

Intersex Identities

WGST 220 Knowledge
Translation Project

Agenda For Today

- Speaker Introductions
- What is intersex?
- Popular Myths
- Intersex Genital Mutilation in Canada
- Media/Literature Recommends
- Relevance to this class

agenda



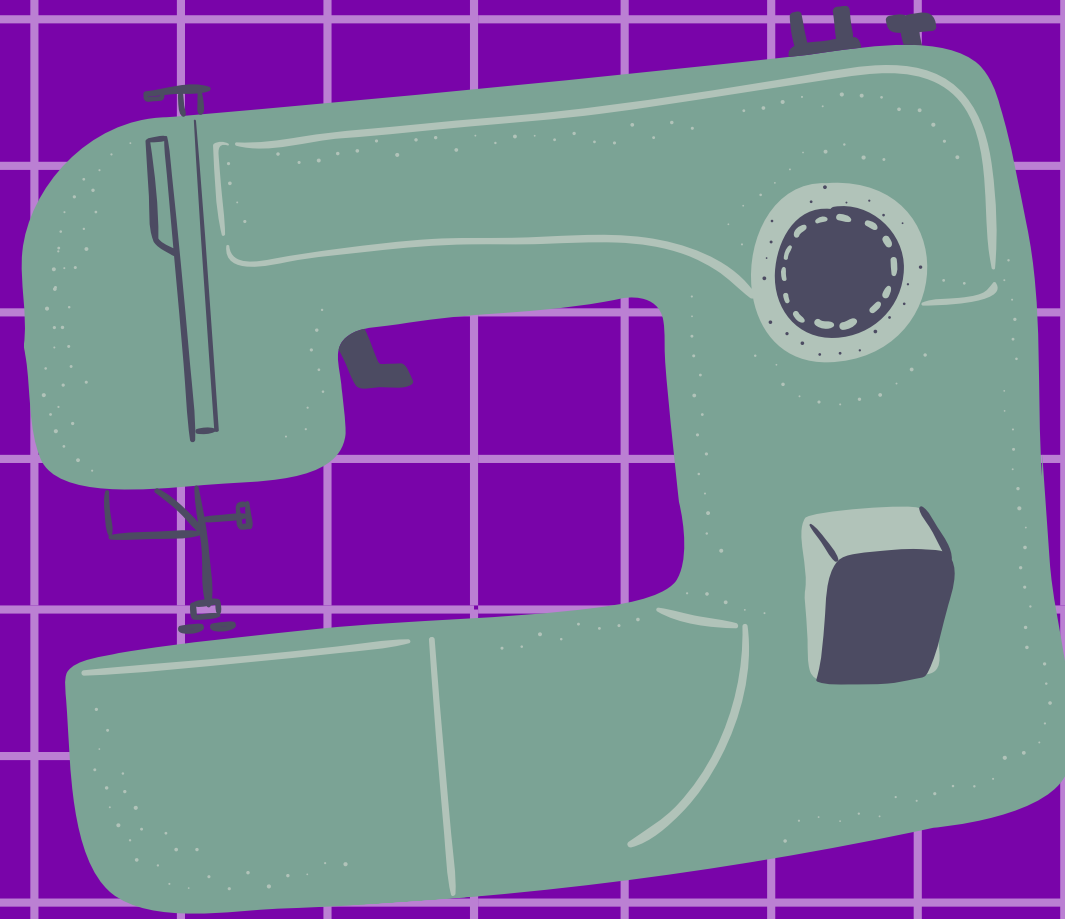


Meet The Speakers

Learn a little bit about us!

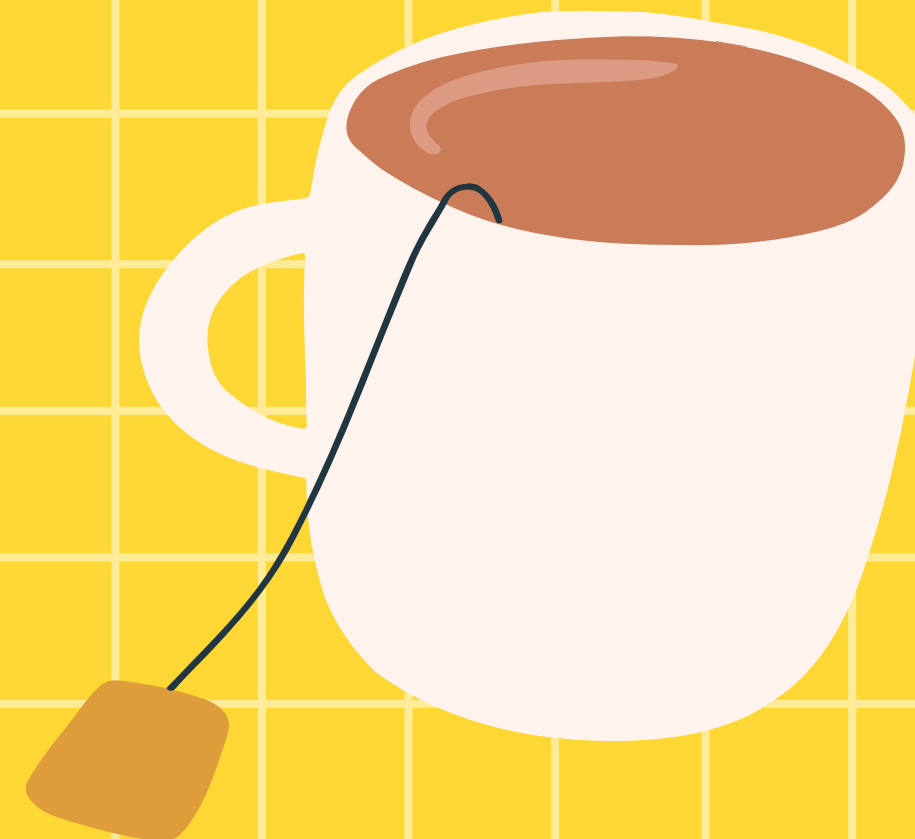
Kelly Lam(b)

- **Major:** Psychology (Arts)
- **Minor:** WGST
- **Year:** 2nd
- Vice President of the WGST Agents
- Pisces (March 18th)
- Current Obsessions : Dropout TV, sewing, my new bubble tea cup



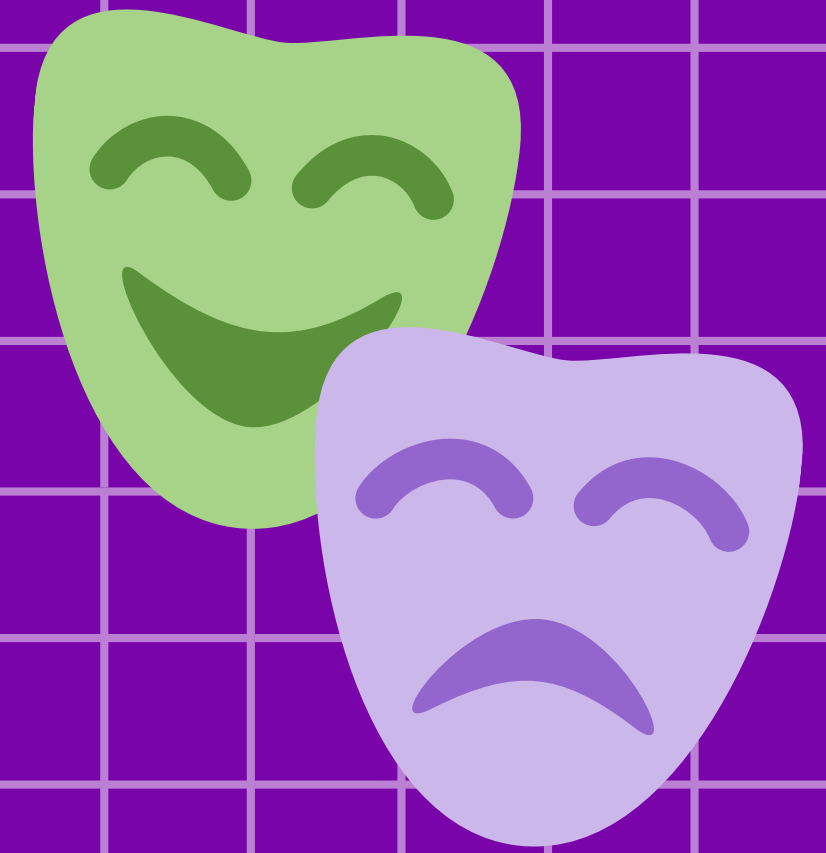
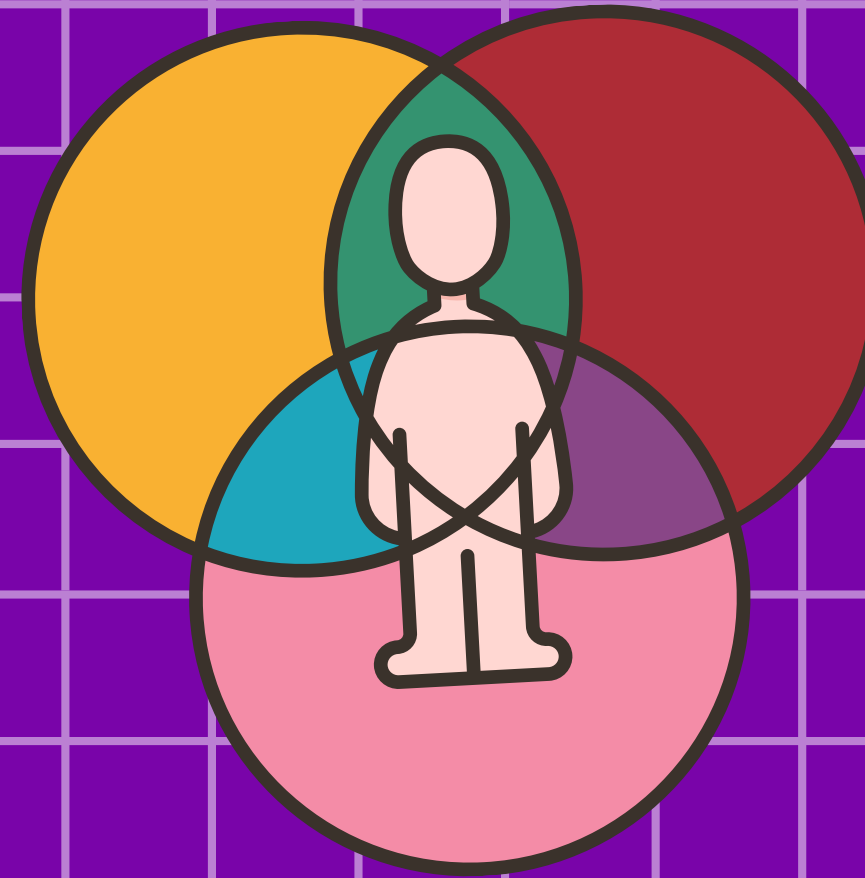
Jingwen Yu

- **Major:** Psychology (Arts)
- **Minor:** Sociology
- **Year:** 3rd
- Interested in sociology
- **Current Obsessions:** Coffee and tea, and cats



Erin Brophy

- **Major:** Women's and Gender Studies (Honours)
- **Year:** 4th+
- Interest in Intersectionality and the Arts
- Administrator of the WGST Agents
- **Current Obsessions:** theatre, baths, coffee, The Great Canadian Baking Show, swords, crushing the patriarchy





What is intersex?

Experiences, Definitions, and how they came to be

Think About It

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'intersex' ?

This could mean:

- Definition
- Intersex people
- Stereotypes
- Medical terms
- Surgeries
- Books
- Films
- Personal Experience
- Questions
- Confusion

Intersex Definition

"Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male."

(What Is Intersex? | Intersex Society of North America, n.d.)

Examples:

- Person presenting anatomy opposite of their perceived gender
- Person born with genitals that have characteristics of both male and female types.
- A person born with mosaic genetics, AKA presence of XX and XY chromosomes in their cells.
- (What Is Intersex? | Intersex Society of North America, n.d.)

Definition Video

Linked on the image to
the right:
**You Can't Ask That:
Intersex people
answer 'What is
Intersex?'**
by ABC TV & iview



Historical Examples

In traditional Jewish culture,

- intersex individuals were either androgynos or tumtum (some people don't have a specific or clear genital) and took on different gender roles, sometimes describe to men sometimes describe to female.

In ancient India,

- There is a state in India called Herdt state, the people who born with intersex are widely accepted by the society.

Ancient Greece

- Hermaphroditus was a beautiful youth who was the child of Hermes (Roman Mercury) and Aphrodite (Venus).

Ancient Roman

- Hermaphroditus is a god that born man, but also has the women feature.

Overall, the intersex in ancient world usually been treated as a god and be accepted by the society.

For Christinity:

- hermaphrodites means monster



Mythbusters: Intersex Edition

Let's go through three myths about Intersex people and break down why they are wrong.

Myth 1: Everyone is born male/female

- The existence of intersex people proves this to be false.
- Millions of people around the world who have sexual characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.
- (Amnesty International, 2018)

Myth 2: Being intersex is rare

- 0.05% - 1.7% of the world's population is intersex (an estimate) (Intersex - unfree and equal)
- 4 000 000 - 136 000 000 people (Based on the UN's population count just passing 8 billion)

Myth 3: Being intersex is something that needs to be corrected

- These procedures are medically unnecessary. (UN Free & Equal)
- The procedures performed can cause major problems, including infertility, pain, incontinence and lifelong psychological suffering (Amnesty International, 2018)



Intersex Genital Mutilation

What is it? Why is it wrong? Why is it still happening in
Canada?

What is it?

"Intersex Genital Mutilation is the practice of performing surgery on young intersex people for cultural or religious reasons, often using medical necessity as the reason given for surgery"
(Intersex Genital Mutilation – Igm, 2012)

Examples of Procedures:

- vaginoplasty (uses male reproductive organs to make a vagina)
- removal of the clitoris
- removal of the testes
- vaginectomy (removal of the vagina)
- phalloplasty (creating a penis)

Lived Experience Video

Linked on the image to
the right:

**What Was Done To
These Intersex People
Was Not Okay**
by Teen Vogue



Egale vs Ontario Superior Court

- Egale is the Canadian national 2SLGBTQIA+ advocacy group.
- Egale Canada filed an application to the Ontario Superior Court challenging the constitutionality of section 268(3)(a) of the Criminal Code.
- Section 268(3)(a) of the Criminal Code prohibits female genital mutilation but exempts from criminal liability certain surgeries performed on intersex children for the purpose of normalizing their sexual appearance.
- (Ball, 2022)

“At the age of 7, I endured things that no young person should have to when I was forced to undergo surgery because my body didn’t fit what doctors deemed to be normal. The pain I endured, both physically and mentally, has lasted a lifetime — it’s something that no child should have to experience, yet today it is still common practice across Canada.”



Morgan Holmes, Canadian professor and activist

Why are we queering it?

- Intersex individuals are marginalized because of massive stigma and discrimination, both in and outside the queer community.
- There is nothing wrong with gender affirming surgeries, but if they are done without consent they are not affirming in the slightest.
- Many human rights organizations denounce these surgeries, but many countries, including Canada, are still doing them to this day.

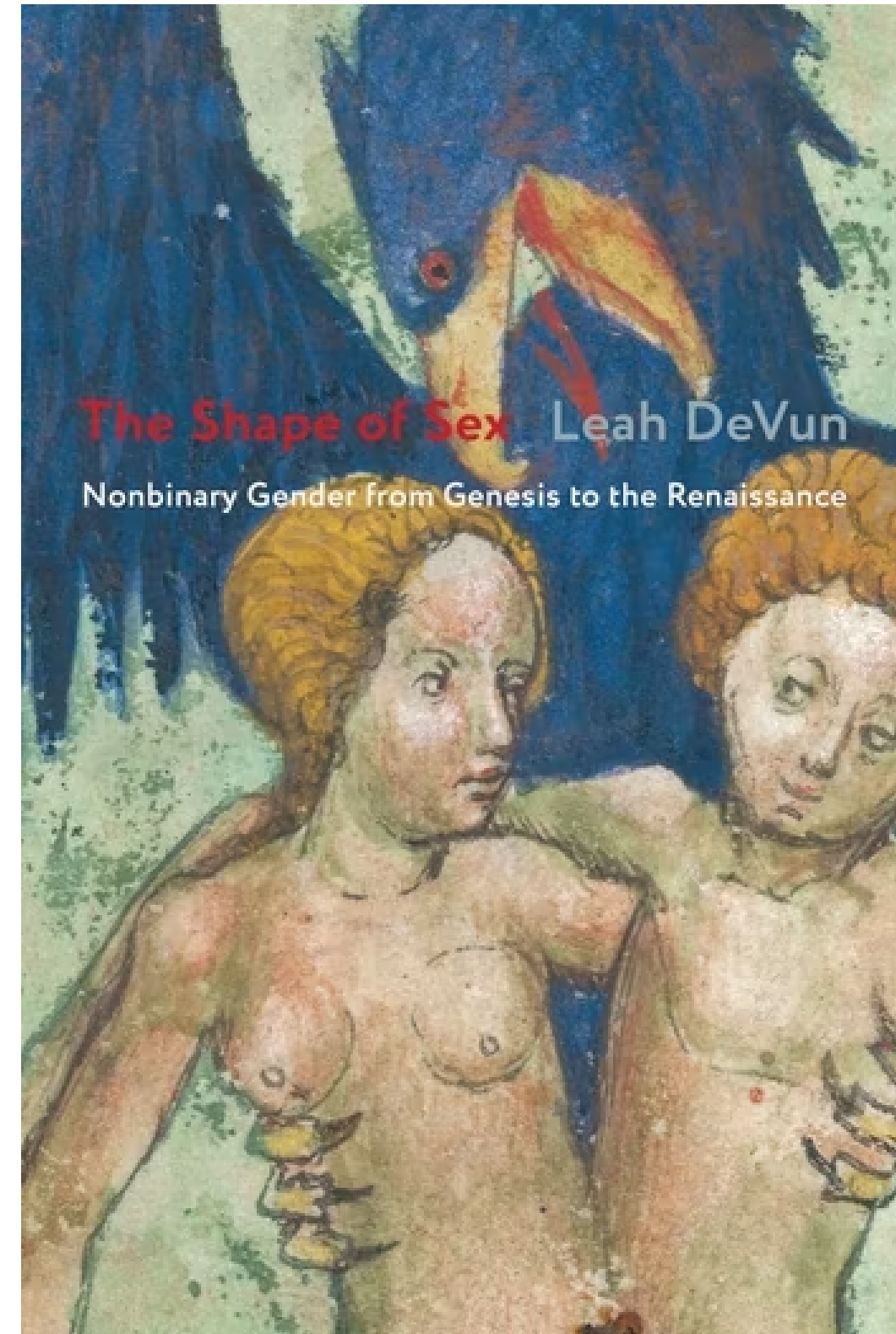


Intersex Rep Recommendations

Intersex representation across multiple medias to
explore!

Book Recommendation

- Analysis of non-binary sex and intersex bodies from 200 - 1400 C.E.
- Published May 2021
- Available at the Murray Library



Film Recommendation

- Released in 2019
- A story of a boy getting his first period and realizing he is intersex.
- Has won 10 awards from film festivals



(IMDB, 2021)

Music Recommendation

- Ambient/dream pop/experimental album
- Tells his story about learning and accepting her intersex identity
- Available on all streaming platforms





**Thank you for
listening!**

Any questions or comments?



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