1 Are there more than two genders?

Most of the evidence in the anthropological literature from AmerIndians (Native Americans)

2 Bonvillian: To understand, we must separate social from the biological

- The third gender is a social concept
- Assumes social roles other than (or in addition to) those assigned to their sex
- They are not gender crossing or mixing, but other social roles
- Do not imply particular relationship to men or women
- A third possibility

3 Anthropologists use the names for the third gender

4 Subartic peoples

- Mostly women were Two Spirits
- But in some groups, more males
- Viewed as special people who fulfilled roles that conferred social prestige
- Respected for practical skills and spiritual knowledge
- Resembled women and men, but distinct

5 Paths to becoming

- Personal inclination
- Spiritual calling: vision or dream
  - Healing powers
  - Prophesies or foretell the future
- Parental training followed
- Social role of Two Spirits were validated through ritual

6 Doyle’s explanation

Non-western societies view gender that can be changed if warranted
- e.g., Families without sons but with several daughters
  - One daughter begins to learn boys’ roles

7 Or the opposite

Boy is more comfortable doing girl’s tasks

Greater flexibility in gender than other societies

8 Mohave Indians: The Alyha and Hwame

- Recognized 4 distinct gender categories
- Traditional male and female
- Alyha: male who chose to live as a women
- Hwame: female who chose to live as a man
North American Indians: gender may be a changeable aspect of life

- Crow Indians: Berdache:
  - Neither male or female
  - Biological male who did not follow the ideal Crow role as warrior [compare to Mead’s deviants, but they were not considered another gender]
  - Comfortably interacted with both males and females

Crow Indians: Berdache

- Neither male or female
- Biological male who did not follow the ideal Crow role as warrior [compare to Mead’s deviants who not considered another gender]
- Comfortably interacted with both males and females

Navaho: The Nadle

- If child born with ambiguous genitals assigned the role of the nadle
- Some could assume this later in life
- Treated with extreme deference
- When doing women’s work, dressed as a woman
- When doing men’s work dressed as a man

Could not hunt or be involved with warfare

- In delicate tribal problems (e.g., marital disputes) could intervene
- Could choose either male or female sexual partners

Economic Roles

(gender division of labor)

Clothing styles

Wore the clothes associated with chosen social role, not biological role
Or wore men’s clothes when doing men’s tasks, and women’s clothes when doing women’s tasks

Sexual lives

Bonvillain book, page 236

- Never married or had sex with other Two-Spirits
- Married and might have had sex with their opposite sex (desired because of their productive skills)
- Not heterosexual or homosexual in the western sense

- Children may have been fathered by another man
- When marriages or liaisons ended, the ex-spouses married a person who gender and sex were opposite theirs
Egalitarianism of men and women in society
- Gender equality is prerequisite for the respect and high status
- Much greater than in many other places in the world
- A Two-Spirit who identified as a woman did not give up status, because women had high status

Greater flexibility in gender than other societies
- By late 19th and 20th Centuries declined with adoption of Euro-American culture
- Males who dressed like a woman denigrated
- Homosexual label but different meanings
- People did not talk about it anymore to anthropologists
- Last Mohave female Two-Spirit raped and murdered