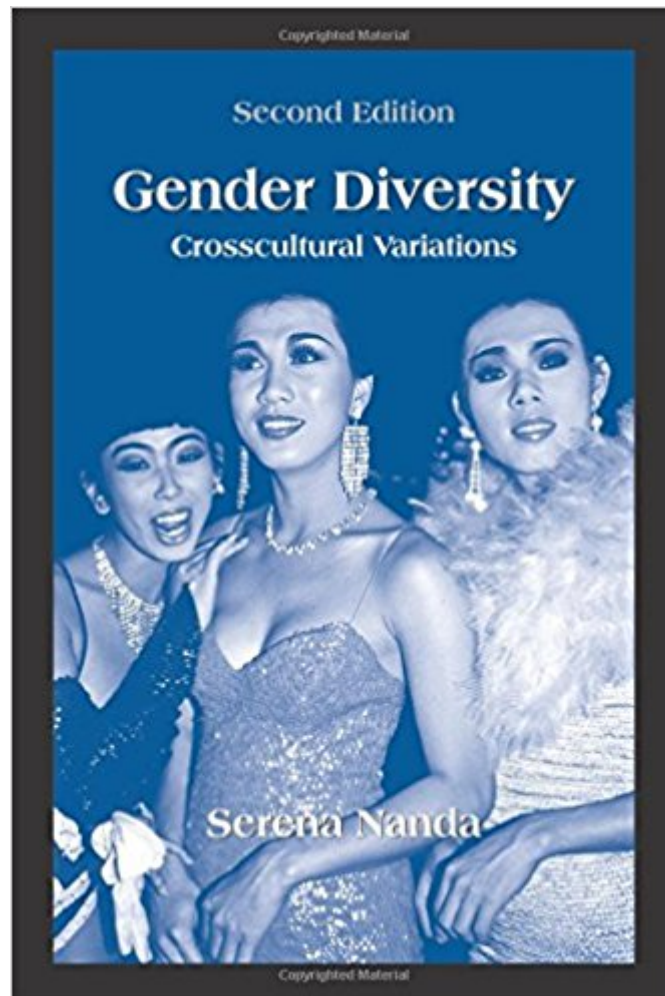




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# Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations, Second Edition



## Synopsis

Anthropologist Serena Nanda has heralded the importance of understanding human similarities and differences throughout her writing and teaching career. This was especially evidenced in her groundbreaking work, *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations*, a masterful, far-reaching examination of the relationships between sex, gender, and sexuality and how they are culturally constructed. The latest edition of *Gender Diversity* incorporates new material on hijras in Bangladesh, three gender alternatives in Indonesia, and global changes related to migration, communication, and health. Concept-reinforcing review questions have also been added to each chapter. Throughout, rich ethnographic examples representing nine cultures illuminate the need to analyze sex/gender roles and identities on the basis of broad cultural patterns and distinct cultural features, including social class, ethnicity, age, religion, urban or rural residence, and exposure to Western cultures. *Gender Diversity*, 2/E encourages readers to think in new ways about what they consider natural, normal, or morally right. As a concise supplement with multidisciplinary appeal, the enhanced edition is sure to energize the undergraduate classroom. Includes glossary and selected films list. Titles of related interest from Waveland Press: Burton, *Culture and the Human Body: An Anthropological Perspective* (ISBN 9781577661801); Mascia-Lees, *Gender and Difference in a Globalizing World: Twenty-First-Century Anthropology* (ISBN 9781577665984); and Mascia-Lees-Black, *Gender and Anthropology*, 2E (ISBN 9781478634164).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“This handy text provides an excellent introduction to gender and sexuality in a

cross-cultural context. I use it in two courses. –• Anthony Shay, Pomona College –• “I love how focused and complete this new edition is. The addition of Indonesia is great. Overall, great updates. –• Jessica Bodoh-Creed, California State University, Los Angeles –• “The book enhances my class significantly and never fails to engage the students. –• Matthew Kennedy, City College of San Francisco

for all this gender diversity - there is some point where there is no diversity - every transgender takes his issue extremely seriously. he is ready to take risks and make sacrifices. I refuse to believe it. there must have been intelligent and free thinking individuals who could rise above this "problem" and treat it as a joke. I tend to think Serena Nanda missed this population because she has a focus on naive and uneducated populations. and because she herself lacks any sense of humor.

I enjoyed learning about individuals whose gender and sexuality varies from the heteronormative gender categories in most Western societies. This text was used as a fundamental piece in understanding different expressions of gender and sexuality cross culturally, through an anthropology course focused on the distinction between gender, sexuality, and socially constructed roles attributed to gender. I liked how the text focused on the experiences of such gender and sexually variant individuals from cultures/societies in Philippines, Brazil, India, Native America, and many others. Even though heteronormative relationships in which men reign supreme over women the relationships of those not within such relationships mimics the structure of such male/female relationships, in some ways which are more destructive than others. One major issue I had about this text was that it was focused on the experiences of men, whether transgender or homosexual, which didn't leave much room for the experience of women as transgender or homosexual and that is not alright, to explore a skewed/ biased experiences of gender, sexuality, and social roles. One major thing that I learned from this text was that an individual's gender, sexuality, and social roles do not have to be the same, however there is a lot of overlap, but it was important for me to learn this distinctions in an ever changing world in respect to non heteronormative identities whether through expressions of gender or sexuality. This text would be a great addition for any women's studies or anthropology course which investigates the differences in gender, sexuality, and social roles. Or for individual exploration into these social issues. This would be a good text for a college course or any other educational courses, as well as informal ones too. This text came well before 's expected delivery date in great condition. Also, I returned it for credit at the end of the semester since does have the tradeback program which is great for students to earn credit.

Cultural differences about gender roles and sexuality has always fascinated me, so I thought this looked like a good read. It was pretty good, but I feel I would have liked it more if I didn't already know about some gender diversity in other cultures beforehand! It's a very good introduction to several cultures' takes on gender, sexuality and the roles that go along with them. At times the style of the author bored me or felt a bit dry, but the shortness of the book (roughly 100 pgs) made it easy to read. I'd recommend this to people interested in gender studies, sexuality, anthropology/cultures, sociology, and maybe even psychology.

This book is full of interesting information about various cross-gender manifestations in different cultures. It also gives some additional perspectives as to why our world is so sexist and male dominated. The book is beautifully researched and makes for a very interesting and pleasant read.

Serena Nanda's short book (only about 100 pages) is an excellent introduction to the subject of "gender diversity". We get to know "berdaches" among North American Indians, a caste of emasculated transvestites in India, effeminate male transvestites and macho gay men in Thailand, and celibate women living like men in Albania. There are also chapters on the Philippines, Polynesia and the contemporary West. The section on the Western world is the shortest one, presumably to emphasize that "gender variants" aren't uniquely Western or modern. There are a few illustrations, including a photo of a transvestite Crow Indian warrior named Finds Them And Kills Them. The book ends with a bibliography and a list of movies about gender variants. I suspect Serena Nanda's intended audience are freshmen anthropology students, but "Gender Diversity" could be read by the general reader as well. However, I also have some criticism of this book. Nanda claims that gender diversity proves that binary thinking (male/female) isn't universal. I beg to disagree. Most of the gender variants described in her book presuppose an already established binary opposition between "male" and "female". Why else would the most common gender variant be a male wearing women's clothing? Why are such persons expected to do traditional women's work? Why do they establish sexual relations with other men, who don't cross-dress and hence act as typical males? Obviously because the whole point of the gender variants is to reinforce the dichotomy between "male" and "female" identities. Indeed, the transvestites described in the book don't look like a "third" sex or gender, despite Nanda's analysis. Rather, they simply look like a combination of the two main genders, men and women. The group that comes closest to being an actual third sex are the male Hijras in India, who emasculate themselves and are supposed to live a celibate lifestyle.

They are even organized as a special caste within Hindu society. But even the Hijras mimic and parody the mannerisms of women, showing that their status as a third category is relative. My guess is that gender variants emerge precisely because most societies think of "male" and "female" as opposites. Of course, such a rigid distinction is unnatural, due to individual human variation. There will always be men who act more "womanly" according to the cultural standards of their society, and women who act more "manly". The equally rigid categories of "male acting like a female" and "female acting like a male" are presumably established by society as a way of accommodating the deviants, and in more oppressive societies, to control them as well. Nanda is probably right on another point, however. She believes that there is no direct connection between transvestite gender variants and homosexuality. True, the overt sexuality of the gender variants *is* homosexual, since a cross-dressing male is supposed to have a "normal" male partner. While this might tempt actual homosexuals to become cross-dressers, Nanda suspects that the homosexuality is effect rather than cause. A gender variant is supposed to have a relationship with a person who is (biologically) of the same sex. That's simply part of their social identity. Indeed, it might as well be the "normal" partner of the gender variant who is homosexual! Nanda points out that many societies in the past didn't condemn homosexual acts as such, nor did they consider "the homosexual" to be a separate category or identity. Rather, the distinction was between the "active" and "passive" sexual partner. "Active" male homosexuals were therefore seen as normal males, while "passive" male homosexuals were classified as women, and often regarded with even more contempt, since men are supposed to be "active". This means that "active" male homosexuals didn't need to join the transvestite "third gender". They could stay male. It was the "passive" partner who became part of the cross-dressing subculture. Apparently, this distinction still exists in modern Thailand, where self-described gay men emphasize their masculinity, and refuse any contact with the transvestite group known as kathoey. As a good anthropologist, Nanda emphasizes the variation in gender roles in different cultures. But judging by her own book, the similarities are just as striking. All societies described in the book seem to have a strict dichotomy between "male" and "female", as already mentioned. This is true of both the patriarchal cultures (such as Brazil or Thailand) and the more complementarian cultures (the American Indians). In all these societies, cross-dressing is a marker of the alternative identity. In most of the American Indian cultures, the gender variant also took up the trade of the opposite sex (there were exceptions). In patriarchal societies, the male gender variants are usually prostitutes (even the supposedly ascetic Hijras often work as such) and there is a connection between their subcultures and the patriarchal distinction between "active" and "passive" homosexuality. Female gender variants are less well-known. In more complementarian

societies, they seem to have sexual relations with "normal" women. In patriarchal societies, by contrast, they are supposed to be celibate, and their "male" status is somewhat shaky. Nanda describes a "sworn virgin" in an Albanian village, who lived as a man, since her parents lacked male off-spring. By becoming a "man", the sworn virgin could inherit the family property. Being socially a man in a male-dominated society did entail more freedom, but any sworn virgin who broke her vow of chastity could be stoned to death by the "normal" males! It's curious that the author of this book can't see the forest for the trees... Still, I recommend the book. It might encourage you to think in new ways about the issues of sexuality, homosexuality and transvestism.

It's a map of gender diversity. Solid theory, rich example, easy to read. Very helpful for academia.

Great book

Great condition

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