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JANUARY 2017 • VOL. 231 • NO. 1 • OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

THE GENDER ISSUE

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Can science help us navigate the shifting landscape of gender identity? Mandy (below) identifies as *fa'afafine*, a third gender in Samoa.

By Robin Marantz Henig
Photographs by Lynn Johnson



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ELSEWHERE

TELEVISION

GENDER REVOLUTION: A JOURNEY WITH KATIE COURIC



A look at how genetics, culture, and brain chemistry shape

gender. February 6 at 8/7c on National Geographic.

TELEVISION

JOIN THE SAFARI

Watch live as guides track Africa's iconic animals on *Safari Live*, a series premiering January 1 at 10/9c on Nat Geo WILD. The guides also will take viewers' questions via Twitter at #SafariLive.

TELEVISION

EXPLORER IS BACK

Known for pioneering programs on science, nature, and culture, *Explorer* returns January 16 at 10/9c with new specials.

BOOKS

PICTURE PERFECT

Travel to spectacular sites with *Wild, Beautiful Places*, available at shopng.com or wherever books are sold.

On the Cover A photo shoot for this issue assembled individuals representing a broad spectrum of gender identities and expressions. Photo by Henry Leutwyler

Corrections and Clarifications
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KATIE COURIC PHOTO: GENARO MOLINA, LOS ANGELES TIMES/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

WHAT IF ALL COULD THR

All of us carry labels applied to us. The complimentary ones—"funny," "smart"—are worn with pride. The harsh ones can be lifelong. Indictments we try desperately to escape.

The most enduring labels are probably the most influential, is the most of us got: "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl." Though Sigmund Freud used the word "anatomy" in his famous 1905 paper, when he meant that gender was determined by biology, the science he meant that gender was determined by biology.

Today that and other biological determinants of gender are shifting rapidly and being challenged. That's why we're devoting this issue to an exploration of gender science, in social systems, and in our lives throughout history.

As Robin Marantz Henig writes in her story on page 48, we are sure to see "evolving notions about what it means to be a woman or a man and the challenges of transgender, cisgender, gender conforming, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming, among many of the more than 50 terms used to describe gender offers users for their profiles. At the same time, scientists are uncovering the complexities in the biological underpinnings of sex. Many of us learned in high school biology that sex chromosomes determine a baby's sex, full stop: XX means it's a girl; XY means it's a boy. But of course, XX and XY don't tell the whole story.

For a future-facing perspective on gender, we talked to 80 young people from the Americas to the Middle East, from Africa to China, these articulate observers bravely shared their world back at us.

Nasreen Sheikh, seen here on the cover, her parents and two siblings in a slum. She'd like to become a doctor. She already she believes that being a doctor is holding her back. "If I were a doctor," she says, "I would have the chance to make money...and to wear good clothes."

I expect Nasreen will learn that being alone doesn't preclude a good