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Research Proposal

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Gender Roles and Sexism

Do parents who force stereotypical gender preferences on their children perpetuate gender inequality in society? The oldest way of communicating knowledge has been through oral tradition, and the ideas parents teach their children. In this manner, children learn from a young age behaviors and forms of communication that match their gender assigned at birth. This is detrimental to the individuals and to society. Individuals are restricted from exploring and deciding their own preferences and behaviors. Society is divided by an imaginary line that separates men and women, resulting in a world dominated by men's vision and rules. Therefore, parents who teach stereotypical gender roles perpetuate gender inequality.

This topic is important because erasing the imaginary line is an effective way of reaching equity among all genders; women have had fewer opportunities, more responsibilities, restricted choice about their life and future, and less pay (if any) than men for long enough; teaching children that we are all equal and able to decide what to do with their bodies and future is paramount to changing society. In order to do research, I will use google scholar to do a broad search, then I will read some papers and pick the ones that fit the topic better. After I have a few papers, I will read some of the works cited to see if any of those cover other aspects of the topic that require deeper analysis. I will read about the relationship between gender inequality and gender roles, and relate it to multi-literacy, knowledge and oral tradition. In this way, I will draw a clear line from parents passing knowledge to their children by teaching them stereotypical gender roles to how these

learned behaviors contribute to gender inequality. Moreover, the reading that inspired this topic, *Girl* by Kincaid, will be used as the main source to exemplify how young women are confined by their sex from a young age. Finally, I will write about gender inequality to show why this topic is important.

Bibliography:

Berg, Barbara J. *Sexism in America: Alive, Well, and Ruining Our Future*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill, 2009. Print.

Reason: She shows that children do not have a play preference until their parents teach them to play with more gender-specific items. Thus showing that gender roles are created by society and perpetuated by parent's teachings.

Farvid, P. (2019, March 7). *Beyond the binary: how teaching children about gender could help reduce sexism*. Retrieved from The conversation: <https://theconversation.com/beyond-the-binary-how-teaching-children-about-gender-could-help-reduce-sexism-113140>

Reason: She states gender inequality is caused by the idea that there are two separate and distinct genders. Thus society, which behaves according to their collective mind, thinks men and women have different skills.

Kincaid, J. (2003). *Girl*. In A. Charters, *The Story and its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction* (6th Edition ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Reason: She exposes the ways in which young women are confined by their sex from a young age.

Shaw, Susan M., and Janet Lee. "Family Systems, Family Lives." *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. 433-51. Print.

Reason: She talks about different ways that parents use to enforce cisgender behaviors.

Smith, Kerry. "Sexism: It Starts at Childhood." *Atavist*, 6 May 2016, kerrysmith.atavist.com/sexism-it-starts-at-childhood.

Reason: She argues sexism starts from the moment parents bring home their children because they treat the babies differently depending on their sex.