



Delusions of Gender

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Abstract:

This project strives to examine how gender is established in children. Throughout the project, we have taken into consideration what roles society and biological determinism play in the establishment of gender. Furthermore, the project examines how gender performativity and societal influence can help us get a better picture of the gender establishment. The paper is written as a philosophical discussion with a point of departure in experimental psychologist Cordelia Fine's book 'Delusions of Gender', with theoretical notions of philosopher Judith Butler, mainly from her book 'Gender Trouble'. The paper finds that there are multiple ways of viewing this topic, as the conclusion depends on personal experiences, theoretical background and field of study.

Adding to this examination of how gender is established in children, we have added a case named the Joan/John case to be able to add the notions from the paper to a real life situation.

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1 Introduction

“In the philosophical tradition that begins with Plato and continues through Descartes, Husserl, and Sartre, the ontological distinction between soul (consciousness, mind) and body invariably supports relations of political and psychic subordination and hierarchy.” (Butler 1990: 12)

This distinction between the soul and the body has through many decades been a topic that has been highly debated. Is the mind connected to the body, or can it philosophically stand on its own? Can we be one thing in our minds, and another in our bodies? And if so, how can it be created? These questions have been discussed and researched by many psychologists and philosophers throughout time. The British psychologist Cordelia Fine wrote in 2010 a book that challenges and discusses cognitive differences in men and women, as well as biological determinism. Biological determinism might be the common understanding of gender, in which we have a sex and then a corresponding gender. In Fine's criticism of this, she views gender establishment in children and how society has an effect on this process. Here a philosophical view could come from Simone de Beauvoir or Michel Foucault, as they are both important philosophers within the field of gender, another interesting philosopher that combines these two in her theories is Judith Butler. Stereotypes are a commonly known part of society, and the category of sex and gender is no exception. Females are often thought to be feminine and delicate whereas men are looked upon as masculine and tough. These stereotypes are produced and reproduced, through, and in collaboration, with the societal norms. Here we find it interesting to look at whether this has an influence on the mind of infants and how these societal norms influence their establishing of gender. Even before a child is born, the process of gender socialization begins with the parents' preparations of the arrival of the child. Do we from the very beginning label our children to be feminine or masculine, by categorizing them as boy or girl and dressing them in blue or pink, influenced by the societal norms. Could this be the reason gender differences emerge?

This project examines how gender is established in children, biological determinism and the many ways in which society has an influence on the establishment of gender. During the paper, we will not be having a great focus on the biological determinism, as the theories discussed in the paper can be seen to work against the theory of biological determinism. They believe in the dualism of the mind and body, of the gender and sex, and are therefore arguing against biological determinism.

The project accounts for Cordelia Fine's views on gender, drawing on her book 'Delusions of Gender'. In addition to this, we look at Judith Butler's notions of gender as performative, following this, we compare the views and theories of Fine and Butler, to get a clear understanding of the two

theorists' viewpoints. Throughout the project, we will therefore be working from the following questions:

1.1 Problem Definition

How is gender established in children, and how can one use ideas of biological determinism, societal influence and performativity to create a better understanding of gender in children?

1.2 Research Questions

- What are Cordelia Fine's views on gender in her book *Delusions of Gender*, how does she view the impact of society on the establishment of gender in children?
- How can we understand Judith Butler's notions of gender as performative and heterosexual melancholia?
- When comparing Butler and Fine, are their views in conflict or do they shed light on each other?
- How can Cordelia Fine's views and Judith Butler's theory help understand gender establishment in children?

1.3 Dimensions

This paper is written within the dimension of philosophy and science. Cordelia Fine is a psychologist and her book appeals to the dimension subjectivity and learning, however, since we have chosen to view the book in a reflecting philosophical manner, including Butler and others, this paper is primarily written and discussed from a philosophical point of view.

2 Method

Our method is philosophical reflection. We have read and reflected upon Fine and Butler's theoretical assumptions on the subject of gender and gender establishment in children. We have then compared and discussed the differences and parallels in their views and then lastly tested the

theoretical framework upon a real life situation, this being the Joan/John case conducted by Dr. Money in the 1960's, to view their abilities to answer how children establish their gender.

3 Material

The material used in this paper is mainly the book *Delusions of Gender* by Cordelia Fine, as it was our introductory reading to the subject and we found her writing both quite informative and inspirational. In order to cast a more philosophical light upon Fine's questions and notions of gender establishment, we chose to use Judith Butler, with our main focus on her book *Gender Trouble*. We also draw on other material, mainly to create a higher understanding of Butler, by using material about Butler such as Anita Brady and Tony Schirato's *Understanding Judith Butler* and Moya Lloyd's *Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics*. External literature on Foucault has also been used.

3.1 Cordelia Fine *Delusions of Gender*

Background information

Cordelia Fine is an English experimental psychologist and writer, with a degree from Oxford University and a master of Philosophy in criminology and a PhD in psychology from the institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London.

With this academic background Fine had a great interest in human cognition and the human brain. With her knowledge on these subjects she wrote the book '*A mind of its own: how your brain distorts and deceives*', and after this, in 2010, she wrote the book "delusions of gender".

(Cordeliafine.com: a)

Introduction to the book:

If we are assured by the expression "*Men think and women feel*", Cordelia Fine makes us think again. In her book "Delusion of gender - the real science behind sex differences" she introduces us to the science conducted on this topic and the persistent biases, which causes us to be blinded by the ways we enforce the gender stereotypes. In her book, Fine views the differences in male and female brains and hereby debunks some myths of neurosexism in psychology.

Her book is one of the main works we base our paper on.

In the book, she takes on the claim that male and female brains are hardwired differently, and therefore males and females have acquired certain different skillsets. Her book can be said to be

parted in three: the first part is about the social influences, and the implicit mind, the second part of her book mainly focuses on neurosexism, and the third part is - as the part is called - on recycling of gender. We have mainly used the first and the third part of the book as we aim to understand the establishing of gender, in doing so we should understand the notion of the implicit mind, and how this is a great factor in the establishing and reproduction of gender.

Throughout the book, Fine draws on original sources when backing her claims, which causes her book to be a reliable source when investigating our problem definition.

3.2 Judith Butler

Background information

Judith Butler is an American philosopher born in 1956. She has a B.A., M.A and a Ph.D. in philosophy from Yale University. (britannica.com, a 17/7-15). She has written a number of books within the subjects of subjectivity, queer, symbolic violence, gender and ethics (Brady & Schirato, 2011; 1). Her most influential and best-known work is the book *Gender Trouble - Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* from 1990 and a lot of her later work originates from this book (Brady and Schirato 2011 and Britannica, a 17/7-15).

According to Anita Brady and Tony Schirato in the book *Understanding Judith Butler* (2011), the theoretical and philosophical background on which she leans her work are extensive, but some of the important names to be mentioned are Michel Foucault, George Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Pierre Bourdieu, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and Simone de Beauvoir.

Introduction to the book

The book *Gender Trouble* was written by Judith Butler in 1990 and has by many been named as important in the debate on feminism, queer theory and gender (Butler 1999), as Moya Lloyd formulates it it was the “most influential book in the coming decade” (2007: 1). The book is a critical view on feminism’s idea of gender and operates within the three parts: *Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire, Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the production of the Heterosexual Matrix and Subversive Bodily Acts* (Butler 1990). In this paper, our main focus is on the first part of the book, as it views how subjects are understood within the schemes of sex, gender and desire. However, the second and third part of the book is also partly read and discussed in order to understand Butler’s notion of gender performativity and heterosexual melancholia.

4 Theory

4.1 Cordelia Fine

Theories:

In this part of the project, we dive into the 5 chapters of Cordelia Fine's book 'Delusions of Gender' from 2010, which we have found to be the most relevant in order to investigate our topic. Overall, these chapters account for gender differences in parenting, having a half changed mind, tagging of gender, gender education and the self-socializing child. This part also touches upon topics of raising children gender neutral and the notion of the implicit mind.

4.1.1 The implicit mind versus explicitly held knowledge

One might believe that many actions and reactions that one has are controlled and created with awareness, but we as individuals have a tendency to act via our subconscious and implicit mind. Cordelia Fine mentions that we have an implicit mind, which "responds to cultural patterns in society, media, and advertising." (Fine 2010: 5). The implicit mind, and the associative memory, will take on the stereotypes of the society unconsciously.

In our implicit mind, we therefore also have the stereotypes of gender, the stereotypes of what men and women should look like and how they should act. Women being associated with words like "home", "care-taking", "sensitive" and men being associated with words like "strong", "independent" and "hard-working".

We act in accordance to how people see us, meaning, that if they view us through certain stereotypes we therefore act accordingly and the stereotypes are then being reproduced.

Opposite the implicit mind, one has the explicitly held knowledge, which is constituted by the choices that one makes, and the views and ideas of people that one chooses to have. An example of this is the implicit stereotype of women doing housework. One's implicit thought might be that women are best at using a vacuum cleaner, even though gender equality and simple logic undermines this, we have seen women do it more than men and created the picture that this is how it is, even though we do not want to think so.

The notion of the implicit mind and explicit knowledge will be further discussed in chapter 5 *Fine vs. Butler*. In this chapter will now, further account for Fine's notion of children and their relation to gender.

4.1.2 Cordelia Fine on gender differences in parenting.

“And as we’ll see in this part of the book, there are many reasons, ranging from subtle to blatant, why a gender-neutral environment is not something that any parent does, could or perhaps even wants to provide.” (Fine 2010: 191).

Cordelia Fine agrees with parents on the fact that boys and girls do not play the same way, and she states, in her book, that this difference in playing habits happens even for children who live in gender-neutral environments (Fine 2010: 191). She states this with proper backing from various experiments, which will be mentioned in the following chapters.

One of the things that has an influence on the behavior of children, are the expectations parents have, implicitly, even before the child is born. Fine argues that even though some parents have the “more-modern beliefs of the conscious mind” (Fine 2010: 194), and might thus be wanting to bring up their children in a gender-neutral way, they can and probably will be influenced by their implicit associations that are deeply rooted in their minds. Using the data from sociologist Emily Kane’s interview study on parents’ views on gender behaviors. Fine is showing how parents automatically assign little girls with the traits of being sweet, more inclined to be emotionally connected, and to be someone who one could dress up and spoil. Little boys on the other hand are seen as a companion to the fathers-to-be, the fathers in the study wanted a son to teach sports (Fine 2010:192).

Fine describes this as the infants being “Unequal even before conception” (Fine 2010: 196) and is also arguing that children are, again implicitly, being valued differently.

Barbara Rothman, an American Sociologist, created an interview where she was asking mothers to describe the movement of the fetuses in the last three months before conception. The interesting thing was that the mothers, who knew the gender, had a clear distinct way of describing the movements of a girl, to the way of describing a boy.

The movements of the male fetuses were described as strong and active, whereas the female fetuses were described as calm and non-violent. This is influencing the way they view and interact with the child, even though they might have had the determination to raise the child in a gender neutral way. This is the effect of the implicit associations, where one has, unconsciously, learned that females are calm and males vigorous.

4.1.3 Having a half-changed mind

One of the things that Fine is stressing in the third part of her book is that many parents have the wish to bring their children up in a more or less gender-neutral way. Even though they have this wish, they still have their implicit actions, which might not correlate with their explicit intentions. This is what Cordelia Fine calls the “parenting with the Half-changed mind” (Butler 2010: 196-197). Fine argues that we must take children's environments and experiences seriously as children are highly affected by their surroundings. She is backing this with an experiment by developmental psychologist Paul Quinn, and colleagues, (Quinn et al. 2002) they conducted six experiments on infants between three and four months old. Here the babies were tested to see which kind of faces they preferred looking at. In experiments one through four, the experiments were conducted on babies who had female primary caregivers, and experiment five was conducted on babies who had male primary caregivers. The study shows that the babies who had female primary caregivers will have a preference for female faces, and babies who had male caregivers will have a preference for male faces. This study shows how quickly infants are affected by their surroundings, and that they are affected by their surroundings even before they are born. Babies will also have the tendency to prefer their mother tongue, which is believed to derive from the baby hearing the voice and rhythm of the mother through the womb. (Fine 2010: 197) This means that when it comes to bringing up children in a gender neutral fashion, all these influences should be balanced, otherwise even these minor differences, in things such as the gender of the caretakers, could influence the children without the parents realizing it.

Fine writes in her book that:

“It seems, then, that gender stereotypes, even if perhaps only implicitly held, affect parents’ behavior towards their babies.” (Fine 2010: 199)

Fine also argues that these implicit actions and reactions often show up in our body language or in our intonation of words, and are therefore not necessarily something that we notice ourselves.

These actions are not the ones that pass innocently by the infants.

In a study done by Luigi Castelli and colleagues, which Fine mentions in her book, they have taken two adult males - one being white the other being black. They have recorded a video of the two men having a conversation, one where the white male talks openly about individuals of a different race, and one where the white man only talks about his job and not about race in any way. Two different versions of the two clips had been made, one where the white male is positive and engaging in body language towards the black male - and one where he is acting less interested in conversing with the black male. The clips have then been shown to different groups of

preschoolers and the children were hereafter asked whether they would play or be friends with the black male.

Funnily enough, the topic that the white male was talking about did not seem to have that big of an influence, however, the thing that did have an influence on the children was his intonation and his body language towards the black male.

This definitely shows that infants are prone to notice even the tiniest implicit actions that their parents might have. Fine ends the explanation of this experiment with the statement “The point is that they [the children] also learn from what is *not* said” (Fine 2010: 201). They therefore also learn from the part of the “half-changed mind” that the parents try to suppress.

Fine comes with some difficult questions, aiming at figuring out what we should make of these studies. Are children hardwired, and what are we to make of the results of this study? (Fine 2010: 206). Studies show that girls under the age of one are more likely to play with “girl”-toys, and boys are more likely to play with “boy”-toys, and at this age babies are said to not be aware whether they are male or female - so this must mean that it is all socially constructed, as they mostly have been exposed to gendered toys? But then again, maybe the babies have their preferences because of hardwiring. According to psychologists Albert Bandura and Kay Bussey, infants do not need to know what gender they are in order to react to their gendered, or non gendered, environments, or to adapt to social norms. (Fine 2010: 206) This leads us to ask the question: would it matter whether one is born a girl or a boy? This is something that only gender-neutral parenting could lead us closer to knowing, but as we have seen so far - that is a long and difficult task, which will be further investigated in the Joan/John case.

4.1.4 Tagging of gender

When one meets a baby for the first time, it is often not hard to determine whether it is a girl or a boy, as parents will make great effort not to create the confusion. The baby will therefore be decorated with gender tagged accessories and clothing, because one is not in doubt that a pink bow will get the tag, or label, girl. The big green tractor on a blue shirt will without a doubt get the tag boy. Every day babies will experience adults around them who are automatically tagging things in gender, some of them might be with words, e.g. using words like he, she, girl, boy etc. towards other individuals or animals. Another kind of tagging is the implicit tagging, which will be seen in what women wear, such as dresses, skirts, lipstick - and in what men wear such as shirts, big boots and caps. In this way, children will learn to divide the world into things tagged girl and things tagged boy, as the gender norms around them are being reproduced.

Cordelia Fine provides a thought experiment to show how we tag gender in our daily lives (Fine 2010: 209). In this mind-experiment, one is supposed to imagine that all individuals are divided in left-handed people and right-handed people instead of males and females.

All left-handed babies are expected to be sensitive, and sweet, to wear pink bows, pretty dresses and not cut their hair off. On the other side, we have the right-handers who are expected to be strong and independent as well as wear all other colors than pink and purple “left-hander”-colors. They are thought to be playing roughly and with cars and swords, opposed to left-handers who are expected to play calmly and controlled. In everyday life it is mainly left-handers who take care of children, whether that be at home or in institutions, the right-handers are mostly seen in more strength-based jobs.

The aim of this experiment is to make people see how easily this will make young children believe that there is a division in the world, there are the right-handers and the left-handers, and it is very important to distinguish between the two (Fine 2010: 210).

It is an experiment to make it easier to see, that it is exactly what we are doing, by gender tagging almost everything in our everyday lives.

4.1.5 Gender education:

In the UK, a survey was conducted by David Woodward. Throughout the survey, a group of preschool children were observed for him to make the discovery, that the sensitivity of preschool boys breaking unwritten gender rules, such as playing with “girly” toys, is happening (Fine 2010: 218). Young boys who would not play with dolls in the presence of other boys, however, was spotted dressing and undressing dolls under the table, constantly looking over their shoulders to make sure they were not seen by other boys. In addition, Woodward discovered that, when a rather dominant group of boys left the preschool, several boys would start playing with dolls more freely, rather than under the table. This indicates that children are more likely to play with gender appropriate toys when other children are nearby, in comparison to play in the absence of other children. Children are obviously aware of the gender stereotypes and stereotypical play from a very young age. From the very beginning, young children are taught that “That’s for girls” and “boys don’t play with dolls”, however, instead of embracing the opportunity to present an imaginary world of play to children, which offers them a glimpse of responsibilities beyond the reality of female and male social roles, children’s media, which is for instance parents, often continue to constrict gender roles (Fine 2010: 219).

Continuing from the constriction of gender roles, just as mentioned in the parts above males and females are often described with different adjectives, as an example, we see Disney princesses

(Fine 2010: 220). This genre of princesses, and the phenomenon called the *pink princess phenomenon*, teaches young girls to find a husband or a prince who can provide for them. The girls have to be delicate and feminine and therefore they are in need of a strong and independent man.

Fine mentions Diane Turner-Bowker's examinations of how males and females were described in picture books for children, by viewing books from the forty-one Caldecott winners and runners-up from 1984-1994 (Fine 2010: 220). One gender was described as beautiful, frightened, worthy, weak, sweet and scared. The other was described as being big, horrible, fierce, great, terrible, furious, brave and proud. One can feel free to guess which one describes which. Males were obviously described with much more powerful adjectives than females, and within the genre of children's literature, the male would of course be a brave man who went on an adventure to save the weak princess, who needs a man to save her, since she is too weak and scared to save herself. Fine argues that children aged four are "already remarkably advanced gender theorists" (Fine 2010: 223), meaning that children at this age already have been so influenced by media-created and societal gender stereotypes that they know which kind of toys and looks a boy or a girl are *supposed* to have.

Fine also argues that children are starting to become gender theorists, or are at least becoming aware of their own gender, between the age one and two. She states this by drawing on the experiment by Zosuls et al. who are examining how and when infants between the age 9 months and 21 months start using gender labels for themselves, others and objects. They conducted this by videotaping the infants and by interviewing their parents. (Zosuls et al. 2009)

The result of the experiment was that the children started using gender labels when they, on average, reached 19 months, and the use of these labels increased hereafter. The children would assign different gender labels to themselves and others, and here Zosuls et al. argue that "The correct use of *girl* or *boy* in reference to oneself would strongly suggest knowledge of one's own gender." (Zosuls et al. 2009), meaning that infants might have knowledge of their own gender even before they turn two. This information is important for our further discussion in chapter 6.

4.1.6 The self-socializing child

Fine writes about how children are affected by their surroundings when it comes to gender. This means that girls do not play with girlish toys just because they are girls, they play with it since their parents from the start has either given them girlish toys or as they watch other girls play with it because their parents have raised them to. In other words, children are susceptible to an in-group

bias to prefer what belongs to their group (Fine 2010: 228). A study conducted by Rebecca Bigler and colleagues has shown that this is especially the case when groups are made visually distinct, and the groups are labelled (Fine 2010: 228). In the study, a group of three- to five-year-old preschoolers in two classrooms were randomly divided into the blue group and the red group. Over a three week period, all the children were either wearing a blue or a red shirt according to the group to which they had been assigned (Fine 2010: 228). In one classroom, the teachers left it at that, and the color-groups were not made into a big deal. In the other room, however, the teachers embraced the survey and made constant use of the two groups, which later showed very interesting results. The children's cubbies and classrooms were decorated with blue and red labels and they were regularly referred to as labels "Good morning blues and reds" (Fine 2010: 228). As the three weeks ended, the study had found that being categorized for only a three-week period was enough to bias children's views. For instance, the children preferred to play with toys they were told were liked by their own group, and the children hereby expressed a greater attraction to play with children who shared either the same red or blue label as themselves. While some of the favoritism were common to all the children, more was seen in kids from the classroom in which teachers had made a bigger deal of the red versus blue division (Fine 2010: 228).

Now, one could only begin to imagine how strongly the same psychological mechanisms can drive in-group pride and out-group prejudice when it comes to gender. "For young children, gender is the social category that stands out above all others right from the start." (Fine 2010: 228).

In another survey by Rebecca Bigler, they selected four boys and four girls with the intention to make decidedly gendered stereotyped toys more appealing to the opposite sex. The children were read two stories that were very carefully constructed and hereby removed gender stereotypes (Fine 2010: 230). One story was about the energetic Sally Slapcabbage and her pilot mother, the second story was about Billy Bunter who finds and adores a talking doll. As a result of the stories, the boys explored their feminine side and started playing with toys they would have normally ignored, and especially the girls showed great effects, as they choose to no longer play with designated girl toys, such as strollers and dolls, but instead, experimented with fire trucks and helicopters. Fine has not debunked these experiments, since it appears that she believes that children are affected by their surroundings when it comes to gender, however, she does state, that children's toy preferences are influenced by loads of factors. These factors are for instance gender identity, which is the child knowing that he is a boy, or she is a girl, and gender stereotype knowledge, which is knowing what toys boys and girls play with, does suggest that these two motivate gender stereotypical play. This chapter shows, that the self-socializing child is the notion that children adapt to the norms that are exposed to them from society. This means, that when children are labelled as red or blue, they adapt to the norms within the same labelled children, and

when children are labelled boys and girls, they adapt to the norms within this label, which is toy preferences, stereotypical play, clothing and so on. The self-socializing child is therefore the notion that a child socializes itself with whichever label he or she gets.

4.1.7 Raising children gender neutral

One clear pointer of gender stereotyped behavior that Fine accentuates through her book is the adjectives used to describe males and females, even before they are born. If gender is, even partly, socially constructed then this is one of the factors that has a great impact on the way children express, and shape, their gender.

There are multiple examples of parents attempting to raise their children in a gender neutral way, Fine elaborates one example, which is about the family Bem. The Bems created a gender neutral environment for their two children, a boy and a girl, this was done by offering the children an equal amount of “girl” and “boy” toys, as well as changing characters in bedtime stories, so that a truck driver could be female and male, and a nurse could be male as well as female. (Fine 2010: 215) This removed the stereotypes of women as being delicate and calm, and caused them to be able to be strong firefighters as well as a man would be able to.

The Bems took the gender neutral parenting to the next level, by creating this everyday life where the children would not be able to create gender stereotypes and implicit associations concerning gendered behavior.

Along with this, the children were dressed in all colors equally, and the Bem parents would share the household tasks, so none of them seemed like a “man’s” task or a “woman’s” task.

The Bems argued for not knowing whether a person was male or female whenever the children asked, as they told their children that this could only be seen by the set of genitals that an individual has. (Fine 2010: 216)

This is one of the more elaborate examples of gender neutral parenting that is portrayed in *Delusions of Gender*, not all parents go to these kind of extremes, as most individuals who go through with gender neutral parenting will only offer their children nontraditional toys (Fine 2010: 225), or dress their children multiple colors including pink and blue for both boys and girls. Fine states that the Bems “seriously outclass what we normally, generously, think of as gender-neutral parenting” (Fine 2010: 216).

Fine argues that the journey the Bems have embarked on, is a clear pointer to how gendered the environment of children is, which very few individuals notice, as they have to change multiple things in their daily lives to change the otherwise gendered books and everyday lives. (Fine 2010: 216)

The goal of the Bems is to raise their children gender neutral until they themselves are old enough to think and act rationally according to stereotypes and sexism (Fine 2010: 214). It is not stated in the book whether this is successful, but it does give a clear picture of the gendered environment that children today are raised in.

4.1.8 Partial conclusion

To sum up Fine's theories and notions from *Delusions of Gender*, it can be seen that the Bems are a very good example of an intense explicitly held knowledge, and a structured control of the implicit associations, in the way they are raising their children. The contrast between the gender neutral parenting and gendered parenting can be seen in the example from the Bems where the Bem son Jeremy is wearing a barrette to school, and another boy then states that Jeremy is girl as he is wearing the barrette, a headwear that is usually seen on females. Jeremy does not have these notions of a barrette being feminine embedded in him so he does not care for the boy calling him a girl. Instead as a reaction, and to prove that he is a boy, he shows the other boy that he has a penis, as he has learned that this is the only difference between males and females (Fine 2010: 215). Fine's idea of tagging can be seen when parents tag their children by dressing them in blue or pink, in doing so the society plays a great role due to the stereotypical feminine pink girl-idea and masculine blue boy-idea. This has a great effect on children being so called "unequal before conception", even in the families who claim to have a changed mind towards parenting as they might unknowingly only have a "half-changed mind", which might cause them to have different approaches towards the newborn, or unborn, baby. This is all a circle where stereotypes keep reproducing themselves. The stereotypes and implicit associations will be reproduced, as the cultural norms of society will root itself in the implicit mind.

4.3 Judith Butler

Judith Butler's book "*Gender Trouble*" from 1990 is a critique and study of how gender is viewed within feminism and a study of gender performativity. With a post-structuralist view, Judith Butler examines the understanding of sex and gender and presents her own notion, that gender is not something you *have* or something you *are*, in her view it is something you *do*, she sees gender as a form of "action". Butler's notion of gender as performative is by Brady & Schirato (2011: 3) described as her "perhaps most significant theoretical contribution". We therefore find it interesting

to apply gender performativity to the theoretical framework of this paper. Linked to Butler's notion of gender and gender establishment is her notion of the incest taboo and its contribution to the heterosexual melancholia which will also be discussed as a part of the theoretical framework of this paper. Different notions and theories within *Gender Trouble* and other works of Butler will also be accounted for in order to map the background picture and create a higher understanding of Butler's theories on gender and gender establishment.

4.3.1 Genealogy

Butler states in the preface of *Gender Trouble*:

“To expose the foundational categories of sex, gender and desire as effects of a specific formation of power requires a specific form of critical inquiry that Foucault, reformulating Nietzsche, designates as ‘genealogy’” (1990: viii).

Genealogy is a kind of historical methodology that does not examine the historical origin, but the power relations, institutions and practices that has created a certain *authority* over us (Gutting 2005). Foucault's notion of genealogy is that it is a “history of the present” (Gutting 2005: 50), meaning that it examines the origin of present rules, in the case of Butler it would be the notion of the category *women*. It aims to understand the past in order to evaluate the present (Gutting 2005: 50). Essential in Foucault's genealogy is the relation between knowledge and power. Foucault argues, that knowledge is not objective or universal, as we does not simply know something, we know something because we are compelled by a social force to know it. This implies that knowledge is only valid within a specific social structure (Gutting 2005, 50-52). This could for example be a child knowing that girls play with dolls and wear dresses. If this child entered a gender neutral preschool, s/he would not be able to use this knowledge, as it would not apply in this social structure.

Butler states that there is “no position outside this field” (1990: 5), meaning that since the subject is constructed within a political and linguistic field of power, it is not possible for the subject to step outside this constructing and reconstructing field of power - there *is* no outside. In order to examine this *phenomenon*, the most useful method is therefore to critically investigate these *power structures* and *institutions* that has created the origin of our understanding of gender. Butler sees phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality as the main institutions that, as an effect of their being, has created the identity categories we have today (Butler 1990: ix).

Genealogy examines the interplay between power and knowledge that “produce both the institution and the means by which it circulate as universal” (Brady & Schirato 2011: 31), meaning that it examines how a *power* or *illegibility* is not only created, but also how it becomes a natural part of our everyday life, what “we tend to feel is without history” (Brady & Schirato 2011: 31), as Foucault did, among other studies, in his book *The History of Sexuality*. Here he concludes, that after the identification of homosexuality, this became an *identity* whereas heterosexuality was just something that had always been there, something universal and therefore *without history* (Brady & Schirato 2011: 31) because the social and cultural powers of society has naturalized it. Butler uses genealogy to examine the category of women, in order to find what mechanisms of power that has created the notion of women as a self-evident category.

4.3.2 Subjectivity, subjects of sex, gender and desire

In order to understand representation and gender performativity, we must first encounter the intelligibility of the subject (Butler 1990). What is the criteria's for being a *subject*, how is it *created*? In the question of the subject, Butler views Simone de Beauvoir's notion that “one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one” (Butler 1990: 8). Butler's main point with this is, that it is not defined by the biological sex whether one becomes a woman or not, it is a cultural compulsion that makes you a woman. Butler sees the understanding of *construction* as existing in between the polarity of *free will* and *determinism* (Butler 1990: 8), understood in the sense, that no matter if the body is the *instrument* that creates a certain notion and cultural understanding of its being or if it is a blank *medium* whereon cultural ideas of its being is put (Butler 1990: 8), the body does not have any significance without gender. Or as Butler directly puts it “Bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender” (1990, 8).

This is backed up by her notion of identity as being equal to gender identity: “‘persons’ only becomes intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility” (Butler 1990: 16). Butler is stating that we as a *person* cannot be identified, before we are identified within the social and cultural intelligibility of what it means to be a person. This requires a definition of sex, gender, sexual practice and desire. In other words, we are what the norms and common intelligibility of society *tell* us that we are, or, creates us to be.

The intelligible genders come to exist when creating a connection between the biological sex, the culturally constructed gender and the sexual desires and sexual practice. This would in example be a person born with female genitalia who is acting *like a girl*, within the societal understanding of this *acting*, and desires to be with a man or a boy. This girl falls within what Foucault ironically terms the “truth of sex” (Butler 1990: 17), she is therefore a *girl*. The intelligible genders are according to

Butler created within a heterosexualisation of desires, meaning, that if this girl had a sexuality that did not correspond to either her sex or gender, or her gender did not follow her sex, she would not fit into the intelligible gender identities. Her and other *different gender identities* would be seen as “developmental failures or logical impossibilities within that domain.” (Butler 1990: 17).

The issues Butler raises in concern with gender, subjectivity and performativity are based on Foucault's observations of the juridical system of power; as she writes in the beginning of *Gender Trouble*: “Foucault points out that juridical systems of power *produce* the subjects they subsequently come to present” (Butler 1990: 2, emphasis is original). As Butler describes further on, this means that subjects are created within structures set to protect or control people “...through limitations, prohibition, regulation, control...” (Butler 1990: 2). When subjects are regulated by this juridical system, they become products of these structures. The juridical system is created by political and linguistic forces, and are therefore culturally produced. The subjects and categories of subjects are therefore produced by a political and linguistic structure, which has the power to regulate the notion of the subject. Butler finds this problematic, especially in relation to feminism and women, since this after all is her niche, as an “emancipation of “women” will be clearly self-defeating.”, if it is not followed up by a critical appeal to the system (Butler 1990: 2).

4.3.3 The Heterosexual Matrix

Butler uses the term heterosexual matrix to “... designate the grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized.” (Butler 1990: 151). Butler developed this idea from different theories, one of them is Monique Wittig's concept of the heterosexual contract, which is Wittig's idea that binary sexual difference and heterosexuality are the political effects of a social contract, which support male-female class relations. According to Wittig, what makes one a woman is a specific relation to a man (Lloyd 2007). The theory of heterosexual contract works by detaining gender identities with the circle of heterosexual desire. Butler describes Wittig's concept with: “Gender not only designates persons, “qualifies” them as it were, but constitutes a conceptual episteme by which binary gender is universalized” (Lloyd 2007: 34, emphasis is original). Meaning that it creates an understanding that the binary gender system is the one truth about gender identities, if we follow the concrete meaning of the word episteme, the concept of *universal knowledge* (Butler 2004; Lloyd 2007).

As quoted above, Butler describes her theory the heterosexual matrix as a ‘grid’ of cultural intelligibility, it should be understood as the specific frame of meaning through which to make sense of sex, gender and desire. According to Butler, the heterosexual matrix makes a series of

ideal relations between gender, sex and desire, stating that gender is following naturally from sex and desire is following naturally from gender (Lloyd 2007). In this meaning 'sex' can be thought as a natural substance, that gives expression in femininity and masculinity. Consistent with the grid, maleness requires masculinity, and masculinity is expressed through sexual desire for a woman. Femaleness require femininity, and is expressed through sexual desire for a man (Lloyd 2007). Gender and desire are seen as aspects of sex, by definition 'intelligible' genders are those who rule and keep the relations of coherence and continuity between sex, gender, sexual practice and desire. These relations of coherence and continuity are not natural, they are the effect of the strong and main work of some gender norms (Lloyd 2007). According to Butler sex, gender and desire can be listed in different ways. Such as a man's desire towards another man, the individual will be seen as culturally unintelligible. In terms of the matrix, he might be thought of as 'unnatural' or not a 'proper' man (Lloyd 2007), as it is also explained in the above chapter on *subjectivity*. According to the terms of heteronormativity, to be human is to be heterosexual, therefore anyone who is not heterosexual, such as gay, lesbian or bisexual is not 'fully' human, they are seen as non-humans and they lack social and political validity (Lloyd 2007). The idea that sex is constructed, is an idea that Butler developed from her critical readings of Foucault and Wittig, she takes the broad notion of presumptive heterosexuality as a political institution. It gives Butler the possibility to develop her argument that binary sex is the construct of a specific gender regime, which creates normative sexuality (Lloyd 2007).

4.2.4 Gender Performativity

"Is there "a" gender that a person is said *to have*, or is it an essential attribute that a person is said *to be*, as implied in the question "What gender are you?"?"

(Butler 1990: 7, emphasis is original)

Butler does not see gender as either something you have or something you are, but rather something you do, an action performed by humans and controlled by society. (Brady & Schirato 2011). As Butler describes in a video on performativity, gender is not just "performed" that would be simply "acting a role as a man or a woman", performativity "...means that it produces a series of effects. We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman." (bigthink.com a). When we act in a certain way, e.g. saying wearing stilettos and make-up to a party, we not alone act within the normative gender intelligibility, we also reproduce it, we thereby help maintain and create a normative gender for the future generation to fit into.

Butler's central concept of gender, from which her theories arise, is that gender is performative. This performativity is guarded and controlled within the frame or rules of the heterosexual matrix, meaning that there is a heterosexual foundation, socially, historical and cultural, of gender and it is within these *rules* that gender is performed.

The inspiration for the theory of gender performativity comes from J.L Austin's theory of linguistic performativity (Butler, 1990). Austin argues that statements do not only state facts, they have an ability to create or make things true, in other words, they *produce* something. By saying, "I now pronounce you man and wife" or "I sentence you to ..." (Brady & Schirato 2011; 45), the utterance creates an effect and are thus performative. In linguistic performativity it would be, for example, a prisoner now has to go to jail. In gender performativity, it creates an understanding of how, for example, *women* as a category is, and upcoming generations can follow their example and will thereby be accepted into the gender group *women*.

Butler also finds inspiration for her theory in Derrida's response to Austin's theory on linguistic performativity (Butler 1990). The argument from Derrida is, that the mechanism of citation, as a performative utterance, most often is accompanied by an establishment of the authority that has placed the power within the person making the statement, for example "by the powers vested in me by the holy...." (Brady & Schirato 2011: 44-6). The performative utterance is thereby set in a context of power and authority, the speaker is not making up certain rules but is acting within a system of already established rules and the power of his/her utterance is thereby legitimized. By repeating the fact that s/he is acting within an existing framework of authority, every time for example a priest marries a couple, the act or utterance is also legitimized (Brady & Scharito 2011). In Butler's theory of gender performativity operates within the same logic and mechanism of *repetition* and *citation*, and it is these two factors that determine the efficacy of the performative act (Brady & Scharito 2011). The heterosexual matrix is the established rules within which gender is performed. By citing "boys are brave and strong", one reproduces the notion of gender set within the heterosexual matrix. As mentioned in Fine's notion of the implicit mind, some words are associated with the different gender, by repeating and citing these stereotypes one obtains and reproduces the notions of gender and is maintaining the power of the heterosexual matrix - just like the priest maintains the notion of some sort of transcendent power when preaching about it. It is however not only verbal utterances, but also actions, simple behavior which creates and re-creates intelligibility of gender.

A gender *utterance* only becomes performative because there is "a framework of intelligibility that precedes and, crucial to Butler, *requires* that announcement" (Bardy and Schirato 2011: 47). A performative act or utterance would not succeed if it were not for the network of meaning that it is delivered within. Just as we see it in Foucault's notion of power and knowledge mentioned in the

above chapter on genealogy. Since the significance of knowledge, in the case of the boy mentioned above it could be, that boys are supposed to be strong, is produced by certain social structures, it would not make sense if we did not have a mutual understanding that *boys are strong*. When announcements are *required*, as mentioned above, it also means that, in order to obtain a certain gender identity, one must keep acting within the norms of this group. As we established in the section on subjectivity, a subject does not come into meaning before it has a gender. It is therefore not only in order to stay within the gender group but to remain a subject, that it is required to keep acting within the gender intelligibility, or “to cite the norms” as Butler puts it (Brady & Schirato 2011: 48).

4.3.5 The incest taboo

Butler starts her discussion of the incest taboo by looking into Lévi Strauss, whose work is influenced by Lacanian psychoanalysis (Brady & Schirato 2011: 51).

Lévi Strauss argues in “The Elementary Structures Kinship” that the taboo on incest, which is the social law that forbids sexual contact between relatives, is the primary law in any society. Lévi Strauss explains how this taboo causes the exchange of women between social grouping, and argues that this exchange takes the form of marriage (Brady & Schirato 2011: 51).

Lévi Strauss concludes that the function of the incest taboo is the foundational moment of culture, it reduces all women to items of exchange. However, Gayle Rubin a cultural anthropologist, who is a theorist of sex and gender politics, describes the exchange of women as “neither a definition of culture, nor a system in and of itself but as part of a system of production that is dependent upon the economics of the sex/gender system” (Brady & Schirato 2011: 52). In short, Rubin disagrees with Lévi Strauss’ claim that the incest taboo is the foundational moment of culture. Instead Rubin argues that the reduction of women to items of exchange does not structure social relations, but is an example of how ‘certain relations’ transform the biological raw of sex into gender (Brady & Schirato 2011: 52).

Butler points out, that Rubin’s model of power is a productive one, especially around the issue of sexual identity. Rubin mentions that through the incest taboo, gender functions as an identification with one sex and entails that sexual desire is directed towards the other sex (Brady & Schirato 2011: 53).

Butler reads the incest taboo through Foucault, which helps understand why it also creates resistance of the heterosexual institution it implies (Brady & Schirato 2011: 52-4). Butler uses Freudian psychoanalysis to explain the connection between the incest taboo and compulsory heterosexuality. The *Oedipus complex* is when a child has a very strong connection to his/her

mother. The child desires the mother, but is faced with the inconclusiveness of his/her desire, for the boy this happens because of the rival, the father. He therefore identifies with the father in order to please the mother. The girl faces the fact that she has no penis and partly therefore, the mother cannot be a love-partner. She therefore transfers her desire to the father and gets a close connection and identification with the mother within a shared desire to bear a child for the father. Children therefore identify with their same-sex parent and are thus a part of the heterosexual structure. According to Butler, this presumes a prior taboo about homosexuality (Brady & Schirato 2011: 53). According to Butler, the incest taboo therefore works as a heteronormative mechanism, which establishes gender identity (Brady & Schirato 2011: 50).

Both gender identity and sexual identity are created through a taboo on incest, which, Butler describes as “primarily productive in its effects”, were Rubin argues that if compulsory heterosexuality were removed, it would simultaneously remove gender and leave unmarked sex. According to Butler, she argues, “such position is falsely imagines and idealized sexuality locatable before the law” and argues that the “recourse to a happier state”, is produced by the understanding of power, which Rubin disagrees with (Brady & Schirato 2011: 53).

4.3.6 Heterosexual Melancholia

According to Freud, in the ego and the id, the melancholy is the unfinished process of grieving. It is central to the formation of the identifications, which are forming the ego (Butler 1997, 132). In the ego and the id, Freud claims that melancholic identification can be a requirement for letting the object go. When mentioning this, Butler believes, that Freud changes what it means to “let an object go” (Butler 1997: 134). Because, according to Freud, there is not a final break of the attachment, but there is the formation of the attachment as the identification, where it becomes a psychic form of maintaining the object (Butler, 1997, 132). With the loss of a loved one you grief, accepts the loss and then moves on to investing your libidinal energy in someone else. If you do not move on we have melancholia, when you are not able to move on and accept the loss, the psyche tries to identify with the lost object by incorporating parts of it to your own ego, Freud calls this *introjection*. You thereby preserve the lost object as a part of the ego and the melancholic identification allows the loss of the object in the outside world (Butler, 1997, 134).

Butler argues that this melancholic identification creates gender, in the process of the Oedipus complex. When looking at the notion of the incest taboo above, we see that children through the process of the Oedipus complex end up identifying with their same sex parent. In Butler's notion, it is not only the incest taboo but also the homosexual taboo that creates the outcome of this process. This happens because the compulsory heterosexuality that Butler sees as the dominant factor in gender norms does not recognize homosexuality. When a child then, in the last phase of

the Oedipus complex, identifies with their same sex parent it is a “melancholic identification [...] with a lost love object” (Brady & Schirato 2011: 55), since they are not allowed to have a homosexual relationship.

4.3.7 Summing up

Butler sees gender as controlled by the powers in society. According to Butler, phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality has created the common understanding that there are two acceptable genders in society. The heterosexual matrix is the grid of rules or common understandings that has become natural in our society, and determines on what grounds a person can be called a man or a woman. As we act within these rules of the genders, and thereby sustain the notions of the accepted genders, gender becomes performative. According to Butler, one cannot be seen as an acceptable subject in society if one does not fit into the intelligible gender roles.

We see in Butler’s theories that heteronormativity creates gender identities, as the incest taboo and the homosexual taboo within the Oedipus complex and the heterosexual melancholia makes children relate to their same-sex parents, and thereby reproduce the heteronormativity and the intelligible gender identities.

5 Fine vs. Butler

5.1 Part I - The Implicit Mind

When comparing Cordelia Fine and Judith Butler’s notions and theories described above, we will start out by elaborating on the *implicit mind*, discussed by Fine. Fine states that people have some sort of ingrained stereotypes of gender that we, despite what we might wish, are uttering all the time, that be in both our discourse, body language and actions. The implicit mind can be seen in close connection to Butler’s theory of the heterosexual matrix, which is the fundamental system of rules wherein gender acts as performative. The heterosexual matrix is a common understanding of gender rules, in quite the same way, as the implicit mind is a, sometimes even unwanted, notion of stereotypes in society.

When an individual experiences an action or an opinion multiple times, it creates a pattern that will then, often, be stored as an implicit association, without any concrete effort from our side. On our implicit levels, we have big parts of our identity, which is highly influenced by stereotypes of, and

the attitude towards, ourselves and the people around us. Our implicit associations are connected to feelings and thoughts that we are currently having and have previously experienced. The creation of these associations are happening without the control of the subject. When for example a child sees a man fixing a car, multiple times in different contexts, s/he creates the association that this is something men do and hence creates a pattern of how different people act and thereby creates stereotypes. The notion of how the implicit mind is established through associations that creates a pattern is somewhat consistent with Butler's view of repetition and citation. A performative act becomes efficient through repetition and citation, when stating a gender role and repeating that it exist within certain limits, like how men are supposed to fix cars, it becomes true. It can therefore be seen as if the process of gender as performative is in close relation to the process that creates the implicit mind.

An example that Fine mentions is an experiment by sociologists Cecilia Ridgeway and Shelley Correll, where the participants are supposed to "write down what, according to cultural lore, males and females are like." (Fine 2010: 3). She explains that no one would be incapable of answering this, and instead most people would argue for women being "*compassionate*" and "*nurturing*", whereas men would be described as "*independent*" and "*ambitious*" (Fine 2010: 5). This is similar to previously mentioned experiments, where females, as well, were described with soft and calm adjectives and men with rough and tough adjectives. This is a clear example of the implicit mind at its finest work.

The implicit associations exist in the mind even though one might not, from their explicit held knowledge, agree with them. The explicit held knowledge is the way we actively decide to know and believe things. If we draw on Fines own examples, we can view it in the context of gender-neutral parenting. As mentioned in the theory-chapter, mothers tend to describe their unborn children differently, if they are aware of their gender, and thereby already inflict them with different abilities, according to normative gender identities. This describes how an implicit mind can be acting against what might be the person's explicit wish, in this case, to raise a child gender neutral. This then continues in the upbringing, where an implicit notion of gender and stereotypes, that the parent might not even want to subscribe to, unconsciously affects the children's gender-notions and complicates the idea of a gender-neutral upbringing. If the implicit mind, as argued above, can be seen to be what Butler calls the heterosexual matrix, as we must argue, they are both expressions of society's ingrained knowledge of what a subject is. The implicit mind can then be seen as the effect of the intelligible gender identities that Butler talks about. The heterosexual matrix is the institution that, because of heteronormativity and phallogocentrism has created and is upholding the binary gender understanding, meaning that we have two (accepted) gender identities. Through repetition and citation, the implicit mind is then created within us, in the same

way as performativity operates and keeps remaining our notion of the intelligible genders. In a situation where parents' wishes to bring up their children gender neutral, as this being their explicit held knowledge according to Fine, Butler would then argue in agreement with Fine, that this is practically impossible. According to Butler, the parents will, by simply being there, act in a certain way that creates a picture of what it is to be a father or a mother/male or female. The performativity that is happening constantly is according to Butler required in order to earn your right as a subject, and will therefore continue to happen. A child will, in the shape of either the implicit mind or the notions of the heterosexual matrix from wherein gender performativity is acting, always be affected by stereotypes and gender norms.

When this *system* is naturalized in society, which both Fine and Butler argues that it is, it creates some deeply ingrained stereotypes of whom you are in order to fit into the different gender groups. Here we might look at Fine's argument that the implicit mind not only affects our perception of others, but also our perception of our self (Fine 2010: 7). As Fine says: "self-conception adjusts to create a shared reality" (2010: 10), meaning that we adjust our self according to how we believe other people perceive us, one can see it as an effort to *fit in* or create a mutual understanding. If other people see you as belonging within certain stereotypes, it is within these stereotypes you act. The concept of the self is, according to Fine, easily changeable, or "malleable" as Fine calls it (Fine 2010: 7). We contain multiple selves, which are mainly formed according to stereotypes. Our active self is a dynamic chameleon that rapidly from moment to moment is able to adjust or change our self, by choosing from the collection in the Wardrobe of Self, in order to fit into context. Fine calls this "social tuning" (Fine 2010: 11), and argues that one will only change to a fitting outfit from the wardrobe of self if the person wants to create a bond or a positive connection with the individuals in the specific social situation.

Butler is following Fine's theory in the way, that she also notes the need to be accepted by society. Butler talks about how it is required that one acts within the norms in order to maintain one's gender, what Fine might call a shared reality. If you act outside the expected gender identities you are according to Butler's theory not to be understood within the *rules*, you are beyond understanding. Fine does not quite go that far in her theory of social tuning. She actually argues that we only tune in if we wish to create a connection to the other person. It should however be noted, that when talking about Fine's theory of social tuning, the tuning is happening within the *collection* of selves that are to be found in the so called wardrobe. According to Fine, we change our self according to the situation, but only between versions of the self that are available. We can then argue from Butler's view that the selves we are to choose between all act within the social norm of this person's (gender-) identity.

5.2 Part II - Children and gender

Both Fine and Butler argue that the intelligible gender roles are deeply embedded in us, as we also see in Fine's notion of *unequal even before conception*, where experiments show that parents have different attitudes towards their unborn child if they know the gender, as it is also explained above. These involuntary differences in behavior then continue in the upbringing as Fine shows in her notion of *parenting with a half-changed mind*. Her view here, that parents, despite a wish to bring up their children gender neutral, are clearly showing their gender, is consistent, or can might even be *explained* with Butler's theory of performativity. When the parents act in a certain way the child sees it and copies it, as a part of them evolving. If it is then the mother who is the primary caregiver, for example, the one to tuck in the child. The child will notice that this is the way women behave, and act accordingly. We are to a high level acting our gender more than we are expressing it verbally, and children, as shown in the different studies mentioned by Fine, read our body language more than our verbal language.

Butler notes in her theory of performativity, that it functions by repetition and citation, which is exactly what we see in Fine's notion of *tagging of gender*. When we, as Fine's example, dress our babies in blue and pink in order to show their biological sex, we also put them in a gender role because there are certain significations embedded in either pink or blue. When dressing the babies color-coded we not alone cite the rules within the intelligibility of gender identities, we also repeat it and thus helps reinforce the *rules* that this is the right way to mark your child's gender.

Foucault, as mentioned earlier on in the paper, uses the notion of genealogy as the examination of power relations and practices that have come to have some sort of authority over one. Butler believes that one can use the notions of genealogy to understand the categories of sex and gender, as they can be seen as the result of the power structure of society.

Fine would agree on this, as she sees young infants as individuals who shape their identity, and thereby gender, according to the way they as subjects and through their lives are being socially constructed. Foucault has the belief that "we know something because we are compelled by a social force to know it", as we see in the theory-chapter on Butler. We can then argue that Fine's notion of *gender education*, as we have named it in this paper, is close to this notion.

According to *gender education*, one can see how children often believe that they can only play with toys tagged with their gender, and act in ways that belong to their gender role. The social force in this context can be seen as the unwritten rules, created by the tagging of gender and policed by the other children. If a child chooses to break these norms, they will, according to Butler, lose their gender identity and thereby their base of being perceived as an accepted subject.

Fine and Butler might share the same notions of gender as something that is created and passed on by the power and institutions of society. Where Fine is focused on society, Butler has a more psychological explanation for gender establishment. The heterosexual melancholia and the incest taboo is built upon the heterosexual matrix in the sense that the heterosexual melancholia would not exist if it were not for the compulsory heterosexuality, which lies in the heterosexual matrix. It is therefore the structures or laws of society that forces children to abandon their homosexual and incestuous desires and thus mirror themselves in their same-sex parent. These desires seem nowhere to be found in the notions of Cordelia Fine, her view is societal, and on this ground Butler might be more Freudian than Fine.

We can also view a distinction between the two in another way. We might state from the theoretical framework that the notion of gender can be comprehended as biological, where sex is fixed and gender is a cognitive difference between males and females. It can also be understood as constructed, meaning that gender is a socially constructed notion created on ingrained ideas of how genders are. The third notion is that both sex and gender is constructed within the laws of society. A heterosexual matrix is setting the rules on how we may act in order to be conceived as a human being or a *subject* in this world. The two last notions might seem quite similar, as we have seen in this paper, Fine is devoted to the second and Butler to the latter. As discussed above, they have many notions in common concerning the role of society, but we will argue that what separates them is mainly the idea of something fixed. Fine does not discuss the notion of desire and the homosexuality that, according to Butler, influences gender establishment. Fine does not really move away from the notion that part of us is *fixed*, where Butler is much more fluent in a way. Butler's notion of performativity is in some way consistent with Fine's idea of socially constructed gender, but where they can be seen to differ from each other is the view on whether it is possible to change this, the current ideas of gender and the binary gender system. Butler's theories are to a large extent based on the epistemology of heterosexuality, meaning that heterosexuality is the one true idea of how people should live together. It follows then, that if the intelligibility of sexuality was that it was somewhat *fluent*, understood in the sense that no sexuality was the right or preferred one amongst humans (a society that will probably never be more than theoretical), then the whole notion of the binary system, of men and women and performativity would disappear. If we were not inhibited by the heterosexual matrix we would, according to Butler's theories, as they are based on this, just be people living together regardless of gender and sexuality.

6 Discussion, theories in real life

In the following part of the paper, we are going to present the Joan/John Case, as a mean to view the theories presented in a real life case. The Joan/John case is a quite extreme case of gender establishment in children, and therefore also highly interesting. Judith Butler has written a chapter on this case and we will therefore take our point of departure in her views and see how Cordelia Fine's notions can aid, discuss or challenge Butler's view on the case. In respect to the person whom this case concerns we will for the most part call him by his self-chosen name, David. There will however be some differences in the use of personal pronouns, it is all in the spirit of the case.

6.1 The Joan/John Case

In 2005, BBC aired the interview of the Reimer family, based on a true story of how one of their two twin sons was raised as a girl. Our description of this case is based on this documentary (BBC documentary).

In 1965, Janet Reimer gave birth to two twin boys who were to be circumcised. During the circumcision, the procedure went wrong for one of the boys, the penis was accidentally burned off. The family was desperate for help, which they found in Dr. John Money, who had recently opened a gender identity clinic for those who wanted to change their sex. Janet wrote Dr. Money after having seen him on TV, and he quickly replied. He asked the family to come to his clinic in Baltimore, and it was here he decided to turn their boy into a girl. Dr. Money was the solution to the family's prayers, and it turned out that they were also the answer to his. He had recently developed a theory about gender identity and how nurture dominates nature in the establishment of gender. He believed that children were gender neutral for the first two years of their lives and within these two critical years children's upbringing, how they are nurtured, would determine whether they feel masculine or feminine. He needed the Reimer twins to prove his hypothesis, two boys, where one would be raised a boy and the other would be raised a girl. The Reimers believed the theory, that it was a matter of nurture rather than nature, they raised their son as a girl and changed his name from Bruce to Brenda.

Brenda was dressed as a girl, Janet tried interesting her in playing with dolls and makeup and helping her make cookies. Janet constantly wrote Dr. Money about Brenda's progress and once a year, the family visited his office in Baltimore. In 1972, when Brenda was 7 years old, Dr. Money announced to the world that his experiment was a success "If given the correct upbringing, a boy could be turned into a girl." His book "Man and Boy, Woman and Girl" was reviewed all over the world, and his experiment became widely known as the Joan/John case and his theory was known as *the theory of gender neutrality*.

In an interview on TLC (footage from 2000), David (aka. Brenda) says that his brother was very generous to let him play with his toys, because the brother knew how unhappy he was with his strollers and Barbie dolls. At the early stage of the experiment, it was clear that the case was not working as well as the Dr. Money claimed. Some say, that he only published the positive results to make it look as if his theory was true, others disagree.

With Brenda being resistant to being a girl, the doctor used different approaches to emphasize and to make her accept that she was a girl, such as talking about the physical differences between boys and girls, by the appearance of their genitalia, which is what distinguishes boys and girls. Since this approach did not work, and Brenda was still resistant to being a girl, Dr. Money wanted her to have additional surgery to make her accept her feminine identity, this, Brenda completely rejected. The Dr. became desperate, his theory that a boy could be raised as a girl was failing and time was running out, he needed Brenda to act female and accept the fact that she was a girl. When Brenda was 13 years old, she had a very hard time at school, she had no friends, since the girls did not want to play with her because she was too masculine and wanted to do 'boy stuff' and she could not play with the boys, since they did not want to play with a girl.

Dr. Money's approaches to make Brenda accept that she was a girl backfired, since Brenda told her parents that she would commit suicide if they ever made her see Dr. Money again. Faced with a suicidal child, the Reimers decided to tell their daughter that she was actually their son. For the first time Brenda, who now renamed himself David, started to feel happy, he wanted to be a boy. David became a boy, with the help from a sexresearcher named Milton Diamond.

Diamond and Money had had some controversies within their field over the years, Diamond believed in the hormonal basis of gender identity and Money believed in nurture vs. nature.

In 1999, David Reimer was married to Jane Fontaine, who already had three children, David was unable to have children so he cared for them as his own. In 2002, the family discovered that Dr. Money was still going public with the experiment as a success, so the brothers appeared on national TV to tell the truth that the experiment had failed, that it was not possible to raise a boy as a girl. Short after the brothers told the truth about the failed experiment and Dr. Money's horrible approaches to make Brenda (David) accept that she was a girl, the other brother, Brian, passed away, allegedly suicide from an overdose. In 2004 David's wife Jane wanted to separate, 38-year-old David Reimer committed suicide two days later.

6.2 Butler & the Joan/John case

It is clear that something went wrong in Dr. Money's experiment, but what was it? Was David always a boy, did he ever feel like a girl? What went wrong?

In her book "Undoing Gender" from 2004, Judith Butler writes a chapter where she views David's story in relation to what Foucault calls *desubjugation*, the idea of how it may be when you as a subject fall out of the intelligible norms, when your gender cannot be recognized. As we have learned earlier from Butler, gender and subject are codependent, which, in this context would mean that if your gender is not recognized, neither are you as a subject. (Butler 2004)

Dr. Money believes that when a child is born, "the gender identity gate is open at birth for a normal child, no less for one born with unfinished sex organs" (Butler 2004: 61) Dr. Money believed that this gate would stay open for a little over a year and therefore saw an opportunity to change David's gender identity (Butler 2004: 61). David, however found himself moved to become a boy, and it was unbearable for him to continue living as a girl. According to Diamond, David had a sense of gender from his original set of genitals, which he experienced in his first two years of life, and no amount of socialization could reverse it (Butler 2004: 62). Diamond is, opposite to Dr. Money, focused on nature and more specifically on chromosome level. He believes that if a child is born with mixed genital attributes but has a 'Y' chromosome, then the possession of the 'Y' chromosome is a basis for concluding that the child should be raised as a boy. David, was not born intersexual, however, he was put in the same position as intersexed infants, when the procedure went wrong, and Dr. Diamond therefore found that his notions could be used in David's case. According to Butler, the 'Y' chromosome should not be an indicating factor for a human being to be a male, as Diamond believes, but the focus should be on what the individual feels. According to Butler, David wanted to be a male because he felt like one, not because his chromosomes said so. Butler notes, that it is thought provoking to think, that the experiments that both Money and Diamond did on Brenda/David count as evidence of the truth of gender.

Even though Diamond defended David against Money's multiple intrusions, he still used the same discourse that Money provided, but in the opposite way, which is trying to ascertain the truth of his sex, by asking him how he feels and who he is. Money focused on the genitalia and Diamond focused on the chromosomes as indications of sex distinctions. Therefore, Butler argues, David can be said to have underwent a transsexual surgery twice. The first time was done based on the assumption that the body needed to look in a certain way in order to be a certain gender, as his penis was damaged it was estimated, that he would not be able to fit into the norms of males. The second time it was based on how he was supposed to feel in order to fit into a certain gender group. (Butler 2004: 71).

Butler's notion of gender intelligibility is clearly noticeable in this case, as David's gender is measured within societal norms of how the genders are supposed to behave and appear. David is faced with two gender opportunities, male and female, there is no *in between*, and he has been constantly measured to see if he lives up to the *criteria* of being a girl. Butler points out that the two

thesis' on David and his gender, by Dr. Money and Dr. Diamond, do not take into account the process he has been through (Butler 2004: 67). A huge knowledge about, and focus on, gender throughout his childhood, mixed with experiments and surgery, must have had a significant impact on his ideas about his own true gender and establishment of his own identity (Butler 2004: 67). Butler also points out that this grand focus on his behavior is mirrored in his description of himself. He argues that he has always felt like he was different, he did not like to play with girly toys and did not like the clothes he had. He hereby concludes that he is not a girl, but his notion of being a girl understood within the norms of intelligible gender, not only set up by society but by Dr. Money. David's ability to be feminine has been measured in every little action, such as what he has been playing with, if he had long hair and was wearing a dress. The language he uses to explain why he is not a girl is created within the norms that he has lived and been "tested" within his whole life (Butler 2004).

According to Butler, David has, while being Brenda, been faced with a set of norms defining what it is to be a person. He has found himself to fall short of these norms, and since he has been faced with the notions of true gender, he sees himself as some sort of alien, that does not belong within the identity that he is supposed to, namely being a female. This has only been confirmed by the many studies of his/her body and questions about his/her gender. As Butler notes, this little child cannot have helped but wondering what might be wrong with him/her since every doctor has always asked him/her what s/he is (Butler 2004: 69).

When urged to change his gender completely and get a real vagina, David was stunned of the huge focus on what was between his legs (Butler 2004: 71). According to Dr. Money, David would not be loved if he did not fit within the norms, referring to what he had, or did not have, between his legs. However, David believed that there was something within him, that was not gender-based, some sort of core, an "I", that was loveable no matter how he looked between his legs. David's trust in that he is something, even *without* a sex or gender, has a very high importance to Butler. As Butler puts it: "he was holding out, implicitly, for something called 'depth' over and against the 'shallowness' of the doctors" (Butler 2004: 71-2). When David received his penis it was based on his desire, but what he says is, that he is more than a desire, he is more than a man, he is a person. Therefore, Butler does not see him as a victim of desubjugation, he is rather acting within, though on the edge, of the norms, wherefrom he is criticizing them (Butler 2004: 73-4). Meaning that David now fits in with the norms of being male, but he still advocates for an understanding of the subject that goes beyond the norms of intelligible gender.

6.3 Does Fine agree?

Butler views David as a person who, to some extent, fell out of the norms - or was at least living on the edge of the norms. Fine would probably view him more as a boy who was brought up as a girl, but to see it in relation to *gender neutral parenting* his parents would, no matter how hard they tried, not have been able to hide the knowledge that David is in fact a boy.

When looking at the parents of David, it is seen that, from the beginning, they were not trying to raise their children gender neutral, but as two young healthy boys. They had the knowledge that their children would be boys, therefore they must have made preparations and created presumptions of how their boys would be even before they were born. This is at least how we can explain it from Fine's notion of *unequal before conception*, as the Reimers will have affected their children gender-wise even before conception. Though it might only have been their implicit associations of what it means to have a boy or a girl. Here one can add Fine's notions of the *implicit mind* and the *conscious mind*, seeing that the parents had implicit associations towards infants and in general, boys, which has influenced the way they raised their two boys in the first two years. As we have written in the chapters above, one does not have control over the implicit mind, and the implicit associations might surface even though one is trying to suppress them. This means, that even though David's parents decided to raise him as a girl, when he was nearly two year old, the implicit associations towards their 'girl' might have been stained with boyish-stereotypes. Fine argues that children close to the age of two will be aware of gender stereotypes and that they close to their second birthday will know what gender they belong to. She bases this on the works of Zosuls et al. (2009) who have conducted a study examining when infants produced gender labels, and the results were that the majority of children in the study had created gender labels at 21 months. This would mean that when David's parents started raising him as a girl, he would already know that he was a boy, seeing that he was so young, he would easily submerge this knowledge - but it would still be floating around in his implicit mind. From Fines notions, we therefore argue that being raised as a male, during almost the entire length of his two first years, has played a role in David feeling like he did not belong to the female gender.

Dr. Diamond states that David's short time with his male genitalia has made him forever a boy. Diamond and Fine can therefore agree that a notion of the gender, is established very early, though their idea on how is quite the opposite of each other. This is a great contrast to Dr. Money's *identity gate*, as he argues that this gate is open "at least for something over a year at birth" (Butler 2004: 61). Butler does not state whether she agrees with Moneys notion of the so-called *open gender gate*. Given that, Butler sees gender as performative, it can be argued that David would have been able to fit into the *role* as a girl. However, performativity happens at all ages and we can

therefore argue that the imprints David has gotten as a child are the ones affecting him later on, when he finds out that he is not a girl, just like Fine's theory on how children are affected from when they are in the womb. It seems though, that Butler might not agree in this use of her theories, as she says that the process he has been through, has forced him to choose a gender and she is discussing whether he might be in between the two genders, as he talks about a kind of "core person", one that is not determined by gender. This is the person we must assume would be the goal if gender neutral parenting was possible, which Fine argues that it is practically not. So according to Fine, David might not be able to be in between, just as Butler says that he is not really. Maybe only because it was not a possibility for him.

Butler argues for the binary sex being the result of the societal norms, and thus being different will make individuals feel odd and out of place, as one is not a part of the normative. Here it is understandable that David did not feel completely connected to the one of the two binary sexes. David and his brother was born in 1965, and one might argue that 50 years ago, in the 60's, the binary gender system was even more distinct than it is now. The time he lived in can therefore be seen as one of the main reasons that David's parents ended in the situation where they felt that they had to choose a gender for their child, they wanted him/her to fit in. One might argue, that if David's case had taken place in present time, there would have been a larger accept of him being *in between* and not in the same way been forced to fit in with the norms.

Fine can be seen to agree with Butler in her notion of the norms wherein David's gender is determined. The material things such as length of hair and type of toys is consistent with Fine's notion of *tagging of gender*, as David is measured, and measures himself, by things that norms within the society has ruled to be either feminine or masculine. Butler says in this context: "do parents regularly rush off to gender identity clinics when their boys play with yarn, or their girls play with trucks?" (Butler 2004: 70). Which implicates that according to Butler the focus on the material things in David's life has been too intense. Since Fine says that tagging of gender helps, establish a frame for the two genders, an extreme focus on this could in David's case, theoretically, have helped him see what gender group he belonged to, which might have been the reason why it was so intense. However, it did not work out, David did not view himself as a girl because of the high focus on gender tagged materials and activities. As Butler points out in the quote above, the focus on David's femininity has been too controlled compared to a *normal* upbringing. This high focus has then made David very concerned with every little action and possibly made him question his own identity. David had a hard time fitting into the norms and did not accept the gender tagged objects and behaviors, such as dolls, dresses, and playing girls games, we can here view the

gender education discussed in the chapter on Fine's theories. According to Fine children, police each other into fitting into a gender group. It is found crucial for children in their development to belong in society, and the first grouping they meet is between male and female, they correct and police each other to stay within these groups so that they may become part of society and feel a belonging. When David's classmates saw that he did not fit into any of the groups, they excluded him from their community, they could not place him within the norms they lived and organized their little community by, so they left him out. This can also be seen in Butler's notion that David found himself to be alienated, something *in between*, which, according to Butler is not a good place to be as we have a binary gender-system and, as stated many times before, there is no *in between* if you want to be seen as a meaningful subject to society.

In Fine's notion of gender education, we see how she explains, when her and her husband's children brought home friends from school, they were amazed to see that the father was at home, asking in surprise "Why is your dad home?" (Fine 2010: 217) Fine believes that children are born into an environment, in which it is men who do the labor and women who service the child and family's needs. In a study conducted by an Australian psychologist, Barbara David and colleagues, they played a film to children in a classroom, showing men and women playing a game. The women were performing one kind of a ritual and the men were performing another. After it was confirmed to the children that this was something that men and women in general did, the girls copied the women's ritual and the boys copied the men's ritual, just like what we have seen with the red and blue label experiment. Barbara David notes that, a parent cannot be a model of appropriate gender behavior, unless the child is exposed to the world, for instance through friendship and the media, which suggests that the parent is a representative or prototypical male or female (Fine 2010: 217).

Comparing these notions to the Joan/John case, we see how the mother, Janet Reimer, explains how she dressed Brenda as a girl and taught her how to be in the kitchen and make cookies like a woman, when her brother was playing with his toys. David explains how he would want to play with his brother's toys, rather than baking cookies and playing with dolls, maybe something deep rooted inside him, did not want to copy the women's ritual, but rather the men's ritual, because he obviously felt a stronger attraction to the boy acts.

One might consider if David/Brenda did not have a brother, David would perhaps have accepted the fact that s/he was a girl, growing up? Maybe s/he would have loved to bake cookies and play with dolls as a child, if there was not a boy to show him/her that there was another opportunity for him/her. The brother and the children from school whom David surrounded her/himself with, was

the opportunity for him/her to take interest in boy stuff and this was the steppingstone for her/him to resent all the girls stuff, which he was brought up with. It is considerable that if David/Brenda did not have a brother to constantly be put in contrast to, the experiment would perhaps have taken another direction.

7 Conclusion

When working with the problem definition: *How is gender established in children, and can one use ideas of biological determinism, societal influence and performativity to create a better understanding of gender in children?* We can conclude that it is a well-discussed question.

There are multiple opinions on gender establishment in children, depending on various factors, such as field of study, personal experience and cultural background, which is causing it to be a topic of discussion where one cannot reach a conclusion.

Following Fine, we see how societal pressure, parents ideologies and norms affect children, not only in their upbringing but also while they are still in the womb. The establishing of gender in children will therefore, according to Fine, follow the societal structure. Fine brings in psychologists Albert Bandura and Kay Bussey as they state, that an infant does not have to be aware of what gender it is, in order to adapt to the social norms such as toy preferences, and therefore it does not matter what physical gender the infant is.

Butler agrees with Fine on this, as she argues that gender is not defined by biological sex, but instead it is cultural compulsion that establishes gender. She states this by following Simone de Beauvoir's notion "One is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one."

To get closer to understanding how gender is established in children, we draw on a real-life case, which is called the Joan/John case. The original case is conducted by Dr. Money and is further conducted by Diamond. These two together, gives us a picture of the nature vs. nurture dilemma. The case is a good example of how many different views there are on gender establishment in children. In Butler's notion of gender performativity, she states that gender is not something you have or something you are, but it is instead something you do. Following the notion of performativity, we act according to the norms within gender intelligibility and hereby reproduce the norms of gender. We can use Butler's notion of performativity to understand the establishment of gender in children, as they will act not according to what they are, but according to what is expected of them to fit into the norms of gender intelligibility, and in doing so the gender norms are being reproduced as well. Both Fine and Butler thus argues that the societal influence has a great impact on the establishment of gender, Butler uses the notion of the heterosexual matrix, which

contains the norms of what it entails to be a man or a woman. To this, Fine notes, that children are affected by these norms, as they are easily influenced by an in-group bias and therefore, they have the same preferences as the children who belong to the same gender. The society therefore has a huge significance, according to Butler and Fine, when it comes to establishing gender in children. Seeing that children from the very beginning are taught and influenced by their surroundings, including media, in which ways to acts and dress according to the norms of the gendered group to which they belong.

A radically different belief to this is that biological determinism is what constructs the gender, as this notion does not consider the societal influence. One is born either a male or a female, there is no in between and no changing how one is born. This notion is something that we distance ourselves from during this project, as we mainly looked at theories, which says that gender is not necessarily predetermined.

Overall, there are various ways to view the establishment of gender in children, however Cordelia Fine and Judith Butler provide two great examples of how this topic can be discussed and understood in relation to the stereotypical expectations of gender in society, and how this may have a greater influence than what one has between one's legs.

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