that choosing a boy gender or a girl gender for the child is the same as choosing the gender for any child is specious. For it is surely nonsensical to suggest that any parent is able to exercise ‘choice’ over the gender of their newborn. Genitalia serve as the signifiers of sex and so of gender for most children. For parents to choose, for example, a female gender for an infant sexed as male - that is, a child with an ‘appropriately sized’ penis - would surely call into question, their fitness as parents.

### ***Transitioning across the gender divide***

ISNA and IPDX claim that those they represent do not have issues with gender, but rather with the trauma and shame that result directly from current medical practices ([www.isna.org](http://www.isna.org) Last accessed 8 March, 2006). These include clitoridectomies, repeated genital examinations (often in the presence of multiple witnesses) and the practice of non-disclosure regarding diagnoses and/or medical records. Yet, at the same time, ISNA claims that: “children with intersex conditions have significantly higher rates of gender transition than the general population with or without treatment” (Dreger, n.d.). That is, they are more likely to transition than their non-intersex counterparts. Unfortunately no rationale is offered, nor evidence provided, to support the claim. This assertion is surely at odds with the idea that intersexuality is

not about gender. For if one is happy with one's gender then it can be assumed that the assignment was correct or at the very least appropriate. Transition on the other hand, is grounded in a *dis*-satisfaction with one's assignment and rearing. Indeed, the latter would seem to be a necessary condition of the former. Such a claim appears to suggest that gender is in fact, a key issue - at least for those who make the journey from one side of the gender divide to the other.

Implicit in the claim that intersex persons have higher rates of transition than the general population is an understanding that transition involves a unidirectional shift from one gender to the other. Transition involves a movement towards, as much as a movement away from. The positive pole of this movement has as its aim, the achievement of an alignment or fit between the morphological and the psychological. This is a crucial point in ISNA's demand for an end to infant genital surgery as demonstrated in the following quotation:

[M]edically unnecessary surgeries should not be done without the patient's consent; the child with an intersex condition may later want genitals (either the ones they were born with or surgically constructed anatomy) different from what the doctors would have chosen. Surgically constructed genitals are extremely difficult if not impossible to 'undo', and children altered at birth or in infancy are largely stuck with what doctors give them  
([www.isna.org/faq/gender\\_assignment](http://www.isna.org/faq/gender_assignment) Last accessed 8 March, 2006).

By this account, elective surgery offers a potential means of self determination, one realised through consumer choice.<sup>340</sup> For what ISNA appear to be articulating here is a person's right to undergo 'unnecessary surgeries' in order to better fit their morphologies to their psychologies. Yet a caution is warranted. For it should not be forgotten that medicine's quest to make the body conform to the parameters of binary sex is haunted by its continual failure to achieve that aim, despite claims by clinicians that their surgical techniques have become more refined over time.<sup>341</sup> I would argue that this situation is unlikely to change by merely shifting the status of surgery from mandatory to elective.

The assertion that intersexuals are more likely than others to transition from one gender to another is also interesting in light of the political tensions that exist between advocacy groups like ISNA that do not consider intersex to be a 'problem of gender' and transgender politics. In addressing the claim made by some transsexuals that 'transsexuality may be a form of intersexuality [which] manifests in the brain', ISNA acknowledges that some transsexuals are also intersexed. However they qualify that acknowledgement by arguing that:

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<sup>340</sup> Elective surgeries fulfil the Western liberal democratic ideal of the individual quest towards self-actualisation; fulfil the requirements of capital by generating income; and fulfil the requirements of consumerism, as a commodity.

<sup>341</sup> For recent assessments by clinicians of such failures see for example, Creighton et al (2004; 2001), Daaboul and Frader (2001), Minto et al (2001). See also Epstein (1990), Fausto-Sterling (2000c), Roen (2004).

Such claim (*sic*) misses the point that the intersex movement is not about whether or not something is biologically rooted, but about how our bodies are treated by medical authority ([www.isna.org/node/186](http://www.isna.org/node/186)).

In light of the fact that some of the mainstream advocacy groups are vehement that intersex is not about gender and equally vehement that intersex and transsex and/or transgender are of two completely different orders (that is, the former as physiological and the latter as psychological) the idea that intersex persons are more likely to transition begs explanation. The claim might also be read as an acknowledgement that intersexuals/hermaphrodites are more, rather than less, fluid in gender.<sup>342</sup> Yet that would seriously undermine one of the key messages of advocacy groups such as IPDX - that *most* intersex people 'fit' the sex they were assigned and the gender they were reared, as the following quotation demonstrates:

Contrary to the popular belief, intersex people are not suffering from a "gender" issue: most people with intersex conditions identify simply as a regular man or a woman. [...] Some allies of intersex people view intersex as a gender "variation" that should be accepted and honored rather than as an unacceptable gender "deviance" that need to be eliminated. But this approach is inadequate because it reproduces the same old framing of intersexuality as a peculiar gender phenomenon (Koyama, n.d.-b).

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<sup>342</sup> This would make sense through Money's identification/complementation schema. See Chapter two.

This claim is saturated by Cartesian dualism which plays out via the sex/gender distinction. People by this account, have an intersex condition (sex) and self identify as men or women (gender). More than this, the above articulation frames undoubtedly complex and multifaceted phenomenon in, seemingly simple, binary terms. Can identification as a man or a woman be said to be in any straightforward way, a simple matter? What is the payoff of (re)investing the sex/gender distinction in this way?

In an interesting turn, ISNA suggests that it is important to recognise that *everybody's* gender assignment is preliminary, regardless of whether they are intersexed or not (Dreger, 2001; ISNA, 2004). To claim that everybody's gender assignment is provisional carries with it an implicit recognition that binary gender categories cannot contain the rich diversity of human subjectivities. By stressing the contingency of everybody's gender assignment, ISNA inadvertently renders *all* genders queer, a point I return to in the following pages.

The late Lee Anderson Brown,<sup>343</sup> a Sydney-based activist argued that because of modern medicine's credence that hermaphroditism is merely a *condition*, today there is no such thing as a hermaphrodite socially. ISNA's position serves to reinforce this idea. The noun hermaphrodite has become the adjective hermaphroditic and so "the specificity of hermaphroditism is subsumed unproblematically into the category abnormal male or abnormal female" (Brown, 2005:12). With the exception of a handful of documented case studies from the medical record of the late nineteenth and

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<sup>343</sup> Lee Anderson Brown died of cancer in late 2003. The contribution he made to IS politics and theorising was significant. Copies of some of Lee's conference papers and articles are held at The Gender Centre library in Sydney, Australia (Refer [www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)).

early twentieth centuries<sup>344</sup> and the memoirs of French hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin there were, until recently, no substantive written accounts of a hermaphrodite ontology. As a result, intersex/hermaphrodite individuals have very few role models from which to draw inspiration or to identify with. Today the dominant voice in IS politics in the English-speaking world - ISNA – also refuses the possibility of an hermaphrodite/intersex ontology because of its investment in binary gender.

Being intersex/hermaphrodite is not, according to ISNA or IPDX, a feasible option since “intersex is not, and will never be, a discreet biological category any more than male or female is” ([www.isna.org/faq/gender\\_assignment](http://www.isna.org/faq/gender_assignment), Last accessed 8 March, 2006). By arguing against the idea of gender as a continuum, ISNA’s discourse bears remarkable similarity to Money’s conceptualisation of gender as binary. Moreover, the refusal to acknowledge intersexuality as anything other than a physical state - and one of minimal consequence at that - is an explicit refusal of a hermaphrodite/intersex subjectivity. In taking this position, ISNA and IPDX bring into play another is/ought distinction and thus unwittingly agree with, and provide evidence in support of, Money’s gender acquisition theory.

It is my argument that the discourses of ISNA are saturated with binary notions of gender even as the organisation claims that intersexuality is “primarily a problem of stigma and trauma, not gender” ([www.insa.org/home](http://www.insa.org/home)). By working through the trajectories of ISNA’s ideas regarding gender, it is my concern to lay bare, some of the political, epistemological and ontological consequences that those ideas have for

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<sup>344</sup> Here I refer to Anne/Jean Baptiste Grandjean and Levi Suydam (Epstein, 1995). See also Dreger (1998b) and Fausto-Sterling (1985).

*all* intersex/hermaphrodite persons. While ISNA currently has the most pervasive and loudest voice in a shifting terrain, it is certainly not the only voice in that domain.<sup>345</sup>

As I will demonstrate, ISNA does not speak for all those who may lay claim to being intersex/hermaphrodite.

Indeed ISNA's representational capacity has arguably been compromised by its choice of coalitional partner(s) - that is, doctors and other health professionals. This is highlighted most clearly through the other articulations of gender that I introduce in the following sections: articulations that contrast starkly with many of those of ISNA and IPDX. Here I refer to the discourses produced by one of the more recently formed IS organisations, the Organisation Intersex International (OII) (establ. 2003) and by individuals who participated in the fieldwork of this research whose articulations are brought to bear in the following pages.

### ***The terminology debates***

Making sense of oneself as differently sexed and/or otherly gendered is not without its challenges since the most fundamental of tools that anyone has available to 'make sense' of themselves is language. The English language is not merely gendered, it is binarily gendered. Language places enormous limitations on the ability to think and

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<sup>345</sup> Reasons for this dominance include: ISNA's strategic use of the Internet, alliance building with established academics such as Alice Dreger and Anne Fausto-Sterling and a new generation of social researchers who are exploring the social, ethical and legal implications of being otherly sexed in Western Liberal Democracies; judicious use of the print media and television; and as discussed, ever closer alliances with increasing numbers of clinicians who are beginning to question some of the underlying assumptions of the current medical model from within their own professions.

talk about being hermaphrodite: limitations that have significant epistemological and ontological consequences for those grappling with what it means to be hermaphrodite. While existing bodies of knowledge constrain what can be thought, so too do the grammatical constraints embedded in English evident in pronouns for instance (Money, 1977). Each of the interviewees in this study was highly cognisant of the way the structure of the English language circumscribes their capacity to speak of their hermaphroditic aspects of self.

Yet it is worth recalling that ontological 'gender' was itself a product of the constraints of language that Money encountered early in his career. English is a living language, subject to constant change. Indeed, neologisms serve to maintain its life breath. Given that a growing number of intersex/hermaphrodite persons are not content to know that aspect of themselves in purely physical terms, what other words could be put to work from the existing lexicon: reclaimed and reoriented as a means of extending hermaphroditism beyond the body? Might new words prove useful to such a project? In the earliest sexological literature, what we now name as homosexuality, as gay and lesbian, was framed in terms of a psychic hermaphroditism (See Chapter five). In its earliest usage, the term intersex referred to those with same-sex desires as well as to hermaphroditism. There is another subcategory of gender that remains available but which has fallen into disuse over time. That word is neuter. However, carrying as it does the taint of 'nothingness', neuter is not an attractive alternative to those seeking to extend or rupture existing gender categories. A more recent term that is gaining increasing currency in some quarters is 'intergendered'. It was while conducting the first of the interviews for this project in late 2001, that my attention was first drawn to the term. Drew self-described as an intersex person, who

was also intergendered, explaining the latter term as a form of gender liminality. Intergendered was useful to Drew precisely because it was “not burdened with the weight of historical precedent” (Interview with ‘Drew’).

Many of the publicly available narratives by intersex individuals ground their identities in diagnostic categories, particularly with reference (whether consciously or not) to Money’s nomenclature. Among those I interviewed, just one person gave primacy to their diagnostic category - or more precisely to their chromosomal status - wearing it as a badge of pride, a key marker of identity. This person identified themselves as ‘an XXY’ but also self-referenced at times as “an epicene” (Interview with ‘Chris’).<sup>346</sup> Others held their diagnostic category at arms length, indicating a reluctance to use it to self-identify. ‘I physically ... as an intersex person ... was born with a condition *known in the medical literature as Kallman’s syndrome*’ (Interview with ‘Drew’, emphasis added).

Still others thoroughly disassociate themselves from diagnostic categories. Those of my interviewees who fell into this group, articulated forcefully, the folly of basing one’s identity on categories of unwellness, disease and disorder:

If I have this condition and you have that condition, well all it does is further separate us from ourselves. ... It denies the possibility that there is anything other than male or female because once you medicalise this you are saying,

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<sup>346</sup> Epicene is defined as “partaking of the characteristics of both sexes” ([http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.library.usyd.edu.au/cgi/entry/50076711?single=1&query\\_type=word&queryword=epicene&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10](http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.library.usyd.edu.au/cgi/entry/50076711?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=epicene&first=1&max_to_show=10) Last accessed 10 February, 2006).

and you are accepting, that really you are a pathology ... a flawed male or a flawed female (Interview with 'Kelly').

Here diagnostic categories are refused on the following grounds: firstly, as externally imposed terms with little import to one's sense of self (this view was shared by those who had been surgically mediated as youngsters and others who were not); secondly because such concepts are inherently pathological (and pathologising); thirdly, because they serve to obscure points of commonality with others; fourthly because they reinforce binary constructs of sex-gender; and finally, because they reinforce the idea that intersex/hermaphrodite individuals suffer from a physiological condition, rather than from the normalising demands imposed by society.<sup>347</sup>

Yet the compulsion to rely on diagnostic categories remains incredibly powerful for many, since almost all our understandings about intersexuality/hermaphroditism either come from, or are informed by, the medical literature. What should we make of such claims in light of the above quotation? One interpretation might well be that different diagnoses and/or medical experiences result in differing degrees of trauma and of shame and that this is significant to both identity formation and to the shape of IS politics (Rosario, 1 August, 2005, personal communication). There are anecdotal accounts of non-medicalised intersexuals and hermaphrodites feeling unsure of where they fit within IS politics and of feeling guilty that others have been more oppressed than they. Of course this is not the only possible outcome. At a more productive level,

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<sup>347</sup> This analysis echoes the social model of disability where disability is imposed by society rather than being the property of individuals. See for example, Oliver, (1990; 1996); Swain, French and Cameron (2003); and Shakespeare (1998; 2002).

attachment to diagnostic categories has seen the proliferation of niche targeted support services that are tailored to particular 'conditions'. Yet this does not diminish the points made by my respondent since the pathologising impulses of diagnostic categories remain, as does the potential for divisiveness.

Language also serves other functions. It is arguably the most fundamental tool through which relations of power are constituted and reproduced, since legitimation is essential to the exercise of power (Swartz, 1997). As ISNA has gained dominance in IS politics, it has become increasingly concerned with regulating the terms of the debate in terms of what can be said and indeed, how it can said. To illustrate that point I turn now to a page on ISNA's website that provides guidelines for writers and researchers. Those guidelines warn non-intersex people not to reduce intersex people to their physical conditions, but instead to "depict them as multi-dimensional human beings with interests and concerns beyond intersex issues" (*ISNA Guide to Writers and Researchers*. Retrieved 17 November, 2001).<sup>348</sup> Yet paradoxically, the organisation itself reduces intersexuality to little more than its physical manifestation(s) by two means. Firstly it defines intersexuality as a physiological variation of male and female sexual anatomy, as potentially meaningless as variation of eye or hair colour. Secondly, it privileges diagnostic categories that do the same, conditions that are referred to variously as "*disorders of sexual differentiation ...*" ([www.isna.org/faq/conditions](http://www.isna.org/faq/conditions), emphasis added. Last accessed 8 March, 2006) and

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<sup>348</sup> A search for these Guidelines page on the ISNA in 2006 will prove fruitless however, as they are now located on the website of Intersex Initiative (IPDX) a site on which most of the material is produced by ISNA's former communications officer (Refer Koyama, n.d.-c).

“atypical reproductive anatomies” ([www.isna.org/articles/tips\\_for\\_parents](http://www.isna.org/articles/tips_for_parents) Last accessed 8 March, 2006).

The guidelines go on to offer ‘acceptable’ ways to talk about and write about hermaphrodites/ intersexuals in seemingly unproblematic ways. Yet these are not, by any stretch of the imagination, unproblematic issues. Warnings are issued against “us[ing] intersex people merely to illustrate the social construction of binary sexes” and further, that “intersex people are no more responsible for dismantling gender roles or compulsory heterosexuality than anyone else” (*ISNA Guide*. Retrieved 17 November, 2001).<sup>349</sup> Yet where does this leave those who challenge binary constructs of sex-gender and sexuality on the basis that they are oppressive constructs, not only for themselves, but indeed for everyone?

The term ‘hermaphrodite’ is considered by ISNA to be stigmatising and misleading and so, “best avoided except in specific circumstances”, although no indication is given of what such circumstances might be ([www.isna.org/faq/hermaphrodite](http://www.isna.org/faq/hermaphrodite) Last accessed 8 March, 2006).<sup>350</sup> ‘Intersexual’ or ‘intersexuality’ are offered as preferred terms for two reasons. Firstly, the term ‘hermaphrodite’ in ISNA’s view, implies the existence of two complete sets of genitalia: a physical impossibility if one is referring

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<sup>349</sup> In response to my call for expressions of interest for interviewees for this project in mid-2001, I received an email from Koyama in her capacity as communications officer at ISNA informing me that, “most intersexed people *do not* have gender issues” (Koyama, personal communication 9 September, 2001).

<sup>350</sup> It is noteworthy that ISNA’s newsletter was until 2001, entitled *Hermaphrodites with Attitude*, a phrase used in something of an ironic sense. As of the February 2001 edition, the newsletter was reformatted and renamed as *ISNA News* (ISNA, 2001).

to the simultaneous possession of a penis and a (separate) clitoris,<sup>351</sup> similarly a vulva and scrotum. Secondly, the mythical connotations associated with the term are not considered by ISNA to be helpful to those they represent. IPDX take the same view arguing that ‘hermaphrodite’ is a term that is “misleading, mythical and stigmatising” since it refers in biology to an organism that has:

Both “male” and “female” sets of reproductive organs (like snails and earthworms). In humans there are no actual “hermaphrodites” in this sense [...] Can we use the word intersex instead when we are talking about humans? Snails are the hermaphrodites; humans are not (Koyama, n.d.-b).

Hermaphrodite as a signifier also does not sit well with others. Brown, for instance (1995), argued that the term’s historic relation to the logic of teratology and its evocation of an exotic sexuality made it particularly problematic:

The symbolism of the hermaphrodite was and continues to be used as part of the mythology of sexuality [and so] people who were, and are, born with hermaphroditic *conditions* remain trapped within a discourse of exotic freaks and monsters’ (Brown, 1995:1, emphasis added).

A further objection to the term concerns the way it has been deployed historically in medical discourses. Hermaphrodite is a term that eclipses post-Enlightenment medical

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<sup>351</sup> It is of course, possible to have both a penis and a vaginal opening or pouch. Similarly at the level of gonads it is widely recognised in medicine that some people possess both an ovary and a testis and others a single (combined) ovotestes. The point that appears to be being made here is that human hermaphrodites are not self-fertilising reproductive entities.

science, since it derives from the Greek myth of Hermaphroditus, son of Hermes and Aphrodite, who was so named after fusing with the nymph Salmacis. However, for the past 100 years, hermaphrodite has been linked to the medically designated qualifiers 'true' and 'pseudo'. Like John Money, ISNA, IPDX and others consider the modifiers to be outmoded remnants of a Victorian nomenclature that preceded twentieth century understandings of the body as offered by the fields of genetics, endocrinology and embryology (Dreger, 2001:3, Money, 1972:5-6, [www.isna.org/faq/language](http://www.isna.org/faq/language) Retrieved 9 September, 2001). There is widespread agreement among intersex activists, of all persuasions, that the modifiers are offensive since they imply a form of authenticity and/or lack thereof.<sup>352</sup> Alice Dreger who serves on ISNA's board and writes extensively for the organization, has referred to them as "a nasty Victorian term[s] invented in an effort to make intersexuality go away" (Dreger, 2001:3). As mentioned, Money also objected strongly to the modifiers, although for purely technical reasons, since in his view, the term pseudo-hermaphrodite failed to account for individuals whose gonadal tissue was undifferentiated (1972:6).<sup>353</sup>

Some of those who reject the word hermaphrodite (although not all) stress a distinction between *intersexual* as the signifier of an identity experienced privately and promoted publically (in other words, a gender) and *intersexed* as a medical diagnosis (Kessler, 1998:84-5). The terms 'intersex', 'intersexual' and 'intersexed' were first introduced into the diagnostic lexicon in 1917 by Richard Goldschmidt and

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<sup>352</sup> See for example, ISNA's position on the issue on its frequently asked questions page under the subheading 'Language' ([www.isna.org/faq/language](http://www.isna.org/faq/language) Retrieved 9 September, 2001).

<sup>353</sup> According to Money, "in modern [medical] usage, the preferred terms are male, female, and true hermaphroditism" (1972:290). Note here the privileging of male/female.

thus, are specifically medical designations. Goldschmidt was an early proponent of the idea that hermaphrodites were incomplete males or females. In his view all mammalian hermaphrodites were actually intersexes since he believed that they were the result of an embryonic 'sex reversal' (See Goldschmidt, 1923). It is worth noting that today the term 'sex-reversed' is ascribed in the medical literature, to individuals who have male or female morphologies with all associated internal reproductive structures, 'matching' genitalia, along with XX and XY chromosomes, respectively.

The term intersex appears to be less offensive to those who see intersex as something done to them, rather than as an element of selfhood (See for example, Koyama, n.d.-a). That privileging is interesting, since the former has always been intricately tied to pathology and to the idea of unfinished-ness. 'Inter' literally means between: thus to be intersex is to fall *between* the two legitimate sex categories. Within a framework such as this, intersex persons can only ever be unfinished, partial males or females. It is precisely this idea that underpins the rationale for medical interventions that include genital surgery and the removal of any, and all, tissue deemed surplus to the sex of assignment.

It is unclear to what degree embracing medical terminology, with its inflections of partiality and incompleteness, reflects a strategic essentialism (after Spivak). ISNA and IPDX have taken a particular position in discourse in order to engage with the medical establishment, on its own terms. Certainly the efficacy of such a move can be evidenced by the inroads ISNA has made over the past twelve years. Yet as with any political strategy, this one brings with it a range of unintended consequences that are never able, as Butler (1990) would say, to be predicted in advance.

With the passing of time, some of those effects have become evident. Privileging the term intersex lends support to binarian constructs of sex-gender that demand intersexuality be kept firmly grounded at the level of the body. Intersex cannot be disentangled from medicine, with its functionalist views of the body, particularly the sexed body. It is precisely because of this that intersexuality remains a (mere) matter of flesh: malleable, correctable, erasable.

I'm not an intersexed man and I'm not an intersexed woman, I'm hermaphrodite - period. Even though it has a lot of mythical aspects to it [...] there is something magical about the term hermaphrodite, intersexed is just another medical label. (Interview with 'Kelly').

Here a case is being made for hermaphroditism outside of medicine. The mystic is implicitly framed as expansive, offering possibilities which the contractive qualifier 'just' that accompanies the term intersex, forecloses. As this, and the narrative that follows indicate, while intersex may currently be the favoured term circulating in the medical, political and public domains, it does not have universal currency with all those who may lay claim to it:

I hate the term intersexed, it doesn't ... doesn't put us anywhere. It puts us in between again and it still doesn't give us anything that we can *be*.<sup>354</sup> I see it [the mythical connotation] as *more* of a reason for taking back the word

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<sup>354</sup> For a recent analysis of the implications of mainstream IS politics' refusal of an ontological hermaphroditism/intersexuality, see Hinkle (2006).

[hermaphrodite], for reclaiming it to say, well we're still here we're not hidden. We've been hidden for quite a [while] but hey, *hello*, we're here (Interview with 'Lee').

Again we see the invocation of the mystic. One of the effects of medicine's privileged status as 'managers' of intersexuality has been that the surgical and chemical technologies of the late twentieth century - those used during these people's lifetimes - have served to render hermaphrodites invisible. That, in turn, has served to reinforce the idea that hermaphrodites are nothing more than creatures of myth, existing beyond the realms of human. There is implicit in the statement, 'doesn't put us anywhere ... doesn't give us anything to *be*' of the above quotation, a recognition of the limits of a continuum that privileges its end points. Those who might fall at other positions on the axis don't appear to count - at least not until they are *made* (as in reconstructed) to physically resemble those who occupy the (variously) privileged sites at either end.

The reclamation of the term hermaphrodite or its more informal counterpart, 'herm' operates in a similar fashion to 'queer'. Those enamoured of the term(s) articulated a number of reasons for their preference. Hermaphrodite was said to convey a sense of the substantive, rather than a sense of partiality and incompleteness. Just as significant was the sense of ambiguity invoked by the word: a referent to both sexes or perhaps indeed, to neither. Intersex, by contrast, evoked for these people a sense of - to use Sabine Sawhney's interpellation - "something neither here nor there" (Sawhney, 1995:199). And, as the above quotations evidence, any mythical connotations associated with the term hermaphrodite were actually implicated in its appeal.

## ***Begging to Differ***

In the latter part of 2002, a group of intersex activists from around the world (including some ex-ISNA members and affiliates) began setting up an organisation whose aims extended beyond bringing an end to infant genital surgery. The intention of this group was to represent adults and young people who consider that intersexuality/ hermaphroditism *is all* about gender. Organisation Intersex International (OII) was formed to provide a voice for those who believe it necessary to challenge the hegemony of binary gender in order to create a place for intersex/hermaphrodite persons. OII argues strongly against the erasure or diminution of the importance of gender to intersexuals/hermaphrodite persons precisely because, in its view, doing so reduces intersexuality/hermaphroditism to its physical constitution.

As its name indicates, OII is concerned to work across national boundaries and for that reason, uses the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as guiding principles. The organisation's aim is to promote the exchange of ideas and create a space for a wide range of perspectives about intersex issues, from a variety of sources and geographical sites.<sup>355</sup> Intersexuality is framed as a human rights issue that affects everybody, whether intersex or not, since OII views binary categories as damaging to all people. For this reason, OII is committed to building strategic alliances with other genderqueers, irrespective of whether they were born intersex or otherwise. Its representatives are located in a range of countries including: Canada,

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<sup>355</sup> As will become obvious in the following paragraphs, OII and ISNA differ significantly in their views of what intersexuality/hermaphroditism is and how it should be dealt with.

the Americas, France, Australia, Germany and Sweden. In keeping with the transnational foci, the organisation offers its web-based material in eight languages.

OII's politics of inclusion is reflected in the organisation's mission statement. It is demonstrated most obviously by the posting of a range of articles and narrative accounts, as well as links to other sites on its website.<sup>356</sup> However, some of that material lends support to, rather than challenges, binary concepts of gender. A disclaimer is offered on the home page cautioning visitors that some of the articles linked to OII frame intersexuality in pathological terms, a position that OII repudiate:

The Organisation Intersex International does not accept the pathological views that are presented in several articles. We do feel it is our responsibility to provide information from many different perspectives because many of us are still struggling with the idea that we are ill or deformed. OII rejects this. ... [T]ake note of all the medical terms and pathological perspectives. In so doing, you will see why we need to speak for ourselves. Most information on Intersex is written with the assumption that we are ill. We hope to gradually change this current misconception ([www.intersexualite.org/English-index.html](http://www.intersexualite.org/English-index.html) Last accessed 10 February, 2006)

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<sup>356</sup> Links are provided to other IS advocacy groups including ISNA, and IPDX, the Australian group, AISSG, and the French group FINE, along with a number of transgender sites. There are also links to numerous articles written by IS activists and a significant number of medical articles, for example Scannell's (2001) *Engendering Differences: Ethical issues about Intersex*. See <http://www.kindridspiritlakeside.homestead.com/links.html> Last accessed 6 January, 2006

While the organisation's position on the pathologising impulses of the medical literature are made clear in this statement, it is less clear where the organisation sits in relation to other material linked to the site: material that is, in some instances, contrary to OII's own agenda. One example is an extract from Farrell Roberts (2000) text, *Seven Days: Tales of magic, sex and gender*, entitled "Is The Baby A Boy or Girl?" in which much of the discussion turns on the idea that the brain is sexually dimorphic. In the current IS political environment, taking up the debates in ways that marks its own position clearly on a range of issues, might well give OII increased political traction.

Organisation Intersex International's agenda resonates with that of ISNA's earliest articulations and with the early gay rights movements by challenging binary categories of sex-gender. However, that may well represent the comparative limit between the two movements, for IS politics cannot be said to be an identity movement as historically understood. OII has no interest in establishing "another "fixed" identity category [but rather] promoting the right to self identification whether as men, as women, or as intersexed" ([www.intersexualite.org/home](http://www.intersexualite.org/home) Last accessed 20 January, 2006). In a press release arguing against the assimilation of intersexuality into GLBT movements,<sup>357</sup> OII's co-Vice President and Canadian spokesperson Joelle-Circe Larameé argues that:

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<sup>357</sup> It is increasingly common for the letter 'I' to be tagged onto the acronym GLBT (as GLBTI) as if intersexuality was itself another mode of sexual identity. It is to this issue that Laramee's point is directed.

The history of intersex has been [one of] constant erasure and assimilation. [Thus] in order to speak clearly about intersex issues from many different perspectives, it is necessary to establish bridges with the whole human community and avoid becoming one more invisible minority within another minority (Laramee, n.d.).

This statement indicates a different order of coalitional type politics (again based on strategic alliances), that refuses to situate intersexuality within a rubric of identity politics, the hallmark of sexual minorities throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. It is precisely because intersex peoples' sexualities exceed simple classification as gay, lesbian, or bisexual that OII take the stand they do. Intersex persons span the gamut of sexualities and, in some cases, exceed them by queering erotic categories in ways that make absolutely no sense within the existing nomenclature of sexuality. This brings us to the issue of a specifically hermaphroditic eroticism, since it is at this level that the existence of hermaphrodites seems most troublesome.

### ***Hermaphrodisias***

Maybe we can enlarge our vision of what sex is all about. Why couldn't sex just be fun? We still have this idea, and we say we don't, but we still have this idea that sex is about reproducing (Interview with 'Kelly').

A 'normal sex life' in medical terms is constituted by the capacity to engage in penile-vaginal intercourse and is inevitably linked to reproductive imperatives, even in those instances where infertility directly results from medical intervention(s). While this premise has laid ICM professionals open to charges of enforcing heteronormativity, as

I argued in the previous chapter, all sexual identities are invested in binary gender: gays, lesbians and heterosexuals need to be able to distinguish the boys from the girls.<sup>358</sup> Bipolar constructs of gender underpin and motivate the current treatment model because hetero-norms (and their ‘others’) depend upon gender to the power of two. An understanding of that dependence is articulated clearly in the following passage in which one of my respondents speaks to why intersex/hermaphrodite - and queer subjectivities more generally - are transgressive:

All gender-bashing starts on the playground, they want a piece of your arse because you transgressed gender stereotyped mandates not because you have sex with your own gender. They kill you for the same thing ... what they can't deal with is gender heresy. [I]t extends itself into the bodies of intersexuals [because] its about preserving masculine males and feminine females (Interview with ‘Jesse’).

Most of those I interviewed were struggling to articulate their erotic desires and their desirability in terms of a hermaphroditic eroticism in ways that speak to hermaphroditism/intersexuality as an indelible part of their subjectivity. While the project of queer calls into question the whole notion of identity (Halberstam, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990; Seidman, 1997, 1996; Simon, 1996; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Wilchins, 2002b), intersex activism is making rights claims on behalf of a specific (albeit diffuse and diverse) segment of the population. These particular claims operate at the level of a freedom *from* mandatory medicalisation and the freedom to *be*

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<sup>358</sup> Those who identify as bisexual are obviously less invested in binary gender, however the very term ‘bisexual’ relies itself on a dimorphic model.

different, indeed to be a thoroughly different kind of different. Yet as with gender, the rejection of sexual identity categories does not diminish the pressure to locate oneself sexually – be it as gay, straight, bi, or indeed, queer since others have a vested interest in knowing *who* one is sexually and what forms one's desires take. That is because *most* erotic desires remain, by and large, linked to bodily specificities. Self-designation as hermaphrodite or intersex has significant implications for one's sexual self and for those with whom you share affectational connections. While such a move is undoubtedly disruptive to normative understandings of sexuality, it leaves the claimant in something of a netherworld, as Chase's rationale for using the term lesbian evinces:

I claim a lesbian identity because women who feel desire for me experience that desire as lesbian, because I feel most female when being sexual, and because I feel desire for women as I do not for men. Many intersexuals share my sense of queer identity, even those who do not share this homosexual identity (1996/1998:216).

Like Chase, Lee spoke of what might well be described as sexuality by proxy. Recognising that others' need to define hir relationships was incredibly strong, perhaps even compulsive, at times s/he admits to assenting to those relationships being defined by the sexuality of a lover. Yet the following quote betrays a sense of the paradoxical with respect to 'fit', as well as an understanding that the model's intactness takes primacy over that which exceeds it:

Other people are always going to define me and define my relationships depending on who I'm with and I just have to let go of that and let them do that ... its not worth the hassle to argue with them about that. If my lover identifies as a certain thing then maybe to a certain degree then I have to identify as that as well, to fit within the framework (Interview with 'Lee').

Canadian activist and academic, Morgan Holmes on the other hand, defiantly queers her relationship with her male partner by refusing to be just another "happy het". Rather she insists that people know that her marriage "is that between a man and an intersexual" (Holmes, 1998:225). In drawing a comparison between these two articulations, I do not mean to suggest that Lee is not fully aware of the queering effects being a herm has for her own sexual sense of self and desires, nor its implications for the wider population. The following comments indicate precisely, a keen awareness of just how queer being a herm is:

But if I take on the label 'hermaphrodite' I can't have a [sexual] identity because there are no words for me. ... What does it mean? Well it means you can't be lesbian and you can't be gay and you can't be straight can you? There's got to be another label, you can't really be bisexual ... you can play with *yourself* and be bisexual [laughs]. What am I when I have sex with a woman [or] with a man, am I you know, when I'm having sex with a man am I being gay? When I have sex with a woman am I being lesbian? When am I being straight? I've never been heterosexual ... its impossible for me to be heterosexual (Interview with 'Lee').

These questions form the backdrop to the constant process of negotiation between Lee's sexual self and his overall sense of self. The constancy of that process is, I argue, an effect of reductive normative ideas about sexuality and selfhood that appear to be so thoroughly entrenched as to seem inescapable - in the current climate at least.

Yet the articulations of ISNA around desire deny, or at least downplay, the idea that there is or could be such a thing as an intersex/hermaphroditic eroticism. This, I argue, is a direct effect of ISNA's investment in the notion of binary gender. Nowhere is that commitment more clearly expressed than in one of the FAQ pages of the organisation's website where various intersex conditions are explained. The following statement appears under the category of 'Progestin Induced Virilisation':

After the onset of puberty the child may want to explore the option, hopefully with the aid of loving parents and peer counselling, of having surgery to allow expression of *either female or male sexuality*

([www.isna.org/faq/conditions/progestin](http://www.isna.org/faq/conditions/progestin), emphasis added. Last accessed 8 March, 2006).<sup>359</sup>

This statement begs the question of just what a male or a female sexuality might be. No further information is offered so one can only speculate that it refers to heterosexual couplings and perhaps also to lesbian or gay male sexuality. Nonetheless, irrespective of whether it is inclusive of same sex desires or not, the statement is informed by heteronorms. According to Money, desire for women

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<sup>359</sup> This is the only one of 12 named 'conditions' in which this statement is made.

constitutes male desire and desire for men constitutes female desire, no matter how masculine or feminine the desirer might be in terms of their gender identity and role.<sup>360</sup> However interpreted (loosely or otherwise), there is no place in ISNA's account for the types of eroticism referred to in the preceding paragraphs.

As discussed in the previous chapter, of the more than 50 recognised classifications, not one accounts for an attraction (or *philia*) directed towards intersex/hermaphrodite *persons* (Money, 1980, 1988).<sup>361</sup> While that absence could be read to mean that such an attraction was or is not considered paraphilic, a more likely explanation is it has never been seriously considered since its very possibility exceeds the parameters of erotic desire as currently understood.<sup>362</sup> Despite this lack of recognition, my respondents assured me that such desires do indeed exist:

We were talking earlier about a hermaphroditic eroticism. ... So its very important that the medical doctors understand that a hermaphrodite with our own body can both receive pleasure and give pleasure in and of itself. And that there is a certain desire... We need to enlarge our idea of what is a healthy sex life. That is why it is important to me that we as hermaphrodites talk about eroticism from a hermaphroditic point of view (Interview with 'Kelly').

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<sup>360</sup> As argued in the preceding chapter, such ideas are grounded in the earliest sexual scientific notions that understood same sex desirers as psychic hermaphrodites or intermediate sexes (Kennedy, 1997a; Krafft-Ebbing, 1965/1998; Laqueur, 1990; Padgug, 1999; Rowold, 1998).

<sup>361</sup> I emphasise 'persons' because I do not wish to objectify those with differently formed bodies. At the same time however, I also do not wish to diminish the fact that hermaphrodites/intersex persons are desirable just as they are desirers.

<sup>362</sup> Because sexuality is a component of Money's gender, sexuality is locked into a binary framework.

Angela Moreno, a North American based intersex activist<sup>363</sup> and participant in the ISNA produced video, *Hermaphrodites Speak* was clitoridectomised at the age of twelve. She had already discovered the delights of her ‘enlarged’ and intact clitoris so had something with which to measure her post-surgical sexual response. Moreno frames her pre-surgical sexuality in terms of something ‘other’, something uniquely hermaphrodite. While loath to say she has lost the intensity of her pre-surgical genital sensation lest it be interpreted to mean she is unable to have ‘great sex’, Moreno does describe her sexual responsiveness as compromised, as ‘not-so-reliable’. In her view:

What has been taken is a very specific eroticism, a hermaphroditic eroticism. That must really scare people and really cause a great deal of anxiety. [...] [T]hat special part, our sexuality, that sacred sexuality, has been ripped from us ... that very special form of sexuality, arousal, and all of that that was uniquely hermaphroditic was taken. (Moreno in Chase, 1997).

### ***Remembering bodies***

The rationale for cosmetic genital surgery is that it provides the individual with ‘normal looking’ genitals and the opportunity for a ‘normal’ sex life (read penile-vaginal intercourse), yet both medics and critics alike know full well that surgery fails to achieve that aim (Creighton, 2001, 2004; Fausto-Sterling, 2000c; Reiner, 2004; Roen, 2004). As the number of narratives by intersex/hermaphrodites circulating in the public domain increases, reports of severely compromised erotic sensation and

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<sup>363</sup> Moreno-Lippert is, at the time of writing (late 2005) the current Chair of ISNA’s Board of Directors.

function resulting from clitoridectomy and vaginal surgeries<sup>364</sup> indicate that these procedures leave more than physical scarring.<sup>365</sup>

Not knowing what I was actually meant to look like, what my body was meant to look like ... presurgery is that ... you know if I'd had my way I would never have had surgery – never! The hard part is I've got no idea of what I was meant to ... look like because I'm scarred. And ... so the grief around that is phenomenal (Interview with 'Lee').

Grosz' (1994) discussion of the phantom limb offers a way of situating the above narrative.<sup>366</sup> The phantom limb, or indeed, any body part that has been removed surgically is, Grosz argues (after Schilder), "an expression of nostalgia" for bodily integrity or unity and thus represents a psychic, as well as a physical, wound (p. 73). It is certainly the case that many of the narrative accounts of intersex persons are haunted by this kind of nostalgia.

All the things my body might have grown to do, all the possibilities, went down the hall with my amputated clitoris to the pathology department. The rest of me went to the recovery room – I'm still recovering (Holmes 1994:6.)

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<sup>364</sup> There is also some clinical evidence starting to emerge (see for example, Creighton, 2004; Creighton & Minto, 2001; Creighton, Minto, & Steele, 2001).

<sup>365</sup> In making this point, I certainly do not wish to minimise or trivialise the effect of physical scarring on either bodily integrity or erotic sensation.

<sup>366</sup> Grosz' analysis is concerned with psychoanalytic understanding of female sexuality as already castrated and the implications that has for silences around both clitoridectomy and hysterectomy. Since her primary concern is with the abject status of the female body, my use of her analysis takes a rather different turn from hers.

Until recently, clinicians failed to consider the impact of their interventions (in reorganising and/or removing bodily organs and other structures).<sup>367</sup> As discussed in Chapter two, for Money, providing youngsters with basic instruction in sexual anatomy served as “double insurance against childish theories of surgical mutilation and maiming” (Money et al, 1955:295). That there remains a paucity of medical documentation of the deleterious effects of surgery does not mean that there are none. Katrina Roen (2004) makes a strong case that surgical and psychotherapeutic interventions carried out during the earliest stages of a child’s life are never simply forgotten since, “[e]ven when carried out on newborns, the body remembers ... the experience of treatment is not erased” (p. 102). This claim is supported by many of the stories of those who have been subject to such treatments.

The idea that mind is somehow separate from the body indicates the tenacity of Cartesian dualism that continues to haunt medical approaches to ICM. However, it is an idea that is increasingly being challenged by some intersex activists. Against the mind/body split, I argue that there is a strong case to be made for the:

Radical inseparability of biological from psychical elements, the mutual dependence of the psychical and the biological, and ... the intimate connection between the question of sexual specificity (biological sexual differences) and psychical identity (Grosz, 1994:85).

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<sup>367</sup> Again I point to the recent research of Creighton, Minto and colleagues that is specifically concerned with long term surgical outcomes (2001, 2004).

While for Grosz, sexual specificity and sexual difference refer to differences between men and women, her argument is equally applicable when considering sexual difference(s) beyond the order of two. That Grosz' point makes 'perfect sense' in considering the sexual specificity of males and females, I argue, it makes just as much sense with respect to intersex/hermaphrodite persons. This point is articulated explicitly by one of my interviewees who argues that:

You can do anything that you want with my genitals its not going to change things. I'll be an intersexual that's had surgery. My perspective is still going to be influenced by [being intersex] (Interview with 'Jesse').

Holmes makes the same point by drawing comparisons with others whose bodily integrity is compromised by the removal (forcible or otherwise) of body parts:

Having my genitals mutilated has made me no less intersexual; it has merely made me a mutilated intersexual – just as a woman who has her genitals mutilated is still a woman, as a person who loses a limb is still a human being (Holmes, 1998:225).

Insisting that intersexuality is something that cannot be removed or cured by chemical, surgical or any other means, makes it possible to begin to conceptualise a non-pathologised hermaphrodite/intersex subjectivity. This does, of course, require a shift in perspective that extends beyond the physical and into the realms of the psyche. To highlight the stark contrast between embodying a pathologised and stigmatised

physicality and embodying intersexuality as an element of subjectivity expressive of the richness of human experience, I turn to the words of one of my interviewees:

I had always thought of myself as a malformed male so I was a deformity. [...] and that my being intersex was merely a physical manifestation of that deformity. I didn't think it had anything to do with the way I perceived things... the way I looked at things. I didn't think it had any impact on my life except that it made me lesser than other human beings (Interview with 'Jesse').

At the time the interview took place, Jesse's sense of self could not have been further from that of a malformed anything, as the following quotation indicates:

What does it mean to be an intersexual, an intersex man instead of a male man? I'm not a *deformed* anything. Actually genetically I'm female. Well that kind of put the intersex thing into really serious perspective. ... That was an explosion that also came out of discovering different parts of my anatomy that I didn't even know I had. Because I used to look at myself as a deformed male that had a micropenis. That's a man minus something. When you discover you have a vagina [as well], that's a man plus something (Interview with 'Jesse').

That shift in perspective, from deformity to integrity, was marked by a realisation of the interconnectedness of the psychic, sensorial and physical elements of self:

I thought that all of my gender nonconformities had to do with sexual orientation, the typical gay boy sissy stuff. It didn't occur to me that they could be also be manifestations of being intersex and that I could be *more* than one gender (Interview with 'Jesse').

Even as it pushes the limits of what constitutes *a man* and indeed who can be a man, Jesse's articulation, '[I'm] an intersex man instead of a male man' also serves to highlight just what a blunt instrument the English language is. It is surely paradoxical that our understandings of what it is to be male or to be female come from Money's (and other's) research on hermaphrodites. Yet our capacity to speak about being hermaphrodite – even at the most fundamental level of the body – has to be channelled through a binary (man/woman, female/male) logic to even begin to make sense. This demonstrates, yet again, the pervasiveness of the binary and its capacity to literally neuter everything that falls outside of itself.

Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's corporeal phenomenology, Grosz offers a reading of the body as "one's being in the world" that is, as the primary instrument through which we receive information and knowledge and subsequently generate meaning (Grosz, 1994:86-7). In other words, our bodies *are* the medium through which we experience the world<sup>368</sup> From this perspective the component parts of the self - physiological, psychological and sensorial - are so inextricably connected that to speak of intersexuality as a purely physiological condition, makes no sense.

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<sup>368</sup> This way of understanding corporeality is in many ways, similar to Money's understanding of the role of the central nervous system in mediating experience and learning, although he refused to acknowledge the rupture of bodily integrity caused by genital surgery.

Yet as discussed earlier, ICM is premised upon the idea that removing the markers from an intersex body removes the ‘condition’ of being intersex. Atypical genitalia are ambiguously male or ambiguously female and thus, are seen as amenable to ‘correction’. As a consequence, intersex/hermaphrodites individuals have effectively ceased to exist outside of medical texts. Critics of the current medical model argue that ICM functions in a similar way to Klebs’ nomenclature of ‘true’ and ‘pseudo’: it serves to erase the figure of the hermaphrodite, just as it reinforces gender boundaries (Brown, 1995; Chase, 1995; Dreger, 1998; Fausto-Sterling; Kessler, 2000). But the very idea that intersexuality is a condition or state that can be ‘cured’ is, in the words of one of my respondents,

A dangerous myth [and] a mutilating myth. And this is why people think we don’t exist. But I’m here to say, well I do exist and I’m healthy. The fact that I *might* have a problem with osteoporosis is a condition in and of itself. But I resent ... going from the osteoporosis to “well the fact is, you’re a hermaphrodite and we really need to fix you up so you’ll be a man or a woman” – NO! (Interview with ‘Kelly’).

Against medical science’s refusal of the possibility of a hermaphrodite subjectivity, narratives such as the above, refuse to be a ‘mere’ condition in need of amelioration. It is noteworthy that the mystical is once again invoked in this account, but in a completely different way from earlier invocations. If doctor’s material practices relegate hermaphrodites to the realms of myth, in this articulation, doctors are interpellated as myth-makers of a somewhat different order. Not only is the

authenticity of their account being called into question, so too is their authority to mediate those of us who are hermaphrodite.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter has been concerned with both the pervasiveness and the fragility of some of the central organising principles of social, sexual and political life. Specifically I refer to the bipolar model of sexual difference, the binary model of gender and a model of sexuality that is, depending on where you perceive the fences to be, variously bipolar, or binary. By examining the discursive formations of the most recent political domain to be concerned with the concept 'gender', I have demonstrated that binary concepts are both reinforced, and complicated, by those who exceed them. They are reinforced through recourse to Cartesian dualist notions of mind and body and of sex and gender, both of which have shown an extraordinary resilience to all kinds of social and political interventions. At the same time, these notions are complicated by the very fact that there exist people who fall outside their bounds: people who cannot be 'apprehended by hegemonic discourses of sexual difference' to the order of two and who, in recent times, have begun to agitate for a place in the world - as hermaphrodite/intersex subjects (Morland, 2005:335). Invoking a signifying moment for civil rights in North America,<sup>369</sup> one of my respondents made plain his expectation of such a place:

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<sup>369</sup> Rosa Parks became the face of defiance for the North American civil rights movement after refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger and move to the back of bus as was expected of African Americans in the Southern States until the late 1960s.

I don't have an illness, its my sex. And I feel like my sex should be recognised legally anywhere in the world and I should have equal human rights anywhere in the world as a hermaphrodite. [...] Talk about the back seat of the bus, we're not even on the bus. But I tell you what, I'm standing there waiting and I'm expecting to get on it (Interview with 'Kelly').

Just as hermaphroditism itself (and IS activism, by extension) has destabilising effects on notions of gender, so too do those recent technological advances in medical science that show bodily sex to be considerably more complex and unstable than had been imagined. As I have argued in earlier chapters, advances in medical technologies have historically revealed more, rather than less, uncertainty with respect to deciphering bodily sex. Developments in genetic research have allowed for the reading of DNA sequencing which has led to the discovery that only a few of the genes which code for sex reside on the 'X' and/or the 'Y' chromosome (Dewing et al, 2003; Vilain, 2000).<sup>370</sup> Moreover, chromosomes remain one of the few elements of the body that, to date, cannot be reliably manipulated nor removed, since they reside in every cell in the body. Most of us only ever 'know' this most resilient and pervasive element of our physiological selves as an article of faith, since chromatin tests is almost never undertaken unless there is some doubt over the sex of a person or their fertility status. It would seem therefore that 'sex', like gender, is considerably queerer than we ever envisaged.

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<sup>370</sup> Female sexual development in utero continues to be a largely uncharted terrain because of the default sex hypothesis.

This necessarily has implications for the framework most generally used in Western contexts to understand sexual behaviours and identifications – sexuality. This is because sexuality has such intricate relation to sex-gender indexed to sexual object. Money contends that a person’s status as homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual is constituted by the genital and body morphology of one’s partners, not in terms of their chromosomal sex, or by their gonads (Money, 1988:42). As I have shown in the previous chapter, sexual subjectivities (even to the power of two) are not nearly as straightforward as this account would suggest, even for those who fall with relative ease into the available categories. It goes without saying then, that things get considerably more complicated when one’s physical status, social status and sexual tastes and interests cannot be fully comprehended *or* apprehended within the existing models.

My intention in systematically working through the implications of binary constructs for hermaphrodite subjectivities has been to locate spaces from which to begin to think differently about what it means to be human and indeed, who counts as human. In the chapter that follows I make a case for the importance of ‘thinking differently’ about some of the issues raised in the preceding pages: issues which I argue have implications that extend well beyond the hermaphrodite population, to us all.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> As the final manuscript of this thesis was being prepared for submission, news broke that for the very first time since census data began to be collected in Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will not require intersexuals and hermaphrodites to tick either the ‘M’ or ‘F’ boxes in the upcoming Census. According to Dave Nauenburg, ABS Director of Population Census Development and Field Organisation, the forms have already been printed for the 2006 Census so people who identify as other than male or female will have the option of handwriting their descriptor of choice. Australian IS activists are hailing this as a significant step toward official and legal recognition. It must be noted however, that the ABS

## Chapter 7

*“Moving beyond the superficialities and elasticities of identity, we must speak directly to altered and altering dimensions of subjectivity, of altered and altering dimensions of being human”*

*William Simon (1996:4)*

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will not be keeping statistics on intersex people this year. Instead a computer program will randomly allocate a male or female sex status to those who do not tick the requisite boxes (Hackney, 2006; n.a., 2006).

## By way of conclusion

This thesis has been concerned to historicise the concept of 'gender' by tracing its permutations through and across various bodies of knowledge. Each of those permutations represents an episode within a larger narrative of the history of the concept 'gender'. Following gender's entry into the English lexicon in the mid-1950s when John Money offered it as a new conceptual realm of sex, the concept has come to serve as *the* overarching framework through which masculinities, femininities and sexualities are understood within English speaking liberal democracies. Many of Money's ideas have become axiomatic over the past 50 years such that his name is now completely disassociated from them. Conceptually gender has become indispensable to a significant number of theoretical and political projects generated from sexology, the social sciences and from feminism. It is on that basis that I contend that gender is one of the great conceptual devices of the late twentieth century and moreover that the contribution of Money to how we understand what it means to be a sexed and a sexual subject has been seriously underestimated.

This research emerged through a reconsideration of the work of Money, feminist genealogies of the concept and recent cultural critiques of intersex case management practices. Underpinning the central argument of this thesis is an analysis of competing discourses about sexed subjectivity and gender that emerge at particular historical moments with significant effects on both individuals and on the deployment of

knowledge(s). In this way the thesis is inflected by poststructuralism.<sup>372</sup> By exploring both dominant and subordinate discourses my research has examined how John Money's concepts and data have been reoriented and put to work in productive ways.

Using two interconnected trajectories I have demonstrated the central relation that hermaphrodites have historically had to 'gender'. Even as they appear to stand outside of binary gender categories, hermaphrodites/intersex persons have provided the ground for understandings of what gender is, how it is acquired and what is 'normal' in bodies and in gender. Each episode in the history of this concept has had significant material consequences for those who were and remain at the centre of the idea of gender, despite the fact that these ideas render them marginal and indeed not fully human. It is for that reason that I assert that socio-cultural analyses that fail to reference the relation that hermaphrodites/intersexuals have to gender, contribute – however unwittingly - towards the ongoing debasement of those of us who are 'otherly sexed'.

Sedgwick and Frank (1995) suggest that one of the limits of much contemporary social theory derives from its tendency towards anti-biologism, especially theory that is inflected by post-structuralism. This tendency carries with it the danger of losing "conceptual access to an entire thought-realm" that offers opportunities to develop a "vision of difference [capable of resisting] binary homogenisation" (p.15). Since the late 1990s, increasing numbers of feminist theorists have taken that caution seriously. As a result a new body of work is emerging within feminist scholarship that engages

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<sup>372</sup> For an earlier and 'purer' poststructuralist analysis of intersex case management, see Germon (1998).

with scientific material in exciting and productive ways. This work does not merely use material from the biological sciences as objects of analysis but rather as a source of new concepts and methodologies.<sup>373</sup> It is a field to which I hope my own research can contribute.

One of the objectives of this thesis has been to find ways to prise open spaces that would allow us to think differently about sex-gender and sexuality. Sexological theory constitutes what Gayle Rubin (1984/1998) has described as a rich vein of material for developing alternative conceptualisations of sexed subjectivity. My exploration into the field leaves me in no doubt of the wisdom of Rubin's claim. Modern sexology has concerned itself with defining what it means to be a man or a woman and with "enhanc[ing] the compatibility of both", as Money's ideas clearly show (Irvine, 1995:11). Yet I contend that Money's theories particularly and sexological theories more generally, are capable of so much more than this.

As William Simon (1996) has noted, the so-called first world is faced with "a crisis of paradigms" regarding the sexual (p. 26). Yet he cautions that it would be a mistake to think that such crises reflect the failures of the sexual sciences: rather they reflect as much if not more, its successes. The groundbreaking work undertaken by our sexological forebears (both living and dead) has provided an awareness of "the distribution of the experiences of the sexual and of its different meanings" (p. 26). That many of the old concepts no longer do the work we require of them indicates that

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<sup>373</sup> See for example, Grosz (2004); Fausto-Sterling (2005); Keane and Rosengarten (2002); Locke (1998) Probyn (2004); Wilson (1998; 2002; 2004a; 2004b).

there is a need for new ones. Just as sexual meanings vary in different socio-historical contexts, so too does the very nature of the eroto-sexual:

The need for new concepts ... does not follow merely from the inadequacies or errors in the older concepts of sexuality but from the fact that sexual realities have undergone and are continuing to undergo substantial change (p.27).

In the introductory chapter I flagged the merits of Money's conceptualisation of gender over more recent interpretations that assume the sex/gender distinction. The strength of Money's theories lie in his refusal of that distinction coupled with his cognisance of the intricate relation between cells, environment and experience. That is not to suggest that his ideas are unproblematic, indeed at many points throughout the thesis I have been concerned to highlight precisely how problematic they are – and why. Nor is this claim intended to elide the very real consequences of Money's ideas on the lives of intersex/hermaphrodite people who continue to pay an extremely high price for the unrelenting commitment of Money, and indeed all of us, to binary logics.

As a first step in developing new concepts, it is essential that we uncouple gender from sexual dimorphism. One way to do this would be to privilege *human* behaviours as the first order of a framework. Such a framework already exists: Money's 'gendermap'. Recall that for Money we are all born with a neural template that

develops in-utero to code for masculine and feminine behaviours.<sup>374</sup> This template receives and responds to stimuli categorised as male or female behaviours.

Money was insistent that as with bilinguism, gender acquisition required exposure to *both* sets of stimuli, or what he called “bi-genderism” (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972:163).

Herein lies the potential of this model because differently interpreted Money’s ‘gendermap’ equates to a neural structure that codes for human behaviours. That we learn to differentiate which behaviours are masculine and feminine appropriate suggests that gender is less a process of ‘becoming’, than one of learning what is required to be a gender in any given socio-cultural and temporal context. Reorienting this component of Money’s gender acquisition theory serves to reinvigorate his ideas in a way that offers more flexibility and thus more nuance than when organised around the (second order) principle of sexual dimorphism. It is precisely this level of flexibility that will bring us closer to understanding the rich tapestry of human subjectivity in ways that reflect more of that richness than they deflect.

The application of recent discoveries in the fields of neurology and genetics to Money’s account of gender acquisition further complicates his ideas in highly productive ways. In neuroscience the concept of neural plasticity has rendered the hardwiring thesis for the most part, redundant. Money relied on the idea that responses were imprinted and became hardwired in the brain as a way to argue for gender’s immutability. Today it is understood that it is not responses per se that become hardwired, but rather one’s capacity to respond. Evidence suggests that that

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<sup>374</sup> This idea formed the basis of the identification/complementation component Money’s theory of gender acquisition.

neural pathways continue to be 'plastic' - that is, they continue to proliferate and transform - until the seventh decade, on average (Elliot, 1998; Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Recent findings in genetics indicate that most of the genes that code for sex-determination are located elsewhere than on the X and the Y chromosomes. These findings disrupt the idea that genetic sex is a straightforward matter of Xs and Ys. Evidence continues to mount that the idea of binary sex is not supported by the facticity of the body. These discoveries create the conditions for new possibilities in the way we understand sex-gender and sexuality and indeed for a reconsideration of just who counts as human.

Another means of reinvigorating Money's theories might well lie in magnifying his understanding of the interplay between the physiological, the sensorial and the social by considering the complex interactions between local (rather than global) biologies (Lock, 1998) and local (rather than global) cultural systems (Elliot, 2001). Local cultural systems are systems of knowledge that, when stripped of artifice and theory, function as common sense in any given cultural and temporal context. The idea that there are only two sexes and two genders constitutes one such common sense idea. But more than this it reflects the pervasive belief that this is 'how things are', (Geertz cited in Elliot, 1998:37). Binary concepts of gender and sexuality have become so deeply embedded in the local cultural knowledges of Western liberal democracies that each and every one of us is implicated in the 'invisibility' of those of use who are differently-sexed. That embeddedness is made manifest through the ways in which we constantly engage in monitoring ourselves, and others. Even those of us with an awareness of the ways in which gender functions as a mode of social and personal organisation are not immune to sorting by sex-gender: indeed it is something we are

so well socialised into that it seems “not just second - but first-nature” (Adkins, 1999:119).<sup>375</sup>

As I suggested in Chapter five, attending to how meaning is made by sexual subjects offers opportunities for developing increasingly sophisticated understandings of the complexities of sexual desires, tastes and styles and thus of subjective experience(s). While Money’s concepts of the sexual are incredibly complex on many levels, they remain comprised by two factors: firstly, their reliance upon a developmental model and secondly an over-reliance on sexual dimorphism. Tolman and Diamond (2001) suggest that, unlike developmental models, descriptive ones provide opportunities to explore how different forms of eroticism depend upon differing interactions between physiology and context throughout the lifespan. As with gender, our understandings of what constitutes the sexual must be unharnessed from the tyranny of sexual dimorphism if they are to ever reflect the lived experience of sexual subjects. By decoupling Money’s theories of sexuality and gender from a binary logic, we can begin to expand our ways of knowing to make spaces for forms of eroticism that seem incomprehensible within the epistemological frameworks we currently have available. This is precisely what those who seek recognition for an ontological status *as* hermaphrodite are demanding.

It is time to set aside questions about the quantitative aspects of gender (how many genders are there?), along with qualitative questions that focus on *why* people do

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<sup>375</sup> A further advantage of magnifying local cultural knowledges is that the circulation and influence of medical expertise then becomes part of the overall object of analysis since those knowledges contribute to - although I argue, do not determine - local knowledges. Refer to the discussion in the theoretical framework section of chapter one on Goffman.

gender and sexuality in the way they do. It is time now to focus our attention on questions of *how* (that is, what means do people use to negotiate this particular mode of social and personal organisation) in order to develop models that are responsive to the theoretical qualifier known in the psychological sciences as ‘individual differences’. At worst we might learn that there really is no such thing as ‘normal’. At most, a revitalised gender would provide opportunities to recuperate the dignity and the humanity of those most marginalised by binary concepts of sexual difference - after all these years.

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**RESEARCH STUDY INTO**  
Historicising Gender

**SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET**

You are invited to take part in a research study into *the history of the concept of gender*. The object of the study is to investigate the development of the concept of gender from its origins in intersex research in the 1950s. The study will trace how the concept was adopted by psychological and feminist theorists during the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to examining the 'experts' understandings of gender and sex, the study will also be concerned with the reflections of adult intersexuals on cultural understandings of gender and the impact of those understandings on your own subjective experience. The study is being conducted by *Jennifer E Germon* and will form the basis for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* at the *University of Sydney, Australia*.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to engage in one 2 hour interview, some correspondence, and possibly one follow-up interview of approximately 1 hour duration. *Interviews will be arranged at a time and location at your convenience during July and August 2001.*

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only *Jennifer Germon* will have access to information on participants. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time.

When you have read this information, *Jennifer Germon* will be available by telephone or by email to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact either:

*Jenz Germon*

*ph 61 2 95501565 email: jennifer.germon@genderstudies.usyd.edu.au*

*or*

*Dr Alison Bashford, Chair of Gender Studies*

*ph 61 2 93513884 email: alison.bashford@genderstudies.usyd.edu.au*

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager for Ethics and Bio-safety Administration, University of Sydney on 61 2 9351 4811.

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Historicising Gender**

I, .....  
[name]

of .....  
[address]

have read and understood the information for participants on the above named research study and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with family and /or friends

.....  
[signature]

I am aware of the procedures involved in the study. I freely choose to participate in this study and understand that I can withdraw without compromise at any time.

I also understand that the research study is strictly confidential.

I hereby agree to participate in this research study.

**Signature:** .....

**Name:** .....

**Date:**.....

**Signature of witness:**.....

**Name of witness:** .....

X

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