UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This is a repository copy of *History and cultural diversity*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/126220/

Version: Accepted Version

Book Section:

Vincent, B and Manzano, A orcid.org/0000-0001-6277-3752 (2017) History and cultural diversity. In: Richards, C, Bouman, WP and Barker, M-J, (eds.) Genderqueer and Non-Binary Genders. Critical and Applied Approaches in Sexuality, Gender and Identity . Palgrave Macmillan , London , pp. 11-30. ISBN 978-1-137-51052-5

https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51053-2_2

(c) 2017, The Author(s). This extract is taken from the author's original manuscript and has not been edited. The definitive, published, version of record is available here: https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51053-2_2

Reuse
Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

White Rose
university consortium
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

History and Cultural Diversity - Ben Vincent and Ana Manzano

Introduction

Only several hundred years ago, gender was not commonly or instinctively binarised. This is explored in a European context through the consideration of identities such as the English mollies, the Italian femminielli, Albanian sworn virgins, and cross-cultural examples of eunuchs. Such individuals were all positioned as 'other' from men and women, without necessarily being marginalised. This historical overview aims to achieve two goals – first, to bring the aforementioned perception of the gender binary as 'a constant' into question, and secondly, to challenge the idea that non-binary gender identities are an exclusively non-Western phenomenon.

The chapter then considers gender on the Asian subcontinent by addressing the Indian hijra, the Thai kathoey, and the two Indonesian examples of the waria, and gender within Buginese society. Finally, North and South American examples will be explored with the range of two-spirit identities of First Nation tribes of the United States and Canada, and the Machi of Chile and Argentina. This discussion demonstrates the heterogeneity of gender variation around the world, and how the Western notion of a gender binary is only one of many possible perspectives. Many of these identities are still articulated today.

We conclude by briefly considering the value cross-cultural and historical considerations beyond the gender binary may have. The examples selected are far from exhaustive, and the reader should be careful not to infer any geographical assumptions in imagining where gender variance may occur. For example, African (Amadiume, 1987) and Middle Eastern (Murray, 1997) examples are well recognised.

There has been remarkable progress in the last few years regarding awareness and understanding of transgender people. Happenings of note at the time of writing include the education and activism provided by the actress Laverne Cox (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2015), together with the much discussed coming out of Caitlyn Jenner (Lutz, 2015). However, when transgender people are discussed within mainstream media, medicine, or academia, this is most often in terms of the gender binary - that is, the cultural system which positions male and female as the *only* possible realities. Binary transgender discourses involve the rights, experiences, and identities of people assigned male at birth that identify as women, and vice versa. Such discourses have challenged the rigidity of the gender binary, but not necessarily the possibility of being outside it. Articulations of gender incorporating aspects of *both* male and female, neither, or some third articulation are, in comparison, rarely acknowledged.

The early 20th century anthropological study of non-Western cultures interpreted gendered cultural beliefs and behaviours in Western terms. It was assumed that the position of the Western observer-researcher was inherently 'true', and led to limited interpretations of non-Western realities (Malinowski, 1937). However, this work was of great importance in recognising cross cultural gender variation for the first time;

and one can argue that “challenging the preconception of biological sexual dimorphism” (Herdt, 1993, p. 44) was not then possible. To summarise, ethno-centric Western interpretations of gender have dominated the natural and social sciences. This background illustrates the importance of discussing gender beyond contemporary Western articulations, without implying variation as abnormal in relation to a Western norm. With this objective in mind we provide a range of purposively selected cases (Blaikie, 2009) over the next two sections to illustrate the social construction of gender identities within European and non-Western contexts.

‘More Variation than you Might Have Thought’ – Articulations of Gender within European Contexts

It is widely assumed that Western European societies such as the United Kingdom have always categorised people as only male and female. Genitals are often assumed to be the ‘essential’ factor in dictating gender, and yet there are historical examples of other factors with enough significance to challenge or change an individual’s status from man or woman. This relates to the important historical relationship between gender and sexuality. In the late 19th century, the early days of sexology, research that attempted to make sense of individuals with same-gender attraction (Krafft-Ebing, 1886) would position those now understood as gay men as having ‘a female soul trapped in a male body’; however this is now more associated with some transgender narratives. ‘Attraction to men’ was viewed as so ‘fundamentally female’ that scientific and medical experts of the time believed same-gender attraction challenged an individual’s maleness or femaleness.

Whilst the relationship between sexuality and gender identity results in their confusion and conflation even today (Valdes, 1996), if one goes back further, the role of sexuality in defining an individual’s gender was more explicit. Trumbach (1993) articulates how sodomy did not inherently challenge one’s status as male but did if men allowed themselves to be penetrated - or similarly if women penetrated other women. Thus, transgressions positioning men as submissive or women as dominant impacted upon gender significantly. This historical consideration also reveals how one cannot necessary draw a clear line between binary and non-binary understandings of gender in the context of the 17th and 18th centuries. At that time, an individual’s gendered status could be rendered ambiguous by factors now understood as sexual orientation, but then thought to indicate ‘hermaphroditism’.

Mollies

The term ‘molly’ was an 18th century label associated with men attracted to other men. In addition to their sexual attraction, mollies engaged in gendered practices which positioned them as critically separate from men: ‘othered’ through their difference into a third category. Sub-cultural practices included the taking of female names and titles, marriage ceremonies between mollies, and ritualised enactments of giving birth known as a ‘lying-in’ (Norton, 2009). Similar birthing rituals have been recognised cross-culturally, collectively referred to as *couvade* (Klein, 1991).

Eighteenth century English society was predictably hostile towards mollies. The earlier Buggery Act of 1533 set the precedent that sodomy was punishable by death. Gaining a reputation for cross-dressing and ‘sinful perversion’ could result in ‘social’ death – whereby the individual is stigmatised and excluded from social participation. Norton explains how mollies’ fear of stigma and execution meant “occasional ‘lyings-in’ could serve to relieve their collective anxiety through outrageous fun, and what today is called ‘camp’ behaviour” (Norton, 2009, no page number). The behaviours of mollies served to nucleate sub-cultural associations between men who have sex with men and playfulness with gender and presentation, as contemporarily exhibited in particular by drag queens. For these reasons, one cannot simplify the molly identity or experience to that of homosexual men or transgender women. As with any group, mollies will have been heterogeneous, with individuals differing from each other in idiosyncratic ways.

Further, in the late 19th and early 20th century, narratives of pathology came to dominate explanations of perceived deviance (De Block & Adriaens, 2013). Recognising how genders were historically dependent upon orientations serves to illustrate the importance of social interaction in positioning the individual as a gendered subject. Today’s categories of homosexual and transsexual were influenced by these older categorisations, such as mollies and sodomites. Consideration of gender variance illustrates the importance of recognising that “cultural context determines whether gender variation is seen as a ‘disorder’ needing treatment or an understood and tolerated variation” (Newman, 2002, p. 355).

Femminielli

Femminielli are specifically associated with Neapolitan culture. Zito makes the claim that the city of Naples has been historically positioned as feminine, and that connections to gendered religious rituals allowed for “men to experience the feminine side of their nature even in a context that has always suffered the patriarchal order dating back to Greek colonisation” (Zito, 2013, p. 207). Assigned male at birth, femminielli share some gendered articulations with archetypal expectations of transgender women, such as taking a female name, and – in recent decades - accessing hormones and gender affirming surgeries. It is only through the details of identity politics (femminielli who specifically disidentify with the notion of being transgender women) and specific cultural practices that differentiation can be seen. For example, Atlas describes how femminielli could articulate themselves in specific ways which would be frowned upon if done by women or men:

> Normally men are not allowed at the *tombola* because trousers worn at the game (i.e. the presence of men) would bring bad luck. Lella [a femminielli] disagreed, arguing that transvestites like her, who wore trousers, were allowed in.
>
> (Atlas, 2005, p. 55, italics original)

Whilst women would not be seen wearing trousers, and men would not be allowed to attend the tombola (a form of raffle originating in Italy), the specific way in which femminielli are culturally integrated and involved allows for femminielli to embody a third gender position. In a similar way to Lella herself in the above quotation, some scholars argue that the femminielli no longer truly exist today, but may be understood as transvestites (D’Amora, 2013). This however risks erasing the specific context within which the category of femminielli was negotiated over time, as well as those femminielli who do not identify with the labels of transvestite or transgender. This illustrates the fluidity of gender, as individuals may have overlapping or seemingly contradictory identifications – some femminielli identifying themselves as men who dress as women whilst others identify as neither men nor women.

Another important difference from binary transgender narratives is the complex relationship with stigma. Whilst traditional Neapolitan culture polices gender roles, femminielli are not disciplined for breach of these cultural rules due to their specific social position. Indeed, whilst many contemporary transgender and non-binary narratives indicate experiences of discrimination, abuse, and rejection, femminielli are often accepted within communities, sometimes living with their immediate or extended family. Femminielli are also believed to bring luck, due to historical association with the deity Hermaphroditus (Piraino & Zambelli, 2015). Therefore specific details of the Neapolitan context directly influenced the development of the femminielli as an expression of gender variance.

Albanian Sworn Virgins

In Albanian tribes, having a son to continue the family line was of great cultural, social, and financial importance; only males were eligible to inherit property. Families lacking a son would lose their property as their family name became extinct, but they could resist and avoid this through the social construction of a son, from a child assigned female at birth. This could occur either at birth (in the case of single child families), or, in cases where an older son was lost: “the biological female who, later in life, after having been socialized as a woman for many years, reconstructs herself as a ‘social man’” (Grémaux, 1993, p. 244). Today, the practice of sworn virginity is very much in decline. Whilst estimation is difficult due to limited research, as few as several dozen sworn virgins may still live after Albanian communism prevented the continuation of many traditional practices (Becatoros, 2008). Cultural shifts over the 20th century and the relaxation of patriarchal limitations on women’s rights have also diminished the social relevance of sworn virginity. Whilst the legitimacy of sworn virgins as male was seen through their inclusion in male-only social spaces and practices, it is important to note that communities did perceive a difference from other men. Grémaux's ethnographic research of the Albanian sworn virgins involved talking to Albanian elders who knew the sworn virgin Mikas, who died in 1934. In discussing Mikas, "informants alternately used 'he' and 'she', as was observed by Gusic [an earlier ethnographer] when Mikas was still alive" (Grémaux, 1993, p. 251).

The issue of virginity itself was surprisingly flexible depending upon ethno-social group membership. Marriage was considered the consistent taboo, due to creating a perceived male/male partnership which was not accepted. That Albanian sworn virgins could discuss attraction to women in male social circles emphasises the social validity/reality of the assumed third gender category, whilst simultaneously reifying culturally dominant heteronormativity and patriarchy. Thus the nuances of social acceptability and gendered difference as a legitimised expression of gender variation were highly dependent on idiosyncratic considerations of gender and sexuality in that time and place.

Eunuchs

Commonly referring to men who have been castrated, eunuchs were found in a range of different cultures, serving different specific functions. In the Ottoman Empire for example, many male slaves were eunuchs, however within Chinese and Roman contexts, eunuchs could act as powerful civil servants (Tsai, 1996). Eunuchs were seen as less likely to attempt to overthrow reigning leadership due to their inability to have children and continue a lineage.

Ringrose explains how within Byzantine society the definition of eunuch changed over time, originally referring to "anyone who did not as well as could not produce children, including men who were born sterile, men who became sterile through illness, accident or birth defect, men who were lacking in sexual desire and men and women who embraced the celibate life for religious reasons" (Ringrose, 1993). Thus 'eunuch' within this historical context had a much broader meaning than is now generally appreciated. In some circumstances castration was chosen and desired. Such individuals included priests for ritual purposes or to interact with women more freely, or scholars who believed the loss of 'vital fluids' through ejaculation might hamper the intellect. The form of castration could also differ, with some experiencing 'total ablation', that is, removal of the penis as well as the testes to prevent sexual relations with court ladies they were to protect and/or serve. For example, removal of the penis was common in China, but not in Rome (Scheidel, 2009).

It is debatable whether eunuchs were considered men or not, and indeed this may have always been a grey area in some of those historical contexts. Castration did however function to transform the individual into one distinctly 'other' (and often less) than 'whole' men, in order to perform socially constructed functions for which men and women were deemed unsuitable. Whilst historical records show much negative sentiment directed towards eunuchs, particularly lacking in strength, bravery, and stoicism associated with whole men, they could arrive in social positions of acceptance or even power (Hopkins, 1963). In the Byzantine Empire, eunuchs could often be well educated, with various court positions reserved specifically for them. Eunuchs could be favoured in some cultures as performers. The castration of boys to maintain their high registers in Catholic choirs was only made illegal in Italy in 1870.

The example of eunuchs highlights how maleness has been tied to masculinity, which has been constructed through a range of factors. Some of these have had cross-cultural significance such as fertility and physical stature, though the importance of a given factor may be idiosyncratic.

This section has demonstrated that there has been a wide range of systems for considering gender within European societies across history. Whilst some of these experienced stigma and discrimination, it is important to recognise how gender variation could sometimes also be constructed as a ‘normal’ difference within that particular context.

Around the World in 80 Genders – Examples of Gender Diversity in non-Western Civilizations

As cultural contexts shift and evolve, so do gendered possibilities. This is also evidenced when considering non-Western gender variance. This section is structured geographically, beginning with considerations of gender across Asia before moving to the Americas. Unlike most of the European examples, all of the examples discussed in this section may still be found within their respective societies today, although - predictably - differences in their articulations have occurred over time. It is also worth considering how these non-Western identities have been affected by Western influences, with colonialism of particular salience to the Indian and North American discussions. We begin with the hijra who, whilst the term may be literally translated as ‘eunuch’ (or sometimes ‘hermaphrodite’) differ greatly from the European discussion.

Hijra of India

The hijra illustrate a gender identity that is situated in relation to both the caste system and the practice of Hinduism across the Indian subcontinent. Thus the hijra illustrate how intersections between class, culture, faith, and other factors can shape different identity categories. Hijra can be subcategorised - with ‘born hijra’ typically possessing ambiguous genitalia at birth, and ‘made hijra’ who often come to their identity in part through a lack attraction to women – historically positioning them as ‘incomplete men’. This delineation is by no means sufficient, as hijra also disidentify both with being male, and masculinity. Hijra community structure is based around communes, which are part of a larger city networks. Households will have leaders or 'gurus' who function to organise the finances collected from the work of the hijra within the house, and prospective hijra require sponsorship from a guru (Nanda, 1993). Many hijra undergo an operation (traditionally by another hijra) to remove the penis and testicles, without vaginal construction. This defines the hijra as neither man nor woman (Nanda, 1990).

The origin of the hijra and their practice of castration are strongly associated with Hindu beliefs and practices. The hijra community is centred around the worship of Bahuchara Mata, a 'mother goddess' deity. The practice of castration and feminine identification originated with the story of the goddess appearing in a dream to an impotent prince, and ordering him to remove his genitals and serve her as a woman or experience divine punishment. It is through the Hindu faith that the hijra were able to gain cultural legitimacy as ritual performers for important events (such as births, festivals, and weddings). Whilst this legitimacy translated into recent recognition under Indian law through creation of a third gender category on Indian passports (RT, 2014), hijra can simultaneously be heavily stigmatised. This is in part due to the incorporation of norms related to gender and sexual orientation through British colonialism. The British removed state protection from the hijra, described their roles as "abominable practices of the wretches", and passed "laws criminalizing emasculation" which would remain after Indian independence (Nanda, 1993, p. 414).

Contemporary ritual practices in India are becoming shorter and increasingly nonessential. As a result, hijra communities have relied increasingly upon organised begging and sex work (Chakrapani, Babu, & Ebenezer, 2004). Those hijra households who engage in sex work will utilise the guru in an analogous manner to a pimp or madam, which may allow for a significant rise in household income. There is also a sense that such practices are offensive to the traditional hijra role, and hijra may have their living quarters separated based on who does and who does not engage in sex work, indicating how what it means to be hijra is transmuting in response to modernising changes over time (Wilson, 2006).

Kathoey of Thailand

The term kathoey is used to refer to individuals who were assigned male at birth, but can also be understood differently by different people. For some, kathoey are analogous with effeminate gay men, whilst for others, similar to transgender women. Many kathoey identify simply as female (*phuying)*, whilst others as 'a second kind of female' (*phuying prophet song*), or simply as 'kathoey', articulated as a third category separate from male and female (Winter, 2006). One commonality does seem to be that kathoey individuals do think of themselves as 'something other than male'. Some kathoey access oestrogen and surgeries (such as breast implants and facial feminisation) whilst embracing a highly feminine style. Others may mix category-associated expectations, such as by wearing ‘male clothes’ together with makeup and using female pronouns.

Käng (2012) explains how the Thai state formalised legal restrictions on gendered presentation and dress, due to Western views of Thai women as transgressively androgynous. ‘Kathoey’ may sometimes be translated into English as the term ‘ladyboy’, which within a Thai context can imply association with particular economies, such as cabaret or sex work. Whilst some kathoey use ladyboy without issue, others may be offended because the word can be taken to imply that they are sex-workers (Käng, 2012). However, some kathoey certainly do engage in sex work, corresponding with Harrison et al.’s (2012) study evidencing that Western non-binary identified people are more likely than the general population to be involved in ‘underground economies’ including sex work. Work examining HIV risk and drug use amongst kathoey individuals illustrate the vulnerability of the group (Nemoto et al., 2012). This can be linked to stigmatisation within Thai society resulting in potential family rejection and difficulty accessing legal forms of work.

Waria and the Buginese People of Indonesia

Waria possess many comparable traits with the previously discussed kathoey. The label is derived from the words *wanita* or ‘woman’, and *pria*, or ‘man’ (Boellstorff, 2004), and can refer to a range of articulations of feminine identity and practice amongst individuals assigned male at birth. The different ethno-social groups found amongst the island nation of Indonesia means that the origins of waria are uncertain. There are accounts from the 1820s of “transvestite performers” (Boellstorff, 2004, p. 164) and by the 1960s waria were well known, through association with sex work. Waria can be differentiated from Western notions of cross-dressers and transgender women. Boellstorff explains how:

> To only be interested in women’s clothes or activities is not usually seen as sufficient to make one waria; at some point, usually while a child but sometimes in the teenage years, waria come to know that they have the soul (*jiwa*) of a woman, or at least a soul that is more woman than man … the goal is not to “pass” but to look like a waria.

(Boellstorff, 2004, p. 167, italics original)

Whilst surgery is rarely desired, hormones and other practices (such as skin whitening creams) are used, which allow agency over the construction of gender presentation. However such practices are also associated with structural racism (the status whiteness holds in relation to beauty) and harm from chemical use (Idrus & Hymans, 2014).

In contrast to waria, who can be related in part to Western transgender narratives, the Buginese people (an ethnic group found on the island of Sulawesi – Indonesia’s third largest) have a social system accommodating five gender categories. Whilst a detailed analysis of spiritual practices, specific gender roles, historical context, dress, and interactions would be necessary for a full explanation, it must be noted here that some of these categories are analogous with Western conceptualisations. Two of the five genders of the Buginese are the oroané and makkunrai, analogous to cisgender[1] men and women respectively. The further three genders include the calabai, who are individuals assigned male at birth but who live as heterosexual women, whilst the calalai are assigned female at birth but live as heterosexual men. There is (perhaps predictably) slippage in the precision of such definitions, illustrated by one calabai who said "some calabai like women, but they're not real calabai" (Graham, 2004, p. 113). Finally are the bissu, who are considered a combination of man and woman within an empowering cultural-spiritual narrative. The waria and the Buginese illustrate how different non-binary gender systems can simultaneously be articulated within a single nation.

Two-Spirit People of North America

'Two-spirit' is a relatively recently created umbrella term used to refer to a range of roles and identities amongst different indigenous North American peoples – including the Winkte of the Lakota, the Nàdleehi of the Navajo, and the Badés of the Sioux amongst others. The term replaces the word 'berdache', which was used in earlier literature. 'Berdache' had its origins in the French for 'male prostitute' and is now considered an inappropriate slur, a cultural sensitivity which anthropological researchers did not consider in the past (Epple, 1998).

In the past, rituals which assigned two-spirit people their gender status allowed for those individuals to engage with forms of dress, social activities, and labour usually reserved for those tribes-folk of the 'opposite' physiological category to that of the two-spirit person. The binarised nature of language when discussing gender in English makes it difficult to do justice to non-Western social systems which have culturally embedded articulations of gender beyond the binary. Simplifications and concessions must occasionally be made, but it is important to recognise that whilst in a Western context a two-spirit person with a penis may have been assigned male at birth, it is problematic to apply this framework of understanding to Native American infants when processes of socialisation (particularly historically) were quite different. For example, the North American Zuni tribe did not position an immediate view of physiology as the primary indicator of gender. Ritual interventions during pregnancy and even after the birth were understood as essential for the development of gender. Roscoe explains how:

> The midwife massaged and manipulated the infant's face, nose, eyes and genitals. If the infant was male, she poured cold water over its penis to prevent overdevelopment. If the child was female, the

---

[1] 'Cisgender' refers to men and women who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. The term has gained prominence as it challenges the assumption that the words 'men' and 'women' implicitly exclude trans people, and avoids positioning cisgender status as 'normal', and transgender by implication as 'abnormal'.

> midwife split a new gourd in half and rubbed it over the vulva to enlarge it. In this context, knowing the kind of genitals an individual possesses is less important than knowing how bodies are culturally constructed and what particular features and processes (physiological and/or social) are believed to endow them with sex.
>
> (Roscoe, 1993, p. 342 - 3)

Some tribes might understand the individual to possess more than one identity, but which are articulated at different times, thus the origin of the name ‘two-spirit’. This allowed for ‘men’s clothing’ to be worn on some occasions and ‘women’s clothing’ on others. Two-spirit people would occupy positions of social respect (though how this was articulated was tribally dependent), and were often thought to have spiritual powers.

Not all tribes regarded their two-spirited members with universal respect, as association with supernatural practices could render some two-spirit people subjects of fear. Occupying positions of respect also did not render two-spirit people as beyond criticism or punishment (Walker, 1982), however the role of third genders in Native American tribes were integral, typical, and substantial.

Machi of South America

The machi are found within the Mapuche indigenous group, located across parts of Chile and Argentina. Similarly to the hijra and some two-spirit people, machi have religious significance within their communities, and are positioned as shamans with healing powers. Their gender variance is strongly tied to ritualism, with Bacigalupo explaining the sacred use of the Foya tree, and how “its white, hermaphroditic flowers legitimate *machi’s* ritual transvestism, their sexual variance, and their co-gendered ritual identities (during rituals they move between masculine and feminine gender polarities or combine the two)” (2010).

In contrast to examples discussed thus far, machi identity construction is strongly context specific and changeable. This fluidity is also manifest in insider/outsider dynamics with regards to Mapuche identity, involving complex interactions between race, language, ancestry, knowledge, and colonial influences (Bacigalupo, 2003). The articulations of gender variance amongst the machi have also been constrained through interactions with westernised, non-Mapuche Chilean society. Fine-Dare (2014) positions this constraint as raising a duality between expression of a gendered fluidity, whilst also needing to defend and resist masculinity and femininity in binarised terms in particular interactions, such as providing healing services for outsiders. Bacigalupo illustrates how expression of stigmatised gender variance in non-Mapuche Chilean society is policed by recounting how one machi who was read as male but identified as female was “jailed without trial under a false accusation of homicide. Additionally she was described as a ‘strange sexual deviant’ and a ‘dangerous uncivilized indian’ because she challenged Chilean gender and social norms" (2003, p. 37). Whilst stigma and discrimination based on gender identity and race are still tragically common within Western contexts, the way in which gender, race, and nationality intersect within the context of the Mapuche must be considered specifically in order to appreciate the nuances of the local social geography.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have attempted to iterate how fluid, fuzzy, and ultimately difficult to categorise, articulations of gender diversity can be when thinking in terms of the gender binary. Indeed whilst stigma and discrimination can drive gender and sexuality minorities underground, there is no reason to believe such articulations cannot be found in any and all nations and contexts. Themes can be seen across articulations of gender variance such as being regarded as lucky, sacred, as leaders, or (and sometimes simultaneously) how gender variance can increase the likelihood of experiencing stigmatisation or risk – particularly in relation to sex work.

The benefits of considering gender diversity lie in appreciating how particular contexts can result in highly varied articulations of gender. This can be harnessed so as to lessen gendered assumptions in our interactions. This is particularly important given that gender variant people are more likely to experience economic and social vulnerability, and may struggle to have their health needs taken seriously, or addressed appropriately. Further, gender variant people are not necessary visibly identifiable.

By increasing appreciation and awareness of gender variance, greater specificity may be attained when assisting those who present themselves as defying normative gender expectations. Awareness of, and conversations about, binary transgender issues are vitally important, and there remains much work still to be done in combating stigma and discrimination. However whilst there is huge variation within how transgender people who identify within the gender binary articulate themselves (that is, as men and women), this is only one facet of the remarkable breadth of gendered possibility, both inside and beyond Western cultural contexts.

Bullet Point Summary

- The idea that gender is only experienced individually and culturally as 'man or woman' is a relatively recent, Western idea.
- 'Biological' and 'cultural' aspects of gender cannot be disentangled, and attempts to do so risks essentialising particular factors above others and delegitimising some experiences of gender variance.
- Explanations of gender variance in terms of the gender binary can result in the loss of specific details dependent on their cultural context.
- Gender variance and sexual orientation are now conceived of separately in a Western context, but historically and cross-culturally they have been entwined.

- Many different cultures understand gender in terms which differ from the gender binary. Many of these identities illustrate how gender variance can be celebrated, but patterns of social vulnerability and stigma are present.

Further Reading

- Johnston, L. (2015). Gender and sexuality I Genderqueer geographies? Progress in Human Geography,1 - 11.
- Newman, L. K. (2002). Sex, gender and culture: Issues in the definition, assessment and treatment of gender identity disorder. Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 7, pp. 352-359.
- Herdt, G. H. (1993). Third sex, third gender: Beyond sexual dimorphism in culture and history, Zone Books New York.
- Kessler, S. J. & McKenna, W. (1978). Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach. Chapter 2 - Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Gender, 21-42. University of Chicago Press.
- Ochoa, M. (2008). Perverse Citizenship: Divas, Marginality, and Participation in "Loca-Lization". WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly, 36, 146-169.

References

Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Books.

Atlas, M. (2005). Representing Femminelli of Naples. *FKW//Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur, 37*(39).

Bacigalupo, A. M. (2003). Rethinking identity and feminism: Contributions of Mapuche women and machi from southern Chile. *Hypatia, 18*(2), 32-57.

Bacigalupo, A. M. (2010). *Shamans of the foye tree: gender, power, and healing among Chilean Mapuche*: University of Texas Press.

Becatoros, E. (2008). Tradition of 'sworn virgins' dying out in Albania. Retrieved 21/06/2015, from http://www.welt.de/english-news/article2536539/Tradition-of-sworn-virgins-dying-out-in-Albania.html

Blaikie, N. (2009). *Designing Social Research*: Polity.

Boellstorff, T. (2004). Playing back the nation: Waria, Indonesian transvestites. *Cultural Anthropology*, 159-195.

Chakrapani, V., Babu, P., & Ebenezer, T. (2004). Hijras in sex work face discrimination in the Indian health-care system. *Research for Sex Work, 7*, 12-14.

D’Amora, M. (2013). La figura del femminiello/travestito nella cultura e nel teatro contemporaneo napoletano. *Cahiers d’études italiennes*(16), 201-212.

De Block, A., & Adriaens, P. R. (2013). Pathologizing sexual deviance: A history. *Journal of Sex Research, 50*(3-4), 276-298.

Eleftheriou-Smith, L.-M. (2015). Laverne Cox says focus on transgender people needs to shift from before-and-after of surgery: 'It objectifies us, reducing us to our bodies'. Retrieved 18/07/2015, from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/laverne-cox-says-focus-on-transgender-people-needs-to-shift-from-beforeandafter-of-surgery-it-objectifies-us-reducing-us-to-our-bodies-10387689.html

Epple, C. (1998). Coming to Terms with Navajo Nádleehí: A Critique of Berdache," Gay,"" Alternate Gender," and" Two‐spirit". *American Ethnologist, 25*(2), 267-290.

Fine-Dare, K. (2014). Ritualized Dimensions of Personhood, Sociality, and Power among the Mapuche of Chile. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies, 9*(3), 356-361.

Graham, S. (2004). It's like one of those puzzles: Conceptualising gender among Bugis. *Journal of gender Studies, 13*(2), 107-116.

Grémaux, R. (1993). Woman becomes man in the Balkans. In G. Herdt (Ed.), *Third sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*: Chicago: Zone Books.

Harrison, J., Grant, J., & Herman, J. L. (2012). A gender not listed here: Genderqueers, gender rebels, and otherwise in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. *LGBTQ Public Policy Journal at the Harvard Kennedy School, 2*(1).

Herdt, G. H. (1993). *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*: Zone Books New York.

Hopkins, K. (1963). Eunuchs in politics in the later Roman Empire. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society (New Series), 9*, 62-80.

Idrus, N. I., & Hymans, T. D. (2014). Balancing benefits and harm: Chemical use and bodily transformation among Indonesia's transgender waria. *International Journal of Drug Policy, 25*(4), 789-797.

Johnston, L. (2015). Gender and sexuality I Genderqueer geographies? *Progress in Human Geography*, 1 - 11. doi: 10.1177/0309132515592109

Käng, D. B. c. (2012). Kathoey "In Trend": Emergent Genderscapes, National Anxieties and the Re-Signification of Male-Bodied Effeminacy in Thailand 1. *Asian studies review, 36*(4), 475-494.

Klein, H. (1991). Couvade syndrome: male counterpart to pregnancy. *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine, 21*(1), 57-69.

Krafft-Ebing, R. v. (1886). *Psychopathia Sexualis*: Bloat Books.

Lutz, T. (2015, 16/07/2015). Caitlyn Jenner accepts courage award: 'If you want to call me names, I can take it'. Retrieved 18/07/2015, from http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/jul/15/caitlyn-jenner-receives-espy-award-and-says-transgender-people-deserve-respect

Malinowski, B. (1937). *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*: Bronislaw Malinowski.

Murray, S. O. (1997). The Sohari Khanith. *Islamic homosexualities: Culture, history, and literature*, 256-261.

Nanda, S. (1990). Neither Man nor Woman. *Wadsworth Modern Anthropology Library, Belmont California: Wadsworth Publishing Company*.

Nanda, S. (1993). Hijras: An Alternative Sex and Gender Role in India. In G. Herdt (Ed.), *Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (pp. pp. 373 - 418): Zone Books.

Nemoto, T., Iwamoto, M., Perngparn, U., Areesantichai, C., Kamitani, E., & Sakata, M. (2012). HIV-related risk behaviors among kathoey (male-to-female transgender) sex workers in Bangkok, Thailand. *AIDS care, 24*(2), 210-219.

Newman, L. K. (2002). Sex, gender and culture: Issues in the definition, assessment and treatment of gender identity disorder. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry, 7*(3), 352-359.

Norton, R. (2009). "Maiden Names and Little Sports", The Gay Subculture in Georgian England. Retrieved 20/06/2015, from http://rictornorton.co.uk/eighteen/maiden.htm

Ochoa, M. (2008). Perverse Citizenship: Divas, Marginality, and Participation in" Loca-Lization". *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly, 36*(3), 146-169.

Piraino, F., & Zambelli, L. (2015). Santa Rosalia and Mamma Schiavona: Popular Worship between Religiosity and Identity. *Critical Research on Religion*, 2050303215593150.

Ringrose, K. M. (1993). Living in the Shadows: Eunuchs and Gender in Byzantium. In G. Herdt (Ed.), *Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*: Zone Books.

Roscoe, W. (1993). How to Become a Berdache: Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender Diversity. In G. Herdt (Ed.), *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*: Zone Books.

RT. (2014). India recognizes transgender citizens as ‘third gender’. Retrieved 24/6/2015, from http://rt.com/news/india-court-third-gender-636/

Scheidel, W. (2009). *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*: Oxford University Press.

Trumbach, R. (1993). London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture. In G. Herdt (Ed.), *Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*: Zone Books.

Tsai, S.-s. H. (1996). *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*: Suny Press.

Valdes, F. (1996). Unpacking hetero-patriarchy: tracing the conflation of sex, gender & (and) sexual orientation to its origins. *Yale JL & Human., 8*, 161.

Walker, J. R. (1982). Lakota Society, ed. *Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 120*.

Wilson, N. A. (2006). The Modernization of Hijras. *Journal of Scholarship and Opinion, 6*, 33-40.

Winter, S. (2006). Thai transgenders in focus: Demographics, transitions and identities. *International Journal of Transgenderism, 9*(1), 15-27.

Zito, E. (2013). Disciplinary crossings and methodological contaminations in gender research: A psycho-anthropological survey on Neapolitan femminielli. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 7*(2), 204-217.