

'Harper opens a new door on the intersexed, revealing men and women who are conspicuously jostled among rigid definitions of gender identity, reproductive physiology, and gender role. As they confront, embrace, or simply question their assigned "positions," these individuals expose opportunities, perhaps, to sidestep binary role impositions in our own lives. *Intersex* brings biological and social theories of gender into a dialogue with the day-to-day existence of a previously silenced people. It's about time.'

Claudine Griggs, *Rhode Island College*



Intersex is the condition whereby an individual is born with biological features that are simultaneously perceived as male and female. Ranging from the ambiguous genitalia of the true 'hermaphrodite' to the 'mildly or internally intersexed', the condition may be as common as cleft palate. Like cleft palate, it is hidden and surgically altered, but for very different reasons.

Intersex draws heavily on the personal testimony of intersexed individuals, their loved ones and medical carers. The impact of early sex-assignment surgery on an individual's later life is examined within the context of ethical and clinical questions. Harper challenges the conventional and radical 'treatment' of intersexuality through non-consensual infant sex-assignment surgery. In doing so, she exposes powerful myths, taboos and constructions of gender – the perfect phallus, a bi-polar model of gender and the infallibility of medical decisions. Handling sensitive material with care, this book deepens our understanding of a condition that has itself only been medically understood in recent years.

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