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Born Transsexual

norrie's ever evolving understanding of hir gender identity

by norrie mAy-welby

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At one time I had come to the conclusion that my own (trans)gender situation was most likely the result of the circumstances of my early childhood, but I have recently been swayed to the opinion that it is most likely the result of pre-natal or genetic circumstances.

... I identified solely as female, until an unfortunate incident where I was targeted as a female, and that ended only when I was identified by my attackers as trans.

Years ago, following sex-change surgery, I identified solely as female, until an unfortunate incident where I was targeted as a female, and that ended only when I was identified by my attackers as trans. I made a lot of personal changes following this incident, and only recently have I been able to revisit and

re-address the changes I had made. One of those changes was that I had shifted my identity from being a normal female to being assertively transgender. Yet, once I was able to process the moment of trauma from a safe perspective, it did seem that I had a 'core' gender, which if not exclusively feminine, was very strongly biased to being more female than male.

The other thing that prompted my reassessment was an article in *New Scientist*, which indicated that gender is influenced not only pre-natally, but even before the formation of gonads (testes or ovaries) in the developing mammalian embryo.

And the more I thought about it, the more I realised that while I could explain the formation of my female gender identity (and/or a strong early identification of my mother as the appropriate role model for me) as a response to certain circumstances, the fact remains that most other children with typical male chromosomes did not choose the response I did, indicating a strong possibility of predisposing factors.

I was thinking about these things on the flight to Perth for the International Congress on Sex and Gender, hosted by the International Foundation for Androgynous Studies. By the time I reached Perth, I had reached the conclusion that there was a 99.9 percent probability that I had a congenital intersex condition of the brain that resulted in my being born with a predisposition to assume a female gender, despite having male genitals.

This line of thought has been reached by many other transsexuals long before me. Yet when I arrived in Perth, I found in the conference program a diatribe from an Intersex activist strongly opposed to such a point of view. This person apparently wants to claim 'Intersex' solely for people with a discrete range of conditions which excludes transsexuals by definition.

There are, of course, political considerations for including or excluding transsexuality from intersexuality. Intersex people may find it easier to gain public support and sympathy if it is believed that their condition is one they were born with (that is, a brain with an intersex condition), rather than one they chose.

I have no wish to colonise any other group, or to claim their experience as my own. I was not born with ambiguous genitalia, nor did I suffer any infant genital mutilation or other non-consensual gender treatment (apart from the discomfort of having my gender expression policed to act male and not female). However, having assessed the likelihood of my having been born with an intersex condition as extremely probable, it is not unreasonable for me to identify as intersex.

Activist Tony Briffa disagrees with this point of view, and said so clearly in his abstract for the conference. Having only recently come to a strong identity as intersex, and perhaps still vulnerable from processing the trauma that had led me to reject a congenital gender condition, I wasn't yet ready to confront him when I first saw him at the congress.

There was a photo organised for all the intersex people attending the conference. Feeling like I really belonged to this group, but unwilling yet to confront the anger of those who wanted me excluded, I simply stood on my head, a short distance from the group being photographed. It simply seemed like a way to make the world make more sense for me.

(As a child I often felt more at ease in inverted postures, imagining myself walking on the clouds or the ceiling, The upside down world was one of my favourite havens.)

I was reassured later during the conference when Mickey Diamond, a leading medical authority in the sex and gender field, told me that it seemed 'most likely' that it will soon be scientifically found that transsexuality is caused by a physical pre-natal intersex condition.

Well, either we (transsexuals) are all born with a condition that causes (or strongly influences) our gender, or else we're all just very naughty children (being contrary for the sake of it). And, frankly, I don't think that's very likely, do you?

And no one, not even a hard working and high achieving activist, has the right to say what identity other people may or may not have. The community of gender or sex diverse people has suffered a great deal of trauma collectively on the grounds of identity, and understandable though it is for many of us to act out that trauma, it is neither helpful nor acceptable for us to perpetuate it by doing so.

norrie mAy-welby

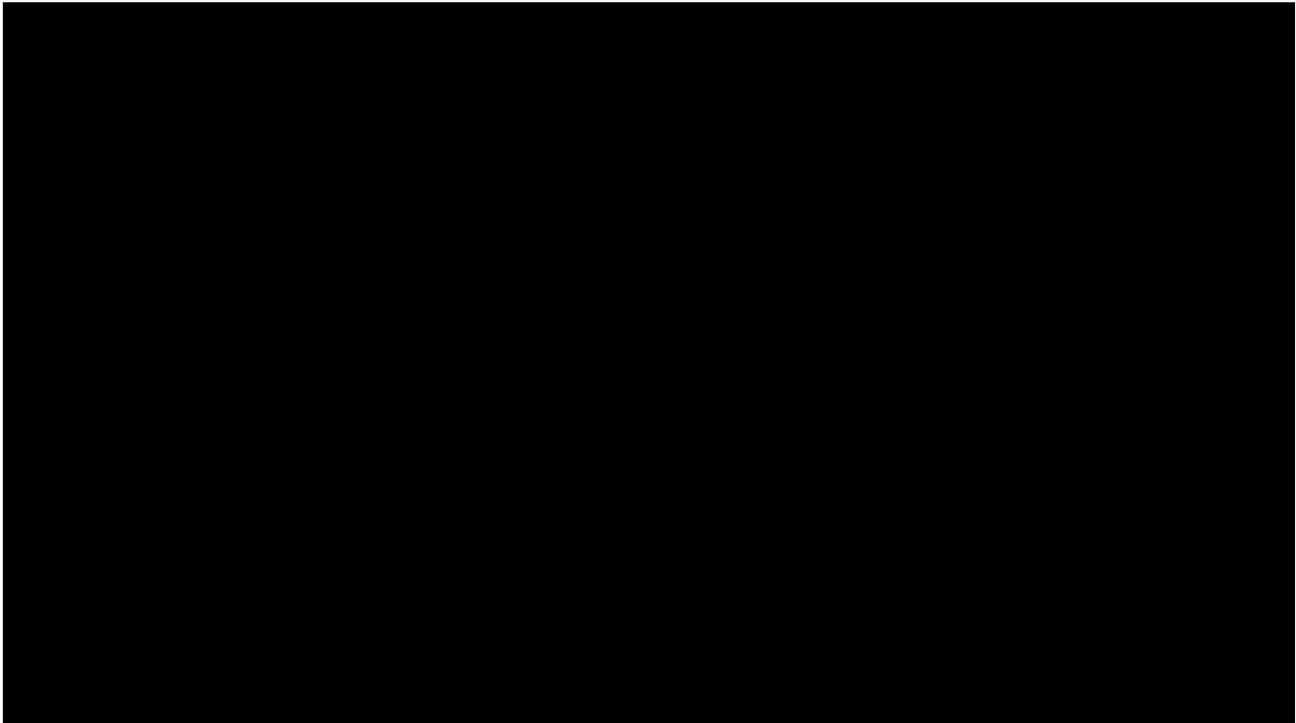
From [Wikipedia](#)  norrie mAy-welby became the first person in the world to be officially declared to be neither a man nor a woman, making Australia the first country in the world to recognise a "non-specified" gender.



Born in Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, as a male and moving to Perth, Western Australia at the age of seven, norrie underwent male-to-female reassignment surgery in 1989, but later found that being a woman was not what zie felt like either. Zie moved to Sydney in the early 1990s. Doctors stated, in January 2010, that norrie was a neuter, neither male nor female, as hir psychological self-image was as a neuter, hir hormones were not the same as a male's or female's, and zie had no sex organs.

One of hir worries about being labelled male or female is that zie now looks like neither and is physically neither as well. Because of this, if hir passport states gender as being one or the other, it is possible that zie might be detained for not fitting what the gender field says zie should look like. This was one of norrie's reasons for seeking recognition as gender neutral. Of hir own sexuality, norrie has stated: "I'd be the perfect androgyne if I was completely omnisexual, but I'm only monosexual. Just think of me as a big queen girl."

norrie has been an integral part of the Gender Centre in many ways since moving from Western Australia many years ago. [Visit hir website for more about norrie](#)  Meanwhile, this excellent video has appeared on You Tube, an interview with norrie in which zie explains her views on many topics



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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We

specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.