

# Unsettling knowledge

*Exploring consequences and potentials of gender- and sexuality discourses in  
Teachers Education*

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# 1. Introduction

I see a society-wide ethical problem of limitation to individual agency and relations in the seemingly coherent narratives of *sex*<sup>1</sup>/gender/sexuality that take part in enabling and foreclosing affect and expressions *for everyone* (Butler 2005). With a keen interest in education as an area to work for substantial social changes, and informed by theories of discourse, gender, desire, ethics and subject formation, I have interviewed faculty members and students in Teachers Education (TE) to explore, in a multileveled analysis, the discourses they cite when discussing or using concepts and narratives around homophobia, desire/sexuality and gender. Why I see a problem as I do, what my research questions are, and what kind of choices I have made regarding structure, material, analytical approach and levels, will be introduced over the next pages, to let you know what to expect. First of all I want to offer a metaphor about the possibly rewarding, or frustrating, feeling of reading my thesis, told by someone dear to me with a passion for cooking:

“It’s like stirring really slowly in a big pot of stew for a long time; touching all the different components several times and approaching the totality and the parts in new ways, grasping how they come together to make up the density of taste, the often invisible parts that are necessary for the whole. It may seem like slow and demanding work, but for me it is beautiful and satisfying. It seems it is supposed to be done like this; I like to *really* realize all that goes into a stew – or an oppressive discursive formation”.<sup>2</sup>

I also *enjoy* stirring – approaching a system from many angles – and find it *appropriate* to explore complexity, openings and density of meaning; I do not repeat myself, but rather, as Butler (2006) says: “I return to the same problem again and again, in different ways and in different contexts. (...) – questions become deepened and more complicated as I repose them”

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<sup>1</sup> The different font used for this word and several others indicates *sous rature*; I explain under “Derrida, Différance and Deconstruction” and describe why/which words under “Language and translation issues”.

<sup>2</sup> Aina S. Kirsebom, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, translated from memory

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## *Approaching gender and homophobia in education*

Heteronormative<sup>3</sup> discourses surrounding “sexualities” in education are increasingly liberal; heterosexuality is just as much a hidden curriculum and schools can still be described as “hetero-factories” (Rossi 2003 in Røthing and Svendsen 2008:36). Explicit approaches to marked<sup>4</sup> sexualities have developed into various educational policies embracing “progressive” social sciences doing “gay research” and mandating inclusion and empathy. Pedagogical and political angles on gender equality and gender roles<sup>5</sup> in school<sup>6</sup> are in Norway generally approached *without*, or only marginally, involving perspectives on heteronormativity and homophobia<sup>7</sup>. Non-academic, semi-academic and academic approaches<sup>8</sup> to homophobia are only aimed to research, discuss, prevent and/or counter homophobia effecting so-called *GLB/T*<sup>9</sup> people. There are sometimes *mentions* of crossing relevance but only rarely a comprehensive “co-understanding” of heterogendering phenomena as we begin to see more of in Sweden<sup>10</sup>; some academics and policies<sup>11</sup> speak of *heteronormativity* and/or *gender related bullying*, but focus here as well is mainly on invisibility, homophobia and negative *self* relations *for GLB/T* youth; rarely does anyone emphasize it as an issue of subject formation and gendered *affective* foreclosure for *everyone*; Røthing and Svendsen’s book *Sexuality in school* (2009) is an exception I will come back to.

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<sup>3</sup> This describes the seemingly coherent narrative of *sex*/gender/sexuality alignment that works in a productive discursive way, and in structural ways, to shape cultures through perceptions and expectations of *self* and others. It will be explained further under “Theory” and “Butler”.

<sup>4</sup> See “Marked/unmarked” under “Approaches”.

<sup>5</sup> The problematic notion of “gender roles” is treated in the level 2 *discussion*, under “Gender”.

<sup>6</sup> Imsen 2005, Heggen 2004, GAP 2009-2012

<sup>7</sup> I explain the use of “homophobia” as opposed to “homonegativity” in section 4.3.4.

<sup>8</sup> (LLH, SkU, Smestad 2008), (Chepstow-Lusty et al 2008) and (Moseng 2005, 2007, Slatten et al 2007, Anderssen and Slatten 2008)

<sup>9</sup> “Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans\* people”; more on this categorical language, and why it is indicated as it is under “Approaches”, in “Language and translation issues”.

<sup>10</sup> According to Helseth 2007, Røthing and Svendsen 2009, and seen in Ambjørnsson 2005, Lundgren and Sörensdotter 2004, Østlund 2006

<sup>11</sup> (Helseth 2007, Røthing 2000, 2004, 2007a&b) and (OC 2006-2009)

How approaches are interpreted must necessarily depend at least on perspective on gender, bodies and sexuality, perceived “type” and urgency of “the problems”, and understanding of subject formation, epistemology, ontology, representation, agency and ethical responsibility. People who see GLB/T approaches as appropriate understand bodies, gender and desire differently, define “the problem” differently, and/or see subjects, agency, responsibility and maybe especially *pragmatism* from a another perspective; mine convinces me that those approaches *foreclose* researchers’, educators’, policy makers’ and institutions’ access to the much bigger problem and more comprehensive preventive solutions. I see TE as most useful and available for inciting long term challenges to reproduction of that bigger problem; it is the pupils’<sup>12</sup> everyday *ethically violent*<sup>13</sup> interaction with “coherent” discourses *from teachers* that is my focus. I will later argue just how it is ethical to challenge educators’ perspectives on (citations of) difference, language and *self/authenticity*, whereas to focus on “inclusive” classrooms or sexual education with coherent narratives is *unethical*. With all this in mind, my exploratory research questions are:

- **What kinds of discourses do faculty and students in TE cite regarding gender and sexuality and surrounding concepts and narratives?**
- **What kind of discourses can be read in curricular and other *con/text*<sup>14</sup> about gender and sexuality and connected concepts and narratives? How do they coincide with or differ from those of the informants? How do these parts relate to the next question?**
- **How do the transcriptions and the “feel” of the dialogues themselves support or negate an idea of TE agents participating in critical unsettling pedagogy of any kind.**

I *expect* overall liberal notions of *self* and coherent categories of *gender-* and *sexual identity*, but *less* generalizable *knowledges*, investments, motivations, and citations in details, justifications and explanations. I *hope* the dialogues I aim for will give useful information, and possibly support, toward potential extended discourse focused TE pedagogy.

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<sup>12</sup> I use “pupils” to refer to those in grades 1-13, and “students” for those in TE, to make this clearer.

<sup>13</sup> See Theory, Butler, on “Ethical responsibility”.

<sup>14</sup> Merging Laclau and Mouffe’s discursive context and Derrida’s notion of *text* as explained in 2.1.2



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## 1.2 Structure, material, sources and levels

I find it useful at this stage to mention some choices I have made. First, the method section involves the gathering and selection of material, but the deconstructive approach I chose to *analyze* the material is not a method (Jegerstedt 2008a:88) and this is why I have written about most issues involved in analyses in a separate section, one that comes directly before the analyses; both are along with two other applied theory sections, under the chapter heading “Approaches”. I also want to make one separate comment this early about quotation use: To distinguish between *substantial outtakes* and *taking out filler words*. I use (...) to mark the former, and ... for the latter, throughout material *and* theoretical referencing. The transcriptions at times also have (...) (...) to indicate putting two separate parts together. I intended to have transcriptions as only material but realized in the process I needed more of a discursive *con/text*, to better illustrate where informants theoretically could “get” discourses from, to analyze these and the differences between informal (transcribed) and more or less formalized language, and to better discuss the degree of density of certain discursive presences in both academia and the public sphere. This means there are several kinds of “formalized narrative”, *knowledge*, and theory involved in this project. The coming theory chapter is one: I present those I lean heavily on for perspectives on bodies/desire and approaches to discourse and education. The *con/text* I added (4.2.1-4) is another “source”, involving textbooks, research, anti-homophobic resources, and institutional and public discourses. A third involves additional useful research, *applied* by people often informed by similar/related theorists; I involve these in the second and third levels of analysis. The analysis is in *three levels*. This will be justified more, but I want to prepare you: the way the material is worked with is at the first level through *a narrativized presentation*, to “read out loud” concrete articulations close together for effect; *con/text* material (part 1), and some of the dialogues excerpts (part 2), are selected, presented and as such analyzed in this preliminary fashion. There is more dialogue material dispersed, but exchanges about the most central concepts were best served being presented initially and independently. I move from there to suggest *discursive consequences* of citation and deferred meanings in the most extensive level two; then I move towards *social and ethical consequences* based on previous analyses in level three. There can be no conclusion in this exploration, but the many suggestions about overall impressions, readings and consequences at the last level serve as the larger-perspective closing arguments.

## 2. Theory

I have chosen to present here some aspects of the main theories I am informed by throughout, from Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, as well as some angles and applications in education by Mary Louise Rasmussen. I involve others as well, but these all provide me with insights and tools that are useful for more or less direct application in, and framing of, this whole project. There are great overlaps in perspective, several refer to each other extensively, and although some resist such categorization, they are all part of a poststructuralist dialogue with aims toward facilitating radical social changes. Foucault analyzes *historical relativity* in discourse and perception of reality, and how *power-knowledge* complexly involves production of identity categories and *desires*. Derrida gives me the notions of *différance*, *deferral*, *text* and *deconstruction* of narratives. Butler provides my understanding of *bodies*, *gender*, *desire*, *performativity*, *citation* and *an ethic of opaque relationality* in a decentered and incoherent self. Laclau and Mouffe's *discourse theory* inspires an analysis that exposes a "*reduction of possibilities*", and an immense *change potential* of opening up discourse and making discursive effects visible and understood. Rasmussen directs my frustration with epistemology and ontology in the social sciences, and applies Foucault's and Butler's understandings to discuss subjectivization, attachments, the closet narrative, and the essentialist and constructivist tropes, and their consequences *in school*.

It may seem chronologically backward with regard to theory development, I have chosen to start with a section on discourses and -analysis, where I briefly involve Foucault and then more extensively Laclau and Mouffe. I go on "back" to present from Derrida's work, before moving to Butler, and then back to present Foucault's production of desire and how this can be used along with Butler, before I finish with Rasmussen's book *Becoming subjects* (2006). But first of all briefly on more general poststructuralist ideas and foci; these theories made possible many ways for academics and other activists to analyze how discursively created meanings creates and sustains the frames of possible experience and perception. Parts of "queer theory" can be placed within this tradition. One basic tenet is that there is no truth or objectivity; all perceptions of reality are in available discursive frames of thought. Another tenet is that language constructs meaning in dichotomies, word pairs of opposition where one is superior, assuming unambiguous and delimited categories that "privilege sameness over differences, and hides and oppresses diversity" (Bustos 2007:20). One part is the privileged

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norm/al while “the inferior part is therefore constructed as what it is not, or what everyone would be if they were not different” (Davies and Hunt 1994 in Bustos 2007:20).

## 2.1 Discourses, discourse theory and analysis

Foucault’s specific notion of discourse with an emphasis on power is useful as a relatable concept; it communicates the urgency in discursive *oppression* and loss of agency in an available way to apply to pedagogical relations and challenge beliefs in scientific authority in the fields of gender and desire. For Foucault discourse is power – it is the power which defines or *constitutes* people’s possible “reality” and *being* in “processes of subjectivation” (Foucault in Rasmussen 2006:85). We all take part in power by speaking, thinking and acting. The negative side of this productive “impersonal” power then is the exclusion it entails, in that a discourse always involves what is not and can not be said within that discourse, as it only constitutes *one* reality and not all the other realities implicated as the *constitutive outside*.

### 2.1.1 Laclau and Mouffe – Discourse theory

What is described as the “most pure” poststructuralist version of approaches to discourse, is the one of Discourse theory (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:15), conceived by Laclau and Mouffe and developed first in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). They position at the far end of the spectrum of discourse theories through most adamantly and completely refuting structuralist interpretations of the social, and argue against pre discursive subjects, truths, innate structures or natural/given meanings or values. They explain that a discourse is a structured totality which is a result of an articulatory practice (:105); “a discourse is hence a reduction of possibilities. It is an attempt to stop signs from sliding in relation to each other, and an attempt to establish coherence” (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:37).

In the short online article “Philosophical roots of discourse theory” (Laclau\*), Laclau explains how what happened in and after analytical philosophy, phenomenology and structuralism, when these directions of philosophy all incorporated notions of discourse to deal with “the illusion of immediacy”, has been important in development leading up to Discourse Theory; of these the poststructuralist strand was the most central, Derrida the very most. Laclau writes: “It is within the latter framework that we can understand the emergence of the theory of hegemony, which is the central piece of the discourse analytical approach to

politics.” The logic of this theory posits that that if identities are purely differential “the totality of the system of discourse differences is involved in any single act of signification”; this requires a closed system, which again involves totality that requires observable limits, posing a logical problem of necessarily more differences beyond it. The “only way out of this dilemma is if the ‘beyond’ has the character of an exclusion: not one more element but one in an antagonistic relation to an ‘inside’ which is only constituted through the latter.” As a result, all identities that are “antagonized by it” are *both differential and equivalent*, and equivalence subverts difference, which means discourse designating for example a *sexual identity*, necessarily holds such constitutive properties that it makes differences from other identities impossible.

There would be no room for politics if there were no ruptures or limitations to the differential logic but there is always a constitutive outside, a “field of discursivity”/“discursive field” that consists of the “irreducible *surplus of meaning* which escapes the differential logic of discourse” (:92). It is not *non-discursive* but it is discursively constructed as “a terrain of unfixity”, as what partially fixes the constituted inside of discourse. *This* is the condition of discourse where changes in power can be sought, because *this* is where competition for defining power is; a multiplicity of discourses can challenge each other for fixity/truth status. Their term for such a partially fixed meaning that are especially open for differently ascribed meaning is *floating signifier*; actors in *discursive battles* where discourses influence and shape other discourses and battles for stability are ongoing (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:34-41). Nodal points are privileged signs which other signs get their meaning from; their meanings are “crystallized” around this point. The important difference between *discourse* and *discursive* is that *conditions* of any discourse are discursive, they belong in the discursive field (Laclau in Torfing 1999:92), implying that the discursive must always be included in a discourse analysis to determine the “outside” allowing the inside to be *true*. What may seem confusing is that objects have *discursive* characters as they are discursively constructed to mean something; it is the exclusion of the *discursive* that *constructs* the reality of the object.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue all social phenomena may in principle be analyzed with discourse analytical tools, but guidelines or illustrative examples are scarce (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:16). They build theory on uncovering unspoken assumptions and internal inconsistencies in other theories, and say this is how to expose ideological content; they also

tell us to use inconsistencies to think further with (:34). Concrete determination of a sign's meaning is impossible because it is *contingent*; possible but not necessary (:35). Jørgensen and Phillips says about the role of an analyst, that "one can never reach reality outside the discourses, and therefore the discourse itself is the object of analysis ... to investigate what patterns are in the statements, and what social consequences the different discursive representations of reality gets" (:31). Accordingly my role is to *suggest* what these contingent patterns in my material involve discursively and socially. There are endless silences and foreclosures for each meaning to be established, precisely all (impossible) meanings the established meanings are different from. When I suggest foreclosures I only see those few available to me because of my set of meanings; aware of this, I still write for example "what is being foreclosed here is..." for the language to flow better in a long line of suggestions.

### 2.1.2 Derrida, Deconstruction and Différance

Derrida was one of the first and most central characters of the critique of structuralist assumptions, and developed the perspective and analytical approach of *deconstructive reading* (Powell 2006, Torfing 1999), which involves *looking for différance* and "originary complexity" in *text* (discourse), by doing multiple readings to expose multiplicity and contingency of meanings/truth. As Butler (2004) wrote in a post script after Derrida: "it is, for many of us, impossible to write without relying on him, without thinking with and through him." Laclau and Mouffe also further developed Derrida's insights, in their critiques of immediacy, of "pre-discursive" and of separations of the discursive from "non-discursive":

"What I call "text" implies all the structures called "real", "economic", "historical", socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents. Another way of recalling once again that "there is nothing outside text". This does not mean that all referents are suspended, denied (...) <it means that> every referent, all reality, has the structure of a differential trace, and that one cannot refer to this "real" except in an interpretive experience. The latter neither yields meaning nor assumes it except in a movement of differential referring. That's all" (Derrida 1988a:148 in Torfing 1999:94).

According to Jegerstedt's (2008a) article "deconstructive approach", this is neither a theory nor a method, because first of all, methods belong in the tradition where truth claims are argued. It is a way of reading that intends to demonstrate surplus of meaning in all *text*; this involves potential for destabilizing seemingly natural truths. As for how approach it, "there is no recipe or technique as to how deconstructions are to be done" (Søndergaard 2002 in

Bustos 2007:44), and importantly, although one can *apply* the perspective in an analytical way, the deconstruction is a “destabilizing logic already in motion” (Jegerstedt 2008:88) in the *texts*. Deconstruction is done with all *text* because all *reading* (perception) is interpretive and reads some meaning and not others. There is no truth about the discourses I analyze; I specifically challenge the constructed dichotomy between “scientific truth” and “incorrect interpretation”. My assumption is that both informants’ and my readings are “about constructed “filters” of feelings, experiences, knowledge, understandings. Deconstruction can ... make visible what kinds of filters these are” (Østerås 2007:42).

*Différance* is both *the deferral* of one pattern, or play, of differences (differential signs) out of awareness, to the advantage of another, *and the deferred* pattern itself; it is the “stabilizing logic” of discourse that causes other meaning-patterns to be deferred. The deferral and the deferred is suppressed in awareness from for example seeing openings for other ways of experiencing, perceiving and feeling. I understand *looking for* *différance* – or *applying* *différance* - as looking for and suggesting deferred meaning, but *always* in a way that involves problematizing the deferred meaning’s *constitutive consequences*, the limitations and conditions one exposes in the discourse. This insistence on the social aspect of discursive forecloses is central in both Butler’s, Foucault’s, Derrida’s, and Laclau and Mouffe’s theories and can not be made insignificant or taken out; ‘différance’ not only marks how signification works – it also characterises an ethical relation (Butler 2005) because it regulates how people can feel, act, narrate and relate. Deconstructions can expose how “language operates to produce very real, material and damaging structures in the world” (St.Pierre 2000:481 in Bustos:43). When I through all my theorists insist on the necessary ethicality of *challenging* the position and utilization of discourse, it is informed by Derrida, who as Butler (2004) says “kept us alive to the practice of criticism, understanding that social and political transformation was an incessant project, one that could not be relinquished”.

Many of the concepts necessarily involved in this project need to be problematized all along; in discourse analysis one must interact with troublesome terms, to be able to expose effects. Derrida had a way of doing this that maintained those terms visibly problematic, and called this putting them under erasure, or *sous rature*. This is an approach that allows the writer to be theoretically consistent and show the word as *not just sometimes* problematic, and allows the reader to stay alert upon to the problem; I argue this is *particularly* important when

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trying to maximize pedagogical usefulness. Davies puts it nicely, how: “putting a concept or word under erasure is a political act” (Davies 2003:8). The concept of identity, for example, only appeared around the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is “central to modern(ist) thinking and is a concept *necessarily under erasure* in poststructuralist writing. ... a term we still need and use, but which need deconstructing and moving beyond” (:8). Derrida signalled this with a cross through the words, leaving them visible.

Because power-knowledge, discourse theory and deconstruction/différance are not in serious conflict, but are rather complementary, the extended analytical discourse vocabulary offers me ways of exploring and suggesting consequences in more nuanced ways (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:12). My selection of the different foci provides structure, material, levels, tools and angles. I have chosen to use a notion of “con/text”, which brings together Derrida’s *text* and Laclau and Mouffe’s *discursive context*, to present a *con/textualization* of discursive influences embracing and clarifying how TE surroundings – mandatory, formal or not – make up *con/texts*, *text* somehow read by its “inhabitants”. My analysis is multileveled and involves intersecting concepts; a totality I believe is better understood with use of the fuller toolbox.

## 2.2 Butler

Butler writes in the preface to *Gender Trouble* in 1990:

“To expose the foundational categories of sex, gender and desire as effects of a specific formation of power requires a form of critical inquiry that Foucault ... designates as “genealogy”. A genealogical critique refuses to search for the origins of gender, the inner truth of female desire, a genuine or authentic sexual identity that repression has kept from view; rather a genealogy investigates the political stakes in designating as an *origin* and *cause* those identity categories that are in fact the *effects* of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin. The task of this inquiry is to center on – and decenter – such defining institutions: phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality.” (preface: xxix)

The elaborate theories on corporeality and the injurious capacity of language meticulously undermine and challenge common assumptions; they may be relevant in applied critique of *all* public *and* academic fields, because issues of gender, knowledge/power and ethics are everywhere. While involving no recipe I infer serious implications for *education*’s potential from the analyses. I only introduce a few ideas here, those found most useful for this project, under the crude division “*doing* gender and desire” and “ethical responsibility”.

### 2.2.1 *Doing gender and desire*

*Gender Trouble* famously argues that there is no essential sexual difference and that *sex/gender* is not a real or productive distinction. Rather it explains how gender is *performative*, a discursive phenomenon which comes into being in communicative praxis - through repeated speech-acts. Through these acts, in the shape of *citations*, norms about embodied *sex, as* correctly gendered behaviour, are infinitely reproduced. One can read that “Within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense *gender is always a doing*, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.” (:33, *my emphasis*). This understanding is based mainly on reworking J. L. Austin’s speech act theory (1970) which describes how forms of authoritative speech are *performatives*, statements repeatedly “bring into being” what they name. Butler extends Austin’s analysis of “hailing”, official rituals and law, to argue much more generally both that the body “as gender” works performatively, and thoroughly how “a performative works to the extent that it draws on and *covers over* the constitutive conventions” (1993a (BTM):227). Butler ties performativity more explicitly to speech act theory and to Derrida’s rewriting of this; repetitions of norms create ontological effects and “it is the performative aspects of discourse that produces, regulates and destabilizes the subject.” (Jegerstedt 2008b:83). Performativity is a way of understanding conditional agency, and how something comes into being every time it “cites by doing” what it supposedly “is“; citing *masculine* symbolics, consciously or not, one “is” *masculine*. Seeing how bodies “work” performatively also means understanding how all humans are vastly complex actors and products of individual experiences/influences/ discourses, and most people only understand (because of the “cover-over”) themselves and others through simplified, unethical and deterministic narratives of being.

After many outraged critiques of *Gender Trouble*, Butler started off *Bodies that matter* by further clarifying previously made arguments around the *sex/gender* distinction; “To claim that sexual differences are indissociable from discursive demarcations is not the same as claiming that discourse *causes* sexual difference” (:1); the latter was a central point of attack. Butler insists that bodies are not “made” by language, but that binary and exclusive *meanings* of bodies are only perceived and understood through citing available discourses, and that language as a system of cultural symbols is powerful enough to reproduce those



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bodies *as* the meanings (male or female) they are thought to naturally possess. Butler writes that “Sex not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies that it governs, that is, (...) <has> the power to produce - demarcate, circulate, differentiate - the bodies it controls” (:1). What is important here is that *sex* is “one of the norms by which the “one” becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility” (:2). This means that one cannot be a subject without “having a sex“, one is not understood without “being a sex“, one is not a readable body without being either/or; a body still exists, but it is not understandable to others as it is not available in language. The unavailability of such a non-position in discourse is unfortunately at its most *violently* apparent in the medical and psychological traditions that still *surgically* defines “a clear sex” on children born with intersex morphologies<sup>15</sup> (2003 (UG)), with accompanying “psychological declaration” of appropriate gender rearing<sup>16</sup>. Specialist teams claim necessity, and ability, to decide “what” a child “is”; culturally, medically and discursively one *must* “be“, a single sex.

About the “social” concept of *gender* Butler further explains that “the relation between culture and nature presupposed by some models of gender “construction” implies a culture or an agency of the social which acts *upon* a nature, which is itself presupposed as a passive surface”, but while “as much as the radical distinction between sex and gender has been crucial to the de Beauvoirian version of feminism (...) it misses the point that nature has a history, and not merely a social one“ (1993:4-5). From this the question begs, what can be left of *sex* “once it has assumed its social character as gender?”, and the answer is simply that “gender emerges, not as a term in a continued relationship of opposition to sex, but as the term which absorbs and displaces “sex” (:5). The meaning of body-as-sex has been discursively *constructed* as “natural”, or rather, as a necessary counterpart to the now “obvious” sociality of *gender roles*; *sex* is “retroactively installed at a prelinguistic site to which there is no direct access” (:5). Rather than being “natural” or “biological”, “sex” is a regulatory practice with reality producing power, but is, when opposed to “gender”, tragically left above scrutiny as long as *gender roles* are presented as relating to “the two sexes”. This denaturalizing scrutiny of meaning insists on the importance of freeing people

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<sup>15</sup> In Norway usually referred to as “genital anomalies”

<sup>16</sup> <http://ssss.oslonett.no/syndrom.php?k=genitale/diagnose>

from the regime of the sexual binary; the argument contends that because we *do* gender, we may also undo/do differently. As *sex/gender* collapses and leaves only bodies with assigned meanings, I use the word gender to mean *embodied* performative practices and identifications.

Concerning *desire*, Butler explains that “Which pleasures shall live and which shall die is often a matter of which serve the legitimating practices of identity formation that take place within the “heterosexual *matrix*” of gender norms” (GT:90). This means that desire is re/constituted for each person just like their “own” gender in relation to what Butler restates as *heterosexual hegemony* (Butler 1993a, 2003), term Butler thought was better suited to emphasize malleability and potential, and “open the possibility that this is a matrix which is open to rearticulation” (1993b). It is “crucial to retain a theoretical apparatus that will account for how sexuality is regulated through the policing and shaming of gender” (1993a:238), Butler writes, and the concept of *heteronormativity* involves precisely this: people are supplied with ways of becoming subjects, and of obsessing, denying, dreaming and expressing through dominant normative narratives of love and desire. These norms *produce* their own reproduction, with two *exclusive* genders, where feelings and desires are experienced as “real” and natural. Heterosexual hegemony is a model that *describes* how a “naturally” connected triangle of *sex*, gender *and* desire is taken for granted, and it *allows* us to expose that this sustains discursive *imperatives* with *reality producing effects*.

Desire is neither a matter of “choice”, nor “innate”, in the simplified essentialist/constructivist binary; it is performative “along with” gender, in a game with always conditional agency to desire another gendered person, *as* a gendered person. People come to be, as *feeling* subjects, within narratives and value systems they are immersed in; “actual” desire is made, felt and performed, and often lined up with perceptions of *being male* or *female* with *masculine* or *feminine* gender expression. Exposing this hegemony as discursively “forced”, rather than natural, aims to let individual desire *develop* with more agency and *change* around with more open narratives. Desire can as of now not be conceptually separated from gender; they construct meanings mutually. Unfortunately, Butler writes, “the ambiguities and incoherencies within and among heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual *practices* are suppressed and reinscribed within the reified framework of the disjunctive and asymmetrical binary of masculine/feminine” (1990:42, my emphasis); people are streamlined within this matrix which *produces* both what it defines as

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normal *and* abnormal, and what it “defines out” of intelligibility. Importantly this logic also means that any break (often called transsexual/ transgendered) in a body’s experience of *maleness/femaleness*, or otherwise expected gender expression or sexual preferences, often infers “logically” an inversion of the person’s *whole being*. Not only *aligned* heteronormative but also *aligned* homonormative people are *produced* as results of this; one is how one is “logically” supposed to be in the triangle coherence. Many bodies do gender appropriately “to their own sexuality”; the concept of *homonormativity* describes the somewhat compulsory gender “inversion” that “follows” the people that feel (for some complex reason have not foreclosed) *homosexual* desire. Butler also illustrates through a trans\*<sup>17</sup> example how desire, although felt *by* a body, is truly not born *of* the body, in that some trans\* people “claim a radical discontinuity between sexual pleasures and body parts”. But “the imaginary status of desire, of course, is not restricted to the transsexual identity; the phantasmic nature of desire reveals the body not as its ground or cause, but as its *occasion* and its *object*” (1990:90).

Identity politics and discursive effects.

Butler argues in *Gender Trouble* that: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted” (:33), and goes on to deconstruct political discourses that involve gender or sexuality categories. Many feminists see Butler’s arguments *against* understanding *women* as a “real” category as attacks on feminism, *women* and the *female* body. This is understandable, considering the history of arguments and policy/changes built not only on *sexual difference* but on implications of a constructivist notion of gender. Similarly many “GLB” and trans\* advocates have been outraged by the challenge to the “realness” of what they base battles/belonging/*identities* on. Answering this, Butler insists we should ask the question “To what extent does the effort to locate a common identity as the foundation for a <feminist> politics *preclude* radical inquiry into the political construction and regulation of identity itself?” (1990:xxix *my emphasis*). In this perspective one sees that the more a categorical *ontological* difference is cited as real, the more powerfully it is sustained; when “minority” advocates maintain focus on categorical difference, they also sustain the very oppression they mean to address. Identity politics sadly *contribute* to the “cover over” through powerful tools such as media, education and policy

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<sup>17</sup> The use of this \* indication will be explained under “language and translation issues”

making, and make it harder at all levels, to see and challenge discourse; this *perpetuates* differentiation and subject formation.

### 2.2.2 Ethical responsibility

Equally important arguments for this project are for a different approach to ethics, in the book *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005); this is a furthering of previous arguments now applied to themes of narration, responsibility and ethical violence. It is on many levels concerned with ethics involved in normative narratives and in formation of subjects. Butler writes:

“the I has no story of its own that is not also a story of a relation – or set of relations – to a set of norms. Although many contemporary critics worry that this means there is no concept of the subject that can serve as the ground for moral agency and moral accountability, that conclusion does not follow. The “I” is always to some extent dispossessed by the social conditions of its emergence. This dispossession does not mean that we have lost the subjective ground for ethics. On the contrary, it may well be the condition for moral inquiry, the condition under which morality itself emerges. If the “I” is not at one with moral norms, this means only that the subject must deliberate upon these norms, and that part of deliberation will entail a critical understanding of their social genesis and meaning.” (:8)

Butler deconstructs the notion of a primary “I/self”, argues the impossible *narration of self* and explains how the agency of this “I” as the believed grounds for all ethics is misunderstood. Instead, a different, “opaque”, view of self, and by implication *other*, is defended as grounds for a more ethical approach to *self*, *other* and relationality. We are reminded that “modern conceptions of the self are neither true nor inevitable, but have been made through a complex history of indebtedness and disavowal in relation to ... earlier formations of the self” (:129). Any account of oneself is dispossessed *both* by the norms that frame (allow) ones emergence as a subject, *and* by the structure of address that invariably implicates an *other* (:36); through recognizing ones opacity – ones troubles in giving an account of oneself, and understanding how one is made a subject in relations to others, one may also understand more about how others too are constituted relationally and contextually. The “primary opacity to the self that follows from formative relations has a specific implication for an ethical bearing toward the other” (:20); in this sense, a better approach to social relations, and teaching, would be to realize and perform an “ethics based on our shared, invariable, and partial blindness about ourselves” (:41).

Butler makes the argument that both giving and demanding, coherent self-narration is ethically violent, it is actually *unethical*;

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“I am concerned with a suspect coherence that sometimes attaches to narratives ... To hold a person accountable for his or her life in narrative form may even require a falsification of that life in order to satisfy the criterion of a certain kind of ethics, one that tend to break with relationality” (:63).

This implies that sustaining illusions of self-coherence, or, when addressing others, asking them to sustain such illusions, can be likened to participating in a sort of ontological oppression; it forces others through to *perform, and therefore “be”*, limited and less nuanced through citation of those illusions. It importantly also encourages and allows individuals, groups and nations to see and treat others based on illusive coherence, whether attached to gay people or terrorists; it sustains shallow, individualistic and unethical relations between people; what Butler means by “break with relationality”.

## 2.3 Foucault

Influences from Foucault are certainly present in Butler’s theory, as well as in many other sources; Foucault would, like Derrida, be in my writing regardless of specific presentation. I still want to introduce some additional insights, among other things the *constitution of desires* in bodies. Through an historical perspective Foucault analyzed discourses of the past in order to relativize the present/future meaning systems, our truths and our affections; discursive formations and narratives of humanness and development are relative to culture and time, and have all-encompassing effects on how we live and experience our lives. In early works Foucault maintained a distinction between discourse and non-discursive structures moved closer to Laclau and Mouffe’s understanding of discourse, with similar foci on “unsutured discursive identities” (Torfing 1999:91) as produced by powerful discourses, so that “theoretical affinities between the later works of Foucault and the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe are on many scores so significant that the analytics can be viewed as two of a kind.” (:91). What for me is the most directly useful from Foucault, in addition to seeing discourse as the real power, is the unapologetic reading and telling of how everyone’s desires are constituted in relation to *scientific* discourses of past cultures and times; not only are *categories* and *gender/desire narratives* made available in a discourse/time/culture, but *the desires themselves* develop, complexly, in individuals’ functioning within these discourses in specific time/culture. Foucault argues compellingly:

“What we talk about and experience as sexuality surfaces in this interaction between body and culture (...)<=> our way of thinking about sexuality, combined with the disciplinary strategies and control efforts this thinking interacts with (...) the influence of culture <and> reaches into

our innermost perceptions, desires, pleasures and senses (Foucault 1995:118 in Svare 2001:311).

*I combine* Butler and Foucault to inform my arguments around gender and desire. Where Foucault argues through history and science, Butler argues through gender and refuses the essentialist-constructivist binary as counterproductive in that it defers meanings of performativity that have no room in the dichotomous “debate”. Both reach similar consequences and insist on culture and discourse’s role, in processes of subjectivization. Butler says: “I don’t believe any of us have irreducibly distinct desires” (1993b) and Foucault makes it explicit that the desires “come to be”, how “attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries to be crossed but perpetual spirals of power and pleasure” (Foucault in Rabinow:324). This means the process of establishment of pleasure-meanings (preferences) happens between an initially pleasure-indiscriminate body, and its surrounding discourses. Despite a focus on discourse-power as constitution of reality, and this perspective on pleasures, Foucault does not question the “sex” binary in discourse, as Butler does, or focus much on gender or *its* constitution in the discussions of sexuality. On the other hand Foucault teaches us (in Rabinow:322-323) about how a notion of gender inversion was, through “dividing practices” the scientific logic of discourse inciting a “new” individual *homosexual* interiority, put into the generalized understanding of sexuality; this “introduced” the modern version of the heterogendered alignment Butler describes. As far as I know Foucault does not speculate about individual doings of gender connected to the desires so complexly constituted, this is where I rather need Butler to argue the interaction, the hegemonic citation and naturalization of gender.

## 2.4 Rasmussen

The theorists presented above are more generally in use through the understanding of gender, desire, ethics, discourse, epistemology and ontology which *I* apply in the general perspective throughout; Rasmussen will be the most visible *applied* researcher/theorist I use at the second and third levels of the analysis. Especially Rasmussen’s “Becoming subjects” (2006) is used heavily; the arguments are based on mainly on Butler and Foucault, and stand against the specific applications of what Foucault termed “dividing practices”, and the temporal and spatial aspects of sustaining a coherent and differential ontology; two of which are the notions of “coming out” and social spaces for “GLB/T youth”, a third is social science’s

knowledge-power role. Three other important dynamics also inform my arguments around resilient reproductions of categories and misery/problem focus in politics, “community” and academia; the first is what Rasmussen refers to when writing “The process of *reconfiguring the wound and unsettling passionate attachments to subjection* is the principal object of study...” (:8, my emphasis). The “art of inclusion” describes another problematic deconstructed narrative; the aim and necessity of inclusion in a differential binary of inclusion/exclusion maintains the same coherently delimited ontology based on gender and/or sexuality. The last main argument is about how variations of “essentialist and constructivist tropes” impact “processes of subjectivization”, and how this well established but constructed binary has consequences of foreclosure of agency, and derailment of other critical arguments introduced to education.

### 3. Approaches

#### 3.1 Marked and unmarked bodies and desires

I have chosen to use the terms *marked* and *unmarked*, to help me critically keep in focus the view on gendered, politicized, epistemological and ontological processes I understand to be involved in people's desires and embodiments; I clarify why and how I use them now, because the implications are central to my selection and production of material and to the analysis. Sociologist Wayne Brekhus calls it an "interplay between marked (socially "specialized") and unmarked (socially "generic") identities". *Gender* is central in thinking about un/marked sexuality, in this case in relation to gender *performances* and heteronormativity; Lynn Carr (2005:2) posits about this centrality that "gender/sexual conflation is a fusion or confusion of terms, including the belief that (...) sexuality connotes specific forms of gender." This involves assumptions that "any "markedness" or deviance from social norms in biological sex or gender expression signifies homosexuality, while deviation from normative heterosexuality indicates "masculinity" (gender) or "maleness" (sex) in women" (:2). Carr also argues how "markedness" involves a hierarchical relation where marked identifications are stigmatized, but following Brekhus I argue importantly that the markedness does *not only* imply "pure" oppression or stigma, or say whether individual un/markedness is actively embodied for whatever purpose, forced on someone through speech acts categorizing "us" or "others", or through lack of alternative narratives.

The discursive logic is maintained through deferral inside and outside the pair and allows for example judicial logics, and social science research to have heterogendered assumptions baked into *gender identity* and *sexual identity* which seem only relevant when marked. My material illustrates un/marked assumptions that people use to *expect* "normalcy", *describe* "abnormalcy" or *negotiate* own identity, narratives which are all challenging for a critical project of "disrupting injurious interpellation" (Rasmussen 2006:187) and unsettling stable identities; one challenge is that *people insist on self-marking*. But marked identity also involves contextually limited agency; in Brekhus' (\*) research "*individuals weight their competing cultural resources of stigma and privilege to actively shape, manage, and transform their social identities across time and space*" (my emphasis). Such negotiations of *self*, difference or belonging are done as symbolic representation of the social or natural, and are relevant because the concept of identity is so *specifically* used in GLB/T narratives;



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marked identity has large individual, social and ethical consequences. Another reason the un/marked concepts are useful, is seeing foci and epistemology involved in “gay research”. Especially sociology, Brekhus (2002) suggests, “has developed a de facto tradition in the *sociology of the marked* that devotes greater epistemological attention to “politically salient” ... features of social life”, and argues that “social scientists contribute to *re-marking* and the reproduction of common-sense”; social science gives you perspectives of relevant differences.

## 3.2 Practical and theoretical issues in language and translation

### 3.2.1 Compromises and *sous rature*

I had to make compromises with *translation* and with *word choices*; I did not manage to separate theoretical “discourse issues” native to Norwegian, ones native to English, and ones relevant to translation, so these are presented through each other. It has been challenging to deal with language and translation that involves problematic epistemological and ontological perspectives; as part of my compromise with essentializing terminology I have chosen to indicate *sous rature* with a different font on words I problematize the use of and see a need to move beyond. These are: *sex-gender* (as a pair), *sex*, *man/boy*, *woman/girl*, *male*, *female*, *GLB/T*, *gayness*, *transgendered*, *gender roles*, *socialization*, *identity*, *being* (as opposed to *doing gender and sexuality*), and *I/self* when used in the context of *true self* or narrating a *self*. I would have used a cross through the words, but this effect is technically unavailable. We cannot stop debating problematic heteronormativity, but neither can we resign to unproblematically keep using the very words that support and reproduce it; this for me involves using them in dialogues to gather material, and writing them *sous rature* to remind readers these terms *always* have very problematic effects.

### 3.2.2 *Gender, trans\**, *GLB*, and *queer*

At times it was challenging to do justice to concepts considered in Norwegian; the word “kjønn” first of all, has no real parallel in modern English, after the discursively constructed *sex-gender* split. This means when I asked about “kjønn”, which in Norwegian does not indicate emphasis on any particular aspect, just a (*the*) binary division, the informants were free to at least initially display free associations; this would be impossible in English and it might be difficult to see after translation. Suffice to say, if the English language would have

separated into “biological gender” and “social gender”, the term gender alone would still mean what “kjønn” alone means in Norwegian. As explained, I *only* use gender because I understand it as embodiment and citation, but although this “reduction” somehow sutures the split and refuses to reproduce the binary, just like an unconditioned “kjønn” alone perhaps could involve, I need to apologize because this is not a fair translation I use for others’ speech/texts. I turn to *only* “gender” for conscious reasons, while both in con/text and transcriptions “kjønn” is used in messy ways with very different splits, sutures and other implications; when there is a “clean” meaning and split indicated, I translate to *sex* as well.

It has been important to involve trans\* assumptions and discourses in the material and analysis; this aspect can not be taken out if to understand exclusions and constituting dynamics in this whole intradiscursive formation. I asked informants about the term “*transkjønnet*”, because I needed an access route to informants’ perceptions. I could have used “trans *person*” but I thought it would give me little response. Internationally “transgendered” covers “the transgendered spectre” (Butler 2003, Halberstam 2005, Ekins and King 2006), but I have resorted to “trans\*”, *in my discussions*, to rather refer to the field of competing meanings around gender “transgression”, and sometimes “people who trans\*” (a verb) (Benestad 2004). *In the quotes* I call “*transkjønnet*” “transgendered” as semantically it is a direct translation. I argue *everyone* embody variations of gender; some just complexly experience more unusual needs, socially and/or physically, around gender. I believe “trans-” *categories* reproduce the binary it relates to, but I wanted to explore and expose discourses and made compromises to access this. Because trans\* when indicating a contested field has little fixed meaning ontologically, epistemologically or politically, I do not deal with it by indicating *sous rature* as I do other concepts.

Despite headaches I pragmatically used these words “homo/homofil”, “lesbisk”, “bifil” and “*skeiv*” *in the dialogues*; and later translated them to *gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*, and *queer*; there are more or less *translation* problems here too, except for with *lesbian*. I never used these words to be descriptive; only to explore perceived meaning, but the words had to be seen visible (interview guide) and pronounced. When I used expressions such as “diversity” to mean *all* people, answers indicated *GLB people*, perhaps both because of the context and because of the unmarked situation of *heterosexuality*. When asked about understanding of etiology of desire, all but one exclusively focused on development and *being* of *GLB people*. Believing it

unavoidable I let it expose itself. Because *all* informants, regardless of perspective<sup>18</sup>, surprisingly used “legning” and not orientation, I translate “legning” plainly to “sexuality” in the transcribed material and indicate, in the more varied con/text, like this: orientation *or* sexuality (“legning”). The use of “homofil”, “heterofil” and “bifil” has been argued for by identity politics for decades, to de-emphasize *sex* and emphasize relations and identity. This difference is difficult to indicate but I chose to translate “homofil” to gay, “heterofil” to hetero, and “bifil” to bi; “homoseksuell/alitet” is indicated as homosexual/ity. A similar problem arose with “homofili” which is used extensively in all the material and is a conceptualization I particularly want to expose: I chose to translate it to *gayness*, a term used to describe someone’s *attribute* in saying “to talk about their *gayness*” (LLH brochures in Smestad 2008, Chepstow-Lusty et al 2008), *and* as a perceived topic and teachable knowledge.

I was interested in the use and understanding of the concept *skeiv* and gathered material about it, and although involving very different histories of meaning, I chose to “plainly” translate *skeiv* to *queer*, whatever informants put into *skeiv*. From the perspective of some “queer theory” this is not a plain translation, but *queer* also means to many English speakers what *skeiv* apparently means in all the material. In public discourse *skeiv* seems to mean the *umbrella term* for GLB/T identity categories, although sometimes *also* meant to subvert the exclusiveness or essence of those categories in some research using “*skeiv*” theory. My informants assigned it some *variations* of the umbrella, but nothing from the material involved a non-umbrella discourse critiquing sense; hence the available “plain” translation.

### 3.3 Method

#### 3.3.1 Execution

I invited to interviews about “Gender and sexuality in TE” but despite repeated approaches via web forums and posters, only three students complied so I resorted to another college

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<sup>18</sup> In Norwegian there has from the 1980’s been an indication of etiological perspective involved in the choice between “legning” and orientation, the former meaning for many an essentialist understanding and the latter for some meaning social construction or choice, and for some a word that de-emphasizes etiology and just aims to describe *without* explanation. More on this under “tropes of essentialism and constructivism”.

where one more contributed. I experienced all dialogues as useful, but was disappointed by the number and decided to approach faculty as well because I was by then also curious to expand the scope. I aimed for *one* faculty member teaching *each* of the four large 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year obligatory subject areas: Norwegian, Math, Pedagogy and “KRL” (Christianity, Religion and Belief Systems<sup>19</sup>)<sup>20</sup>. I revised the guide, approached faculty members and was glad to achieve my aim. I am pleased the project turned out to involve both groups; it allowed me a broader range of actors. All informants had a guide in front of them, to see use of quotation marks, and to allow re-reading to increase chance of understanding. Dialogues ranged 95-135 minutes. Laughter, smiles, eye contact, acknowledgment and encouragement, was crucial to establish rapport, avoid embarrassment or impatience, and instill interest and motivation.

### **3.3.2 TE dialogues – selection and representation.**

It was *not* interesting to aim for any “selection” of bodies or identities. The discourses are in them selves filled with interesting meaning; informants are not interesting as such. An important note on the participants is *social desirability*. If I could have demanded a large random selection from the two subject pools, some dialogues would likely be less engaged or include more opposition and less patience, and some may have enjoyed it but others may have been annoyed or embarrassed. This is *not* to say that my participants have more positive potential or that others are prejudiced, but to consider that only a very few agreed to participate, and their discourses are somehow informed by supporting research on “gender and sexuality in TE”. They were likely above average “actively” anti-homophobic, feeling this as obvious parts of their world views and self images, which they might imagine would only be strengthened by participating. Although this means my group displayed perhaps more enthusiasm in the dialogues than others might have, I do not believe my basic assumption is troubled by this as I was interested in understandings and citations, not attitudes; the *meanings* (concepts and narratives) they provided me with can expose issues and assumptions that may illustrate a perhaps common *diversity* of intersecting meanings and foreclosures. Overt homophobes, the “homo-tolerant” (Røthing and Svendsen 2008,

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<sup>19</sup> I have translated “livssyn” to “belief systems”, as they have done at <http://www.regjeringen.no>

<sup>20</sup> This has since then changed to “RLE” to involve “Religion, Belief Systems and Ethics”, to meet the European Court of Human Rights’ demand that Norwegian schools stop giving priority to Christianity/Christians.

2009), or the “homo-positive” (Anderssen et al 2008) may all display discourses informed by the same hetero-gendered *logic*, the argument is essentially the same because the *foundational* challenges could have to be similar with all of them, although executed in very individual ways.

I approached second year students because they were not too new to express opinions about TE, but not specialized enough to base answers about the institution and classes on subject choices. Discourse wise this was probably not relevant, but I was interested in parallel perceptions of institutional emphasis on ensuring engagement through obligatory classes. The only “given” useful relevance of *anyone* in my subject pools is that they are involved in a field of education *connected* to children and youth, one available to public scrutiny, with possible entrance ways for political and academic approaches to change. Everyone was equally interesting and equally non representative. Although some express *belief* in being representative of their own identity or demographics, I see this as individual investments in coherence, competence and identity. No demographics, “doings”, histories, expressions, abilities or any other “defining feature” play any simple role in meanings cited in the broad discursive fields of gender and desire. My pre-research understanding of this was strongly reinforced across the dialogues, seeing the complexities, inconsistencies and non-stereotypical narratives and expressions; this supports not presenting demographics or personal narratives. I asked briefly about backgrounds and experiences because my experience<sup>21</sup> suggests many like to be allowed to tell something personal, “explaining” and positioning themselves, employing some version of causal logics when presenting attitudes and understandings in this area of *knowledge*. I wanted to see references to personal narratives when asked about concepts and narratives that are arguably often perceived as conflicting, personal or private.

### **3.3.3 Semi structured interview-dialogues**

Even though I developed *interview* guides, I wanted a form of material-gathering that involved some kind of pedagogical conversations; this for me meant *intending* to contribute information myself, and steering, encouraging and explaining in ways I believe necessary in unsettling learning dialogues. This coincides with my two goals: to produce material for

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<sup>21</sup> I have done workshops and both formal and informal dialogues on these topics and angles since 2000.

analysis, and to use dialogues as exploratory test runs. I mainly use the word dialogues because I feel it is better suited to describe what happened; I asked questions, but we mostly talked about and around the answers. I intended and managed to challenge some of the informants, while providing both them and me with good experiences and illustrations of learning by looking for own systems of meaning and discursive inconsistencies. I wanted to facilitate dialogues where I could see how they reacted to being in the middle of such a strategy, being put in an unusual and personalized situation of defending understandings of a contentious “topic”. I did not state this explicitly, thinking it would be more powerful if realized, but when some asked at the end I confirmed and awarded the realization; I wanted this project to experiment with and evaluate the potential usefulness of this type of dialogue. Importantly I was convinced that this intention could not be opted out, because if I had good dialogues and found useful material, they would also *by default* be indicative of potential. By posing similar questions from different angles I hoped I might (and did) trigger interesting discourses and different argumentations toward more or less “scattered” comprehensions. As expected, a few thought particular questions were simple or silly, some expressed impatience with repetitions, and some experienced parts as difficult and/or surprising. They seemed from okay to thrilled afterward, and I gathered exciting material, so I found the guide well made. I was convinced it had to be fairly *time-consuming* to establish good rapport and treat the issues well; I let them know the timeframe and although some responded with a little concern, there were no complaints during or after. Four had free time after and all these continued talking and asking enthusiastically, for 15-30 minutes, further confirming my impression of good rapport and “approved” length of time. I interviewed and transcribed in Norwegian.

### **3.3.4 Outline of interview guides**

I asked them to briefly present background, education and work experience, motivations around teaching, and subjects of interest, and then to describe “experiences” and attitudes growing up, with self-marked or perceived “GLBTQ<sup>22</sup> people”. This led to asking if they saw themselves as non-prejudicial, and exploring implications of answers and the term prejudice, via “stereotypical thinking”. I proceed to deal thoroughly with concepts, asking how they

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<sup>22</sup> “Did you know, or know of, someone who called them selves “lesbian”, “gay”, “bi”, “transgender” or “queer” growing up? Or someone you perceived that way?”

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understand “gender”, “sexuality”, femininity, masculinity, any related thoughts on origin, experiences, communication, and if/how/why they understand relations between “gender expressions” and “sexual preferences“. I move on to understanding and use of the words heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and queer. I explore further the concepts of “homophobia”, “heteronormativity”, “tolerance” and “political correctness”, and tie them together by asking for possible connections, how they like the words, if they are useful, what one concept’s implies for the sense of another, and relevance in education. Both groups were asked about perceptions of curriculum and institutional involvement, regarding normativity, anti-homophobia and responsibilities. Students were asked about experience in student teaching, strategic responses to specific school situations, and teaching topics surrounding sexuality education. Faculty members were asked about institutional practices, teaching content, intentions, perceived success, student attitudes, responsibilities, interpretation of mandates, and possibilities of change. I finally ask everyone how they personally relate to themselves in terms of “gender“, “gender expression” and “sexuality”, often in terms adjusted to previous comments about gender, sex, identity, expression, belonging and preferences; finally I ask whether the dialogue was challenging or if they had any other feedback.

### **3.3.5 The choice to con/textualize**

As the project progressed, I realized I also wanted to see how this transcription material could be read in relation to more or less formal/ized *text* that was mandated in TE, available as *knowledge* on gender or sexuality or anti-homophobic tools, or just discourses of gender and sexuality “surrounding” these agents in institutional or broader social/political ways. This could provide the project with a wider perspective on how these discourses maintain their defining authority of truth, through repetition and multisided mutual legitimization that naturalizes this distributed *knowledge* with its underlying assumptions, in a field of education.

### **3.3.6 Ethical considerations**

Informed by Butler’s perspective on ethical relationality, and applying it to what it would involve to pedagogically approach increasing relationality and agency, I consider my choice of subject pool and analytical approach both *ethically* pertinent and appropriate. My ethically informed focus is *exploring how* to “create” educators that will see their involvement and responsibility; based on the perspective on discourses sustaining heterosexual hegemony *and*

current anti-homophobic approaches as *unethical* for their illusive coherence, I explored understanding of many of the involved concepts and narratives. Some may object that it is ethically problematic to conduct interviews that *intend* to question an informant's *knowledges* and personal effects on/in their classrooms; I realize I put informants in a vulnerable situation. One reason I disregard this "risk" is the belief that the ethically grave agency-foreclosing "life consequences" for pupils must be put before a consideration of informants' possible discomfort; also, they *chose* to take on the roles they were interview in, where professional execution is subject to public and academic demand and scrutiny. It may also be argued that interference should always be minimized for it not to be ethically questionable; again, an ideal of non-interference only forecloses social changes that *demand* radical relationality and serious interference. Ethical approaches involve seeing *self* as involved in, and dependent on, others; the informant and I will *always* have consequences for us both and the material. I consider it conducive to better dialogues to leave *aims* of less interference behind and rather express *intent* for, allow, explore, and analyze the multiple interferences; I am after all exploring potential of *unsettling* dialogues similar to these. I therefore allowed scary moments and sometimes pushed questions that could make informants feel inconsistent, illogical, unknowing, or even some level of ignorant. While disregarding *possible* discomfort, I also made much effort to make experiences as safe and meaningful as possible, and perceived them to feel good about it. In total I can ethically justify the appropriateness of intentionally "interfering" interviews. I made sure they were all well informed of their participant rights ahead of time, and regarding confidentiality and anonymity I consistently treated the material in ways that ensured this. As I only present excerpts and do not create "profiles" or use pseudonyms, it is virtually impossible to recognize any informants from reading this.

### 3.4 Practical aspects of analyses: priorities, foci and levels.

The perspectives are elaborated on in the theory chapter but I want to present some practical deliberations here in the context of describing my approach. Again, I explore discourses with their conflicts and implications, *not* informants and their personal stories. I do not use pseudonyms in presentation because most importantly it distracts the reader from scanning for persons to "get to know", ones that somehow explain and give meaning to statements. I believe illusions of causal coherence are best avoided and challenged by making individuals behind statements minimally available and relevant. The dialogues produced substantial



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feedback on many issues, and I do, intermittently, present some comments *about* TE and teaching, but my main focus all along has been on certain concepts and narratives. I realized I have far too much material to do it justice and decided to focus almost exclusively on conceptual discussions. Although interesting, aspects about institutions, experiences, strategies and motivations sadly had to be de-prioritized. The decision to *con/textualize* made it even more necessary to limit my focus when analyzing transcription material.

I need to *justify* further the focus, in all my material, on discourses involving GLB/T/Q instead of unmarked normative *text*, a focus I have in my questions, my selections, presentations, and my discussion. As I constantly argue against citing and re-marking GLB/T/Q meanings, within the theory chapter and elsewhere, I have arguably focused a lot on what is already *marked*. One of the central insights of “queer theory” is the importance of focusing on the privileged, the *unmarked*, to expose heteronormative dynamics that uphold false and arbitrary divisions between people (Bolsø 2007); this is something I agree *is* important. I therefore make it explicit how my choices were made for specific reasons: first, because I want to argue analytically and pre-emptively against a counter-argument which could involve defending of *knowledge*-texts (“about GLB/T”) perhaps otherwise found useful (Skeiv Ungdom 2008, 2009b, Blikk 2009) for anti-homophobic work in education. Secondly I believe that showing a further plethora of *text* involving no marked bodies/desires, but bodies/desires unmarkedly “present”, would be overkill; the two curriculum textbooks<sup>23</sup> and the *Resource book*<sup>24</sup> will illustrate that dynamic sufficiently. The third reasoning is that I also believe this selection illustrates the academic and semi-academic “discourses of homophobia”<sup>25</sup> that *mark* desires, shape affect, and *reproduce* mainstream language and “common sense”, including that of TE agents. Fourth, and most of all, I find it productive toward the analyses I attempt at; I try to look at how *differéce* works in two ways: the unmarked bodies and desires have invisible but “given” status in discourse re/produced through many assumptions and deferrals re/constituting this status, the marked and explicit being what makes the unmarked and implicit a seemingly functioning discursive totality in itself, in “neutral” discourses where *hetero/homo* is not visible. On another level

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<sup>23</sup> Imsen (2005), Heggen (2004)

<sup>24</sup> *Relations and Sexuality – A resource book for teachers* (Læringscenteret 2001)

<sup>25</sup> More on this under “heteronormativity and homophobia” in the level 2 discussion.

hetero/homo is mutually dependant and functions in the same discourse, which defers and excludes the meanings of bodies and desires which delimit the binary and makes *it* comprehensive with an illusion of totality.

Additional reasoning for the *available texts*' (2<sup>nd</sup> part of the *con/text*) focus on marked bodies/desires and related resources, is my approach to other people's choices and systems of meaning. Assuming that most TE agents would not have a conscious perspective on identity critique, or thoughts on gender constitution through homophobia, or want tools specifically to challenge heteronormativity and unmarked heterosexuality, I believe/d *they* would look for something GLB-, gay- or homophobia related, or something involving youth + sexuality, if they ever wanted to invest efforts in anything anti-homophobic. I wanted to analyze discourses encountered in that hypothetical situation. Because I argue how all gender and desire is constituted in "circular incitements" (Foucault) in bodies, I place myself at the perspective of this production only; I have chosen "descriptive" texts, but production is what I am interested in, not for example whether or not descriptions of misery are "true" about the surveyed or interviewed people. In other words, I am not interested in the bodies who now feel marked or unprivileged; I am interested in the *différance* in the material, in the effects of discourse and the potential for a critical unsettling to enable *other* effects, and I am explicitly trying to analyze reproduction of unmarked privilege *and* re/production of all bodies/desires.

It is difficult to theoretically separate a "presentation" of my two sources of material, from a deconstructive discussion of implications and consequences, as there is a lot of analytical reading involved in the selection. As I have said I choose to make some narrating comments to frame the presentation of excerpts, and call this a *preliminary* reading ("level one") but for the purpose of readability/availability and structure I still held off most of the arguments. This way I could give a more rich impression of, and more room to, the very saturated and diverse situation of discourses I encountered, and speak more about larger samples of discourse instead of smaller; I wanted the *contrasting effect* tightly together. I further believe this is justifiable when exploring such a large area of discourse where "size" and insistent presence itself is a central power. This way I also repeat myself less and I can more efficiently illustrate commonalities and differences. All the levels of reading/analysis are equally important. I do not believe less material, or more integration in discussion, would make a better analysis, rather I believe my solution to rich material has been a rich solution.

When I make sweeping comments about several quotes at the second level, it is to report diversity or variations over a theme. The uniqueness is established in level one while larger scale *variations and similarities in discursive effects are brought out in level two's larger perspective where the two material bulks are brought together*; I believe this does the most justice to the material and deconstructs it in the most interesting way. Having to flip back to referred examples may decrease accessibility somewhat, but I found it a reasonable prioritization: discussing *with* quotes necessarily meant *less* of the transcription material.

It is important to clarify that although it may seem I do not in the level two discussions “tend to” the full intricacies of each “piece” from level one, they have *all* been analyzed simply by being selected and narrated into relevance and deconstructability. Much of the *con/text* stands on its own as *cumulative contextual illustrations* of density/saturation of the walls of truth, and many pieces, mostly the quotes, also stand to illustrate very individual formations, where in further discussion *the overall variations* are partly what is the most interesting.

## 4. Analyses

### 4.1 Introduction to analysis – what this will include

To provide a good frame for that discussion my informants' discourses, which may illustrate some of perhaps *why* and *how* they speak these ways, I first explore possibly relevant discursive *con/texts* that may provide many of the concepts and assumptions that could in different ways inform systems of meaning for people in TE; this order is to allow you a reading of excerpts with *con/text* discourses in mind. The *con/text* (part 1) is divided in three, moving from "closer" to more peripheral, regarding what I see as interaction proximity and level of active involvement, although this division should be understood as much less clean. First I present some *mandatory* curricular texts in TE, then other *available* academic and semi academic texts, and finally examples of discourses used in institutional, organizational and political environments that may influence in *unintentional and indirect* ways. From the *con/text* I move "in" to present (part 2) illustrations of how informants' understand some of the *most* central concepts I asked about: *gender, trans\**, *sexuality, homophobia and heteronormativity*. Both parts present angles and foci, to suggest assumptions, similarities, and nuances. I use those preliminary analyses toward the second level discussion about *consequences in discourse*, focusing on suggesting foreclosed and unavailable meanings in the material, and how this discursive field continuously re/constitutes the established discourse/truth. I bring together *con/text*, additional theory and research, and informants' discourses, to discuss, under similar but adjusted divisions, topics such as the *sex/gender split, difference, the closet, tolerance, the nature/nurture "debate", representation, homophobia and heteronormative subject formation*. This latter topic is treated as both a discursive and a social consequence, and as such is an appropriate bridge to the next level. Whereas level two "pulls out" to discuss level one in more nuance, the third level moves outwards to a larger perspective, analyzing *social* and ethical consequences of the discourses; I finally tie the *identity* politics, social science, differences, agency and in/coherence together. In this landscape, based on my analysis and my perspective, and introducing new theorists/researchers' insights, I make suggestions about pedagogical potentials, blockages and useful considerations for approaches in TE and in schools.

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## 4.2 Presentation part 1 (Level 1)

### 4.2.1 Con/text, complexity and “bouncing” normative discourses

I have selected a few sources of discourse, *knowledge* and understanding; a selection of texts that I take to be *likely* relevant examples of *possible* discursive sources. Agents/institutions and larger surrounding fields interact in ways that make me believe in discussing them in concert. I hope to argue the usefulness – I would even say necessity – of *beginning* to understand this saturation, and complexity, of meaning behind educators’ own systems of meaning, to be able to engage with them critically and productively about language, agency and change. The vast fields of research, curricula, political documents, and media discourses all intricately interact to re/produce, silence or emphasize certain perspectives in individuals, and not others. Individual experiences and stories are also in unforeseeable ways established as generalizable truth; they may also dismiss or legitimize other parts of a discursive formation. Educators speak differently about difference in a classroom than with friends, or with me. You can call it appropriate citations adjusted to context, but awareness of this is relevant as it allows perceiving *reasonable* and unproblematic communication of several more or less contradictory versions of “reality”. Private use of tabloid media for example, is *at least* as important as institutional mandates; this is a transdisciplinary approach to a “trans social” issue, where discourses bounce in all directions, and thoughts and descriptions are framed and reframed in infinitely individual ways. As people draw from discourses they also destabilize them by adding their version of how signs relate to each other (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999:18-20); they cite and reproduce but never in exact ways (Butler 1990). This also includes silences, the constitutive outside to all concepts in use, the “unpronounceable” perspectives that delimit “common sense”. Because of both the “bouncing” and the citational “nature” of these con/textual *knowledges* I find the indirect and unintentional influences to be as relevant as the more direct ones.

### 4.2.2 Mandatory text

I want to focus more on other influences and therefore limit my *mandatory* textbooks to two; first year readings within pedagogy, one in psychology and one that introduces some sociological topics of youth. This was because both deal more or less explicitly with gender and sexuality and because the two fields share most of the relative authority on describing and/or explaining gender and sexuality (Rasmussen 2006). Just as relevant to the persistent

marked/unmarked dynamic, are the many textbooks that *do not* deal specifically, that just leave gendering and relations in the even more “invisible” background, but I limited myself and am satisfied with a few illustrations of this completely silent production of meaning.

Inspired by Foucault I first place us temporally by taking an historical look<sup>26</sup> at *Pedagogical Psychology with General Psychological Introduction* (Rørvik 1968). This had no discussion about gender or sexuality; the closest to a mention of *any* sexuality not just implied via married reproductive relations, was in the section “Behavioural problems and social maladjustment”, where serious signs are “lying, disrespecting parents and *sexual behaviour disorders*”<sup>27</sup> (:124, my emphasis) It also ridicules people who are sceptical to the appropriateness of therapy to “heal” children’s “behavioural problems”, *including all sexual behaviour in youth, as well as inappropriately gendered interests* (:131). It illustrates perspectives from 30-40 years ago, which have likely at some point (in)formed understandings of parents and teachers of (and) some of the agents in TE today. It certainly involves some of the meanings newer social sciences related/responded to, and as such is part of their developments and current discursive situations of differentiations etc. Therefore it is not only relevant as an historical comparison, but as an example of the accumulation over time of influences on individual understandings, desires and embodiments of TE agents today.

*The pupil’s world: introduction to pedagogical psychology*<sup>28</sup> (Imsen, 2005) is now mandatory reading in first year pedagogy. This textbook was first published in 1984; much of the cited research is from the late 70’s and early 80’s, but some new material and references were inserted in 2005. There is no “sexuality” in the index, and there is no mention of homophobia or *gayness*, including in chapters dealing with bullying or tolerance, and no mention of *hetero*, but gender *differences* are described throughout, and explicitly explained in seven pages about “gender in school” (:145-152). This opens with a statement of intent: “School is still in many ways characterized by a traditional, patriarchal pattern of gender roles contributing to both girls and boys still choosing the well-used paths (...) we

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<sup>26</sup> In 2004 I analyzed the 1968 book by Rørvik in comparison with one written in 2000. See bibliography, Kirsebom 2004.

<sup>27</sup> “Homosexual behaviour” was a sexual behaviour disorder in the diagnostic manual until 1977.

<sup>28</sup> ”Elevens verden : innføring i pedagogisk psykologi”.

will ... look at how this is apparent and what consequences it has for boys and girls". It states "expectations directed at pupils take part in shaping their behaviour" (:146), but seeing that "teachers say" they don't *consciously* treat pupils differently, the text concludes that "the teachers' cultural ballast, and the boys' power play, are probably the most important contributors to sustaining the differential treatment." (:146), without commenting any further. A page on "ruling techniques"<sup>29</sup> explains how boys have, "in reality, large interests to defend. (...) boys are favoured (...) <and they> work for continued favouring of boys." (:148). From describing boys as ruling and oppressive it leaps to newer sociological trends in describing how men are losers in many areas; suicide, addiction and crime is more prevalent, friendships are poorer, and prejudices stronger (:152). The text on power play and crime closes with the paragraph:

"In a school context there is reason to ask what goes wrong with the boys (...) and what can be done for them. It can be discussed to what extent a school with a large female majority of teachers may meet the boys' needs for new values and good role models. Taking the boys' culture and the boys' problems more seriously is therefore a serious challenge for our schools."

"Gender and gender identity" (:443-445); opens by saying "Gender is more than biology. (...) Gender is a social relation between males and females". It further states that "parallel with the development of self image and identity is a consciousness of "being a girl" or "being a boy". *No feeling of identity is without gender.* (...) Gender neutral persons are unthinkable" (emphasis in original). Three theories explain the development of *gender identity* (:445), of which the third (cognitive theory) denies validity of the former and argues how:

"the child also has experiences about it self and interprets and works with this information (...) <it is> in this structuring of its own self image that the child actively "chooses" to be a gender. (...) The boy does not become active, rambunctious and outgoing because of identification with the father or outside rewards; he does so because he himself wants to become a boy. Equally the girl becomes concerned with caring, dolls and close girlfriends (...) to shape her budding femininity."

My last example is the statement "women's moral judgements are closely tied to the actual situations where the moral problem belongs. Women think inductively, they "try" different solutions because of *a basic feeling of responsibility for care.*" Further, "Women do not think through formal and abstract principles. Their conflicts are about conflicting

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<sup>29</sup> "Hersketeknikker", a concept formally introduced in 1981 by feminist/academic Berit Ås in the book *Kvinner i alle land...Håndbok i frigjøring*. It became a central part of feminist understanding and liberation at the time.

responsibilities, and not as with the boys conflicting formal and abstract principles.” (:476); no further discussions of morality.

In the index of Heggen’s *Risk and negotiations: Topics in the sociology of youth* (2004)<sup>30</sup> I found the words *identity*, and *identity -conflict*, *-construction*, *-problems*, *-project* and *-development* referring to 48 different pages, by far more than any other word, and related to many parts of the situations and lives of youth. There is no mention of *gayness* or *homophobia*, readable as no acknowledgement of these “aspects” as *risks* or *negotiations* in youth (ref title). *Gender roles* are, as in Imsen’s book, not mentioned as problematic as such; “traditional gender roles” are acknowledged as problematic, but not mentioning *present roles*. Also “young girls may (...) <no longer> have to take over prejudicial traditions related to gender and sexuality.” (:23); nothing is said about “young boys” and “prejudicial traditions” are presented as only about *girls/women*. A section opens with the statement “Research on youth (...) was for a long time characterized by gender ... not being considered.” (:24). The one paragraph expanding on this problem, says that research is biased through focus on *boys*, and that gender also has to do with social and cultural influences (:25); here “lack of gender perspective” is “met” by saying there is lack of *girl’s/women’s* representation in research and that the text positions itself within some kind of constructivist understanding. One section is interesting for its epistemologically explicit statements, as it says that “During the 60s and 70s the social research (...) gets a more critical character, often with more or less explicit Marxist references.”(:21), but such “critique of a positivist research tradition ... is not very explicit <now>” (:24). It says nothing of gender, but read together this positioning may communicate that critique of positivism is no longer interesting, whether about gender, or something else.

### 4.2.3 Available text

TE students may easily encounter the book *Relations and Sexuality – A resource book for teachers*<sup>31</sup> (Læringscenteret 2001). There is a 12 page chapter called “*gayness*” involving the

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<sup>30</sup> ”Risiko og Forhandlinger. Ungdomssosiologiske emner”.

<sup>31</sup> *Samliv og seksualitet. En ressursbok for lærere*. Læringscenteret. Written by an interdisciplinary group, and intended for teachers in grades 8-13. Made on assignment by the Departments of Health and Knowledge. In 2001 this was ”Kirke- Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet og Helse- og Omsorgsdepartementet.”



following subheadings: “history”, “facts about and attitudes toward homosexuality”, “discovering and accepting own sexuality (“legning””, “coming out as gay or lesbian”, and “living conditions and quality of life among lesbians and gay men”. The first includes a brief presentation of the etiological arguments of *gayness* (:105) (there is no similar presentation of arguments over etiology of “hetero” in the book). The second reads “for some the gay *identity* develops long before puberty.” (:107); there is no comment, here or elsewhere, about *hetero identities* in children. Further, the encouragement to teach “respect and *tolerance* for what is different” (:111), advice to be considerate of the homophobic pupils (!) (:112), and reminder that LLH makes representative and descriptive school visits (:112), all use discourses of identity, difference and representation. The text alternates between *gayness* and *homosexuality* as well as between “legning” and *orienting*, without reasoning. The *sex/gender* split is explicit, and an understanding of gender as “roles” is presented as ethically, culturally and temporally progressive (:134-136). As above, readers are encouraged to criticize *gender roles*; the only problem is for the few not fitting into appropriate *gender identities* (:167), briefly touching on “transsexuality” (:168), citing medical discourse and “old” pronouns. General issues are of unmarked desire; on rare occasions mentioning “relevant” *homosexuality/gay* issues. The following is typical, in “love and crushes”: “reflect on the relation between friendship ... crushes ... love and sexuality. ... <so> boys need to know something about how girls think and feel, and the other way around.” (:93). Suggested activities involve separation and encourage respect for different thoughts, feelings and needs.

An available social psychology booklet is *Prevention and handling of homophobic teasing in junior high school*<sup>32</sup>. *Overview and suggested efforts* (Slatten et al. 2007). An illustrative sentence is in the preface: “This <text> is part of the project “production of normality”<sup>33</sup>”; “normality” is a clear goal. It describes national policies prohibiting homophobic teasing, and says teachers should be unambiguous and hands-on. It explicitly separates from culture *surrounding* homophobic teasing: “teasers are acting in line with the cultural guidelines for homonegativity. It is of course this homonegativity our society should be rid of. ... <it> is not the topic (...); we are discussing the concrete manifestations” (:10). One sentence

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<sup>32</sup>Junior high school here means 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade. (Ungdomsskolen)

<sup>33</sup>Normalitetsproduksjon

describes the role of gender: those “who don’t follow norms (...) or have interests or needs that stand out from what we traditionally associate with masculinity and femininity, are homophobically teased more than others.” (:4); neither gender nor homonegativity are explored further.

There is a *Resource package* (Smestad 2008) for teaching about *gayness* in TE. It for example defines *gayness* and *bi-ness*, and presents “homo history” and research on “living conditions”. The following is a positioning: “To speak of gays, bisexuals and heterosexuals can be useful but the divisions between the groups are not clear cut. (...) some choose to disregard the categories and rather use words like queer. In this book we still choose to use the “old” categories.” (:7). It cites directly a brochure from LLH<sup>34</sup>, to say that “self realization” is to “accept and understand the fact that we are gay” (:8), that “coming out” is the opposite of “living hidden”, and coming out is difficult so “be careful!” (:8). *Gayness* is a possession (:9) and a topic of teachable *knowledge*. Gendered norms or bullying is absent, only mentioning bullying of *gays*. “Heteronormativity” (:10-11) is to “result in all pupils assuming that everyone “is hetero”, making it lonely “to be gay”. “Trans person” is explained using *identity*, and *opposite* or *other gender* (:16). The division of sexuality “*legning*” into fantasy, behaviour and identity (FBI) (:7) is presented, emphasizing importance of *identity* development. For many the word “*legning*” imply biology and they prefer *orientation* while for others the latter imply choice and they therefore prefer “*legning*”; “*legning*” is used and there is no encouragement for discussions about it. It is important with “openly gay” teachers, and “tolerance”, although questioned (:13), is used positively on numerous occasions.

The book *Gay Kids – Cool children who also exist*<sup>35</sup> (Chepstow-Lusty et. al. 2008) is a book made for pupils *and* adults, with personal pictures and stories as well as research. It starts off presenting itself like this:

“a textbook about gay love for children and youth. (...) teachers and parents will benefit greatly (...) In an accessible and understandable way “Gay Kids” communicates knowledge from years of research on *gayness* in Norway. (...) gives an extensive and broad description of the life situation for youth and adults who fall in love with people of the same gender. It challenges many common

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<sup>34</sup>From ”Ta ansvar Vis omsorg” (”Take responsibility: Show care”), more on LLH below.

<sup>35</sup> *Gay Kids. Kule barn som også finnes.*

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assumptions <and> may provide the basis for safety, tolerance and respect for children and adults”.

The “gay research” weaved in bases itself on research presented below; this book is one of the applied and “sellable” uses of such *knowledge* production. “Gay Kids” explains to the reader that people “who get crushes on persons of the same gender *are called* (kalles) gay. There is an emphasis on facilitating *identity* development and the preface explicitly states that they wanted to present the childhood of gay women and men before the gay identity has fallen into place. The word “different” appears repeatedly in all parts. An advice is: “It is not wise to experiment your way to *the right answer* by trying out both boyfriends and girlfriends. It is not necessary to make life more complicated” (:44 my emphasis). It also explains how some believe we are born gay and others that we become gay, but that it is not important.

*New sexualities*<sup>36</sup> (Pedersen 2005) describes contemporary youth sexuality and approaches statistics and operationalizations by working with three dimensions of Fantasy, Behaviour and Identity (FBI) (:232). The separate chapter “queer lives” (:225) briefly tells of “queer theory” and at the end concludes that the theory’s scepticism toward *identity* categories has unfortunate consequences like not knowing what is important in life and making ones own desire/love life “trivial” (:251). It supports itself on Moseng (2005) for *identity* importance.

Several informants understood needs for anti-homophobic tools to be “*knowledge* about” *gays* and *lesbians*, and if they looked for *research* they could find several published sociological descriptions. Hegna et al (1999), in the NOVA<sup>37</sup> rapport *Living conditions and quality of life among lesbians and gay men in Norway* concluded that young *gay* or *lesbian* people have significantly higher probability for depression, suicidality and both legal and illegal drug use than “the general population”. A parliament report (PR 2000-2001) and heavy media established this political and mainstream truth, especially regarding suicidality (Hegna 2007:7). A finding in *Queer days 2003: intoxication research*<sup>38</sup> (Moseng 2005) was how level of secure identification as *gay* or *lesbian* negatively correlates with stated probabilities,

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<sup>36</sup> *Nye seksualiteter*

<sup>37</sup> Norwegian institute for social research. Norsk institutt for forskning om velferd of aldring.

<sup>38</sup> *Skeive dager 2003 – en rusundersøkelse*

positioning unambiguous identity development as crucial to health and lives in policy and education<sup>39</sup>. *Violence against gay and lesbian teenagers* (Moseng 2007) concludes gay and lesbian youth are more likely to experience bullying, violence and threats, and “those” who “have been exposed to severe physical maltreatment reported higher levels of sexual risk behaviours, substance abuse, suicide ideation, and loitering”; this knowledge is similarly reproduced. I do not present more research because none have had similar impact on mainstream discourses or educational application the last ten years; these sources are likely, in addition to their availability for TE agents, much more relevant as mainstreamed “truths”.

#### 4.2.4 Unintentional and unspecific con/text

It is useful to explore mandatory and available material, but I think it may be more important to begin to grasp how (and what it means that) agents’ understandings of gender and desire come from largely all social arenas through multileveled, intimate, mediated, sellable, simplified, and often non-explicit cross referencing within and among social fields. These circulating discourses will be heard of by, and somehow affect, *all* TE agents regardless of intentions, prejudices, education levels or political opinions, both before, during and after TE. I cannot separate media from other opinion builders in the public sphere, and media re/production plays perhaps the very most significant role, but this enormous field is not available within my scope. I assume “cross fertilization” and discursive reproduction from texts like those presented above. My reading of this is limited, but can non-the-less be an interesting peek at these intra discursive mutually reinforcing assumptions.

#### Discourses in TE institutions

What happens in TE classes and on campus? One frustrated student expressed that: “**The experience I have about gender in TE has been in pedagogy ... in a disciplinary context ... boys make more noise, girls are quieter, ... the individuals disappear a lot ... I think it’s unfortunate! (...) I am afraid that focus... contributes to sedimentation of gender stereotypes!**” This student clearly does not like the gender *descriptive* focus I illustrated in the two textbooks, and was irritated about “**a Mars and Venus attitude to boys and girls here in TE**”. The same person had questioned the teacher “**what about the little boys who want to become ballet dancers?**”, and told how both the teacher and the class had shrugged, ignored the question and moved on.

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<sup>39</sup> For example: OC 2006-2009, GAP 2009-2011, Smestad 2008, Chepstow-Lusty et al. 2008

Students all said they had very little or no focus on sexuality in any class, while faculty expressed they did bring it in, indicating gaps between perceptions of what constitutes the topic of sexuality. A faculty informant told me of using “gay media” examples and presenting a children’s book with a narrative of two mothers, and said that “**I was explicitly accused of being politically correct (...) both that and other similar times**” and these were not jokingly made accusations; classmates did not respond/defend. On one hand liberal “political correctness” is rampant (Afdal 2005), all informants say homophobia is “out”; on the other political correctness is “legitimately” criticized. I asked if any explicit homophobic remarks were heard on campus, and all but one said no; simultaneously all students said there was *no* audible feeling of interest or motivation for critical or anti-homophobic work among anyone. Students told of frequent “homo-dropping” in social TE contexts, saying “**my cousin is gay too**” in response to mentions of *gay*. A student told how boys from class often talk excitedly of getting girls from class to “make out” in front of them at parties. The only person known to say *anything* about homophobia was one who gives a yearly three-hour “gayness in school” lecture. The lecture focuses on many of the same “issues” as the *Resource package* (Smestad 2008), in the same language<sup>40</sup>. Almost all informants knew about it but none had attended; no faculty mentioned having heard of the *Resource package* when asked if they were offered/ made aware of voluntary or additional/available tools. The faculty felt “such issues” were not prioritized by the institution and could not easily, as one said: be “**squeezed in**”.

The TE Plan<sup>41</sup> (2003) does not specifically say much of gender or sexuality, but states under the connection of society to TE the premise that children:

“shall grow up in a society with far more *gender equality* than previous generations. It is a goal for TE that both genders shall be able to develop on their own terms. *Knowledge about the differences between boys and girls is important* in TE. Pressures from a global culture and media industry, which is often stereotypical in expression and content, affect children and youth. TE students must have insight into how this influences *gender socialization* and ... be able to pull the consequences of this influence into the pedagogical planning and the methodical approach.” (:8-9 my emphases).

The students had not read it; faculty reported reading but (correctly) not remembering gender or sexuality, but “**probably something about tolerance, again**”. The textbooks presented are in line with the plan goals regarding gender. The “general part” of the national Teaching

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<sup>40</sup> I have attended two of those (voluntary) lectures, it is by the same person.

<sup>41</sup> Rammeplanen for lærerutdanningen

Plans (TP 2006) for *school*<sup>42</sup> states tolerance as an important value to model and teach (:4), something all were aware of. When asked of specifications around *gender or homophobia*, only two faculty members knew that there were subject- and age specific “learning goals” regarding “**gay and lesbian families and something...?**” and were aware of *increased* goals in the 2006 plans (LLH 2007). All students experienced “homophobic teasing” in placement work; this is not surprising when “fucking homo” is reported as *the* most used derogatory term (Sundnes 2003). Some told me that their overseeing teachers reacted to it; others said there was little or no reaction. One told of fear of reprimanding or disliking if to act on staff homophobia and inaction to pupils’ homophobia; because of this, the student did nothing. Another acted collectively with fellow students to tell a teacher to stop being homophobic; they were politely listened to, but had little faith that it “**had any lasting positive consequences**”. The reactions to teasing, if any, were limited to saying “fucking homo” is negative and offensive to whoever was called it, *and* to *gay people* in general; no one told of more comprehensive conversations. Impressions were of silence in schools around homophobic behaviour, and one said: “**I had no idea that term would be used all the time like that!**”. All informants are introduced to school textbooks, so citations there are also relevant: Røthing and Svendsen tell of encouragement to “homo-tolerance” throughout textbooks (2008:34); analyses done by Smestad, about when *gay and lesbian topics* are made explicit in textbooks and about quality and/or prevalence absence, show that there is 1) focus on problems, 2) that love is *hetero* and that 3) *gay and lesbian* is about adults, not children/youth (Smestad 2005a); investigation by a textbook group, about whether “it” is mentioned *at all* confirms mentions of *gay and lesbian issues* as rare, and so are *exemplifications of people or lives* generally (Aftenposten 2007b, Dagbladet 2007).

### Organizations influencing public agenda and discourses

The two organizations “LLH – The Norwegian LGBT Association” and the “Norwegian queer youth organisation” (Skeiv Ungdom/SkU) deliver a large portion of the premises in the public sphere regarding marked desires. These use and are used by the media, and set some of the *GLB/T* agenda for local and national politics. The former “focus public and government attention on cases of discrimination against LGBT people by asserting political/diplomatic pressure” (LLH.no/English); the latter, although also discrimination- and

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<sup>42</sup> Lærerplanen for grunnskolen.

rights oriented, has a mission statement about working “for each individual persons freedom to be themselves regardless of gender identity and sexuality” (SkeivUngdom.no). Both offer visits to schools. LLH uses *both sexual orientation* and “legning”, and both refer to “the topic of gayness” (LLH.no, SkU 2008, 2009b). SkU uses *orientation* and speaks of *queer identities* to blur categories of “GLB/T” – but still *as opposed to hetero*.

### Political level discourses

A text with comprehensive level “trickle down effects”, discursively and policy wise, is the national Government’s “Action Plan” (GAP) called *Better quality of life for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people 2009-1012*. Both previous and present governments have built politics (:9) regarding *GLB* on the 2001 Parliamentary Report (PR), and have worked closely with LLH and SkU. This new plan is a “comprehensive expansion” of previous policy. People “represented” under the umbrella term “transpersons” are now historically included and presented/explained, and youth research by Moseng (2007b) is emphasized. It expresses need for continued research on “living conditions”<sup>43</sup> and “the coming out phase”, and a “mainstreaming” of “the LGBT perspective” in all sectors; in education the plan specifies “inclusivity” toward “LGBT persons” and need for “LGBT competence”; the Department of Knowledge supports distribution of the monthly “gay magazine” *BLIKK* to schools and libraries as well as the making and distribution of the book *Gay Kids* (GAP 2009-2012:22). Oslo County’s department of Education<sup>44</sup> maintains the online portal “Diversity in school” (OCDP) in collaboration with LLH; it invites teachers and others in education to four materials available online: Slatten et al’s pamphlet (2007), the 1999 NOVA research, the county’s own “action plan against discrimination of lesbians, gays and bisexuals 2006-2009” (OC) and the new marriage law of June 11<sup>th</sup> 2008. OC cites the 1999 report and presents negative population differences. Familiar foci are central: “To understand what it is like *to be <”GLB”>*, it is important to have knowledge about (...) “the coming out process”. (...) *the development of ones own identity as gay or lesbian (...)* acknowledging that one *is gay or lesbian is hard*. (...) common cause of depression (...) struggle with developing a positive self image (...) self loathing or even self hatred and feelings of shame, guilt, anger or loneliness may arise (Reidar Kjær 2002)” (OC 2006-2009:5, my emphases). Research on “living

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<sup>43</sup> A new “living conditions” project was designated 2,8 million NOK in the 2007 budget (Bolsø 2008).

<sup>44</sup> (Utdanningssetaten 2008)

conditions” is in both GAP and OC acknowledged as *the* serious incentive to make national and local policy; marked sexual politics are based on assuming a coherent struggling group. It is acknowledged but not taken further, how pupils’ transgressions against gender lead to homophobic teasing. Emphasizing a “GLB/T perspective” means *inclusivity* and *empathy*. National and local level efforts in TE and in schools are based on these policies. In a web based GLB search of news media, articles involving politicians from the past few years focus almost exclusively on supporting work against harassment/violence<sup>45</sup>, or positioning for or against the new marriage law; the foci are again on citing the negative, and on rights. Gladly noticing that the Department of Knowledge requested a “knowledge status” on gender related bullying by Helseth (2007), which I read as linking the bullying to heteronormativity, I still find no official statement bringing the public’s attention to *heterogendered* bullying, or any educational policy/plan taking these insights into consideration; the Government’s Manifesto against Bullying (Regjeringen 2009a), now specifies bullying based on gender *and* sexual orientation in the listing, but *not* as part of the *same* dynamic; it does not translate to a comprehensive critical approach or encouragement.

### 4.3 Presentation – part 2 (Level 1)

I wanted to explore the resilience, the instability, the levels of diversity in attributions of meaning and what the use of common language does to sustain illusions of agreement and communication. This for me involved producing dialogue material about, among other things, concrete use of gendered and sexual categories, narratives of community, misery, diversity, representation, apparent coherence and incoherence, engagement, dis/interest, prioritization, ontology and epistemology, humility, and the possible effects of norms or language on peoples lives. I have taken out pieces of transcribed material, divided it by conceptual themes, and narrated to you what seemed to reveal itself to me. I felt these exchanges about the main concepts deserved a preliminary analysis, but there will also be additional dialogue material presented in the level 2 discussion. To make material stand out I adjusted size, also showing informant speech in thick fonts. This (...) mid quote indicates taking out something in a statement *with* meaning but no relevance there, while (...) (...)

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<sup>45</sup> For example Dagsavisen 2007 & 2008, VG 2006, Nr 2007, Nettavisen 2008, Bergensavisen 2008, Vårt Land 2008, DinSide 2007b, Bergens Tidende 2007.



means pulling separate parts of the dialogue together. Using ... in a quote means I have taken out more meaningless repetitions or hesitations. *Italics* show loudness/slower speed or intonation.

### 4.3.1 Gender

When I made the interview guide and settled on compromises, I came to the assumption that most informants might relate questions about gender to a *sex/gender* split, and essentialist and constructivist tropes (Rasmussen 2006) available around a nature-nurture debate, but in individual ways. As these discourses are ethically problematic (Butler 2005) I had to explore the citations of them. Perhaps naïvely, I expected the informants to have more established and invested opinions on where the split “is”; most did not seem concerned with the “whys and hows” of gender, or even showed much *engagement* when I brought up questions of gender norms around bullying, opportunities, or social changes, with a few exceptions that will appear below. Some resorted to concluding from personal perceptions, while others spoke on more general levels. As elsewhere in the dialogues, I sometimes questioned their answers; this type of social knowledge is constantly negotiated and I decided it very useful to also access discourses they cited when convinced/defensive or insecure, when realizing inconsistencies, or when repositioning themselves. As *desire/sexuality* is generally understood through *gendered* meanings of subjects and objects it is impossible to separate the two concepts *cleanly*; I still treat separately, but attach some of the “connecting” arguments to gender and some to desire/sexuality. To try to respect the diverse ways of connecting and/or separating the “two”, I did this where it seemed appropriate; a few transcriptions describe very conscious pre-interview thoughts about how they inform each other; I illustrate this under *heteronormativity*.

These informants believe expressions of *femininity/masculinity* is somehow essential, and juxtapose it to believing in socialization, but rely on different levels/lines of argument:

#1 C: What do you think about what the word gender means, about what *femininity* and *masculinity* *is*, or where it so called “comes from”? **Well, I don’t think about where it comes from, you just are the way you are! (...)** **Personally, for me, I think that a lot is in the body. But on the other side I see that society is leaning towards it being learned.**

#2 C: Do you think any *femininity* or *masculinity* is innate? You talk about it being learned, and...? **I think it is <innate> for many... I didn’t really believe that before (...)** **but I haven’t thought about what big differences there are in small children! Before spending time in kindergarten...** So you believe that for *some* it is innate? **It is maybe probably innate in everyone, but I... Hm.** How can it

be for some and not for others? **Exactly! That's what I mean! So it's a bit strange, but maybe it is that some are more vague, that it takes time to develop... maybe?**

The following also relates to the argument but is sure about socialization, demonstrates a narrative about gendered aesthetics of the bodies themselves that imposes femininity/masculinity" notions across the sex/gender split, and emphasizes relational aspects of gender:

**#3 Femininity and masculinity is connected to... (social) gender, primarily. (...) Well, there are certain characterizations with the female and male bodies that are biological, right! They give an image of gender! But... I believe that gender primarily comes out in interaction with others. And of course how you perceive yourself, how you express yourself...**

One informant only rather related my questions about gender and femininity/masculinity, to whether developments in gender roles, and "mixing of roles" were to be seen as completely positive, and emphasized how some differences are natural. This informant says:

**#4 I ask myself ... it appears that in reality, several jobs are a bit gender segregated. ... it might be beneficial. That we should take a step back, after all the steps one has taken with regard to equality (utjevning). That it might have gone too far.**

This was a very engaged informant, eager to not be read as *against* equality or women, underlining how it is an important part of TE to *also* teach women's perspectives and history. The equality focused narrative apparent in these statements do not appear with any other informant, and illustrate describing "feminist perspectives" as very important inclusions of women's issues, while expressing how some traditional job divisions were *for the good of* women, and should be maintained. Very far from that understanding another informant insists that femininity and masculinity:

**#5 ...are created cultural concepts. ...created in... different cultural and social contexts that we perform in, so I have little... perceptions of them as so-called biological categories, or, yes... I don't see it that way."**

This informant experiences everything as learned and understood through discourse and insists that "You can't say anything that is cultureless!". Another relates more to the sex/gender split, but questions the *absoluteness* and the *binaries* within "both", and uses less theoretical reasoning, through intersex morphology:

**#6 I separate, practically, between biological and... gender. And I don't see any of them as absolute, not the biological either, really. ... I find it very fascinating... this couple was very frustrated because they had a, eh, child, where the doctors could not determine the gender, until after further testing. (...) It is exciting to see the reactions of the people around the child (...) but at the same time very sad to think of what reception the child might get... if it were not to be gendered (kjønna). (...) These kids are considered abnormal, but they do "pop out" occasionally... so you have to ask, normal depends on the perspective you place normalcy in...**

A very interesting exchange illustrates an engaged, but insecure, combination approach, including understandings of how genetic and social factors are relevant, and how they relate to complexity, averages, individual expressions and diversity in the context of gender:

#7 C: What do you think about what the word gender means, and about what femininity and masculinity *is*, or where it “comes from”? **When it comes to gender, I feel very enlightened by Benestad and Almås’ book “Kjønn i bevegelse” <Gender in motion> (...) with more dimensions of gender than commonly used (...)** There are so many variables making up gender! And I am a bit tired of those boxes, where you have to indicate if you are a man or a woman. Even though I personally don’t find it difficult! But it is like... then you have really boiled it down... a lot! It becomes very simplistic! (...) (...) You say it is culturally determined... do you think any of it is innate? I find that very difficult to know! (...) Well, first of all, it is not like all girl babies are born to be feminine, and all boy babies to be masculine! But I believe there is possibly something in the genes, *as well!* This makes *more* women feel feminine than masculine, and the other way around! (...) I am not convinced everything is upbringing and social things. But if you have a feminine boy... is that in the genes of that feminine boy? No, that’s not necessarily so. No? Could it then be in the gender determination on the chromosomes? Chromosomes? I... don’t know much about that. If it is on the Y, out of X and Y. That masculinity is on the Y? Yes, but it could be, right? It could be that when you happen to become a man, then you have a larger tendency to become one than the other! ... I don’t know enough about this. But I imagine it could be! That it isn’t *just* social... yes, I don’t know. In that case, what about ones who are very feminine and very masculine - score high on both? No, now you are talking individuals, I am talking about whole groups, who may have tendencies in one direction or another! There will always be variation! (...) The question is whether there can be something, even genetic, that makes the average different with women and men!? (...) But as you may notice, I haven’t thought a lot about this.

When asked whether “sexual preferences are connected to expressions of femininity or masculinity”, some said yes, maybe, initially, but none landed on believing in *biological* connections after just brief further questioning. Several did say there is a *cultural* connection, which makes some GLB people act and appear in accordance with stereotypical (“inverted”) gender. All but one assumed I was asking about expressions by GLB people. Interestingly, some answered that there *is no connection*, but “**maybe something in our culture makes it so that...**” while others said there *is a connection*, “**not necessarily, but in instances**” where “**popular cultural expressions... <are> established among like minded people**” or “**different identities and cultures arise, right!?**”; this illustrates the possibility of understanding “connection” as only applicable to biology, or automatically assuming culturally normative connections. One transcription, also limited by constructivism *versus* essentialism, reveals sexuality being pulled in when asked about “what gender means and what femininity and masculinity *is*”:

#8 I have a small thought that some is also in the body. Not just the things you do, but how you do them, the way you dress and act. You see it in some, well maybe especially boys, who are gay, that they act differently! (...) You can see it on “queer eye” (homsepatruljen)! They probably exaggerate, but yes! Just the way they *try*, to show they are gay... in extreme ways!

The same informant later got tangled up in binary exclusiveness; when I asked if femininity then was naturally *for females* the dialogue continued:

**#9 I believe so, to a certain extent.** But what if a boy is *feminine*? **Then it is not *unnatural*!** Then it is natural, or? **Yes. But then maybe it is just that the majority, of boys, are maybe just going with the flow then? That you are supposed to (skal), a way to... talk, a way to walk... So, socializing? Yes!** So then it is not biological? **No.**

Back with the question of possible connections of femininity and masculinity to sexual preferences another transcription narrates confidently how it is possible to hide true gender expressions, implicitly to stay closeted, and many other assumptions can be read as well:

**#10 Yes, both yes and no! (...)** well if you are insecure about your sexual preferences, if you haven't found your place, then clearly you might hide the feminine or masculine expressions more! **While when you have reached more security, in yourself, then you have the opportunity to release them more.** What about that boy in your school, with the "limp wrist"? **Yes, but he did his best, poor thing! And when he moved, he let go more! (...)** and found the security in himself, then the feminine features came out more, or became clearer! But, do you think this goes for all gay men? That they are *feminine*? **No. Absolutely not. Well you can say... they get away with it easier, the gay men who don't have that feminine expression!** So with them it is not connected? **No... they are not questioned in the same ways! (...)** so because of that I believe it is easier for them to... they hide it. **Because they have that more masculine expression.** (...) So how is all this connected then? **No, I don't know! It's hard to tell!** (laughs a bit hysterically)

The last examples I want to present are from the same transcription, the first explaining how

**#11 Research shows how boys are rewarded for what you can call masculine behaviour... and girls for what you might stereotypically call feminine, or female (kvinnelig) behaviour. (...)** So I believe it is mainly about socialization".

This type of *conditional* use of the terms *masculine* and *feminine* was *for me* somewhat coherent with the description of gender in terms of socialization, but for other informants an emphasis on social/cultural factors did *not* mean any similar type of conditional language. On the other hand, this citation which seemed very conscious and "careful" not to implicate essentializing notions of gender, also expressed about sexuality that:

**#12 Upbringing and socialization, is what sort of *shapes* it! I don't believe there's something saying from birth that you're going to be hetero, and you're going to be a lezzy...**

There are no signs here of trying using sexual categories conditionally, regardless that desires/sexuality is explained through arbitrariness and socialization as well. Answers to etiological questions of "expressions" did not neatly correspond to answers around preferences. In personal meaning systems, adding engagement or pragmatism, a person may think everything about bodies is complex beyond categories, but find it unproblematic or

even important to use binary labels, or find it intellectually problematic but a necessary evil; we will see examples of these lines of argument in the following subsection.

### 4.3.2 Sexualities and desire – gender, terminology and etiology.

Everyone used “GLBH” categories descriptively. One found them intellectually problematic because of repressive normative effects, while another admitted to them being too simplistic because of their being “over focused” on problematic binary concepts of gender, although the latter both insists on the necessity of sexual identity politics and believes desire is somehow innate. One told me **“I don’t tell my children they are two aunts because they are lesbians. (...) Because then I would feel I pigeon-hole them!”**, but otherwise uses all categories unproblematically throughout the dialogue. Most used the term *gayness* to refer to a *topic* that could hold *knowledge* in the context of school or TE, although I asked about “approaching gender and homophobia”, and never asked about *gayness*, much less if “it” should be taught. Two used the term *lesbianism*, one of them referring to what some lesbians at TE talked about when they talked about “issues” or their own life/home situations. There was no consistency or coherence as to using *gayness* as opposed to *homosexuality*, or apparently problematic about using “-fil” and “-sexual” in the same listing, illustrated in **“gay couples should have the same <marriage rights> as heterosexuals”**; here you even see the *opposite* of what is typically (Smestad 2005a) a coupling of “-sexual” to *gay people* while leaving “-sexual” *out* of hetero. I start again by returning to a gender-sexuality connection:

**#13 I catch myself thinking, if for example a girl is relatively coarse, and is also standing wide legged and has a very direct gaze and acts self confident, then yes! (...) and when you meet those... swooshy fags<sup>46</sup>, up in “queer-eye-land”<sup>47</sup>! (...) I feel that many relate the swooshy with being gay! (...) but I doubt the scientists find a swooshy-gene! Biologically you don’t think it is connected? No! Because in that case you would have seen more! It would have been more difficult to stay closeted! (...) the closet door would have been open all the way!**

Here someone admits to personally thinking stereotypically and then taking apart the logic with the argument that if femininity and masculinity were biologically connected to sexual preferences, then every feminine man would be gay and it would be so visible that the **“closet door would have been open all the way.”** This understanding of “biological connection”, and

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<sup>46</sup> Skrullehomser.

<sup>47</sup> homsepatruljeland

gender and sexuality, implies clean binary divisions of gender expressions but negates any neat inversion onto gay people from otherwise heteronormative connections; it also involves a belief that “true” biological gender expressions *could never have been hidden*, contrary to another (#10) presented under *gender*, and therefore makes any (inverted) connection impossible. Here, if there was to be biology to femininity and masculinity, then preference would be uniformly visible, whereas the (#7) exchange I presented under *gender* shows an understanding of femininity/masculinity where biology *is* given legitimacy, but where statistical “genetic tendencies” involve room for variation. There was a great deal of mix up and overlap regarding *genetics* and *biology* that none of the eight said anything more about or differentiated meanings of; I used “biological” to be as open as I could for types of “physical” arguments, but also sometimes “innate”. Regardless, very different ways of thinking about biology, genetics, statistics and variation might lead to different meanings of gender – and sexuality. Regarding the word *queer* I expected that perhaps some, maybe the younger ones, would use and like this word. On the contrary I found upon specific questioning that *none* used it; some did not attribute a clear meaning to it; others did, but meanings varied; some specifically did *not* like it, for different reasons; all are illustrated in these six quotes:

**#14 Queer is a word I don't know much about... or where it comes from (...) I think it's used not only about gayness and gender issues, but more general... *difference* from the big average...**

**#15 Eh... queer? I see it used more and more! Without personally relating to it! (...) It is an umbrella term, it seems to involve, well instead of using all these words (LGBT)**

**#16 Queer is a word I don't like! Because it is the opposite of “straight” (“rett”)! ... I feel it is a little negative! ...to use about others! (...) a word they use about themselves! ...easier for them to use, than for me about them, because I feel it is negative.**

**#17 I have problems with queer... I see it as meaning gays, lesbians and bisexuals and diverse... affiliated groups! It is an umbrella term. Which I like... for what doesn't fulfil society's norms! (...) But the *wider* it is the more it loses content and usefulness!**

**#18 ...*queer*!? I take that as a sort of pre-term for gay! ... Before it became publicly acknowledged, to say gay out loud, you said queer! So I don't use queer.**

**#19 No, queer is an expression I don't use! ...I think it just means a *direction* of gay!?**

Other terms interestingly used in this context were “superfaggy” (“kjempehomofile”), which was explained as someone very “prototypical”, and “faggy” (“homsete”) about which I asked:

#20 C: When you say “faggy”, what does that mean? **It’s more about *behaviour* than looks... I have a friend who is a “faggy gay” (“homofil homse”). He says so too, and knows people think it, and thinks it’s okay.**

The following exchange was very interesting, and somewhat surprising, considering the connection, which I assumed to be “outdated”, instantly made to a whole other “type” of preference, and what it has meant to the person’s current understanding and attitude:

#21 C: Did you know, or know of, someone who called themselves <“LGBT”> growing up? Or someone you perceived that way? **Yes I did. Definitely. I encountered that.** Encountered? Friendship-wise? Someone you knew of? **I would say I was... molested. Once. I was a child, about ten years old. In a public bath, where I was subjected to a gay person. But I realized he was gay, and he didn’t hurt me, and I have lived with it without telling anyone. Without that being difficult for me.** That is... sort of... a paedophile. **Yes, you can say that is a paedophile... I haven’t told my parents (...) I don’t think I have been harmed from it (...) Others may have reacted differently, but that early I was made familiar with the fact that people are “put together differently”!** Yes. But has it coloured how you think of men who like men? **No, or if it has, it has coloured it in a positive way! To the extent that I have never had a problem with gays and lesbians.**

Regarding usefulness or problems with categories only two said something specific and showed concern with the categorical discourse. One displayed intellectual and social concern:

#22 **I believe there’s more diversity than we know! So I don’t really believe in those categories! No? I know that the categories are very detrimental, for very many, right? Yes!? .... yes, absolutely. So they, they might be useful in a certain phase, but I would rather not have them. (...)** (...) If it were to come up in a conversation, would you be comfortable talking... about... would you pragmatically use the categories? **Yes I would look at how the text treats them too, but... yes.**

...while another said:

#23 **Well, we need categories to talk to each other! The categories are supposed to include a lot of people, who are very different! So it will never be perfect! <but> are we supposed to try to not have categories? Then we loose something else...**

But that informant displayed a very social (but “opposite”) *and* personal argument for it:

#24 **The word gay means a lot to me! Because it has been a long process to be open about it. (...) When you don’t have a word you feel like you are nothing at all! Or you *can* feel that! (...) it is something I am sort of proud of! (...) Not that I am gay, but that I have made it there that I am... gay! (...) And many still have problems with being gay! So it is important... to be open about it.**

Those last three all stand out from other completely *un*problematized attitudes like this one:

#25 **Bisexual, gay, lesbian, heterosexual, I think, shouldn’t they be okay expressions? Yes, if you think so, that’s fine! Yes, is there a problem with that?**

Close to the end of each dialogue I asked the following question to see what words they would turn to, to describe themselves, and some of the responses are presented here. Notice that most did not answer anything regarding gender:

C: May I ask how you *identify with regard to gender identity*, gender expression and sexuality?

**#26 I am a biological boy, but expression-wise with regard to gender, I am what I would call a wimpy hetero... He he. Not so tough and macho. And I am mainly hetero, when it comes to physical sex, I am married and stuff, but I have always been both smitten and fascinated by men, but I almost exclusively have fantasies about women...**

**#27 That's hetero!**

**#28 I would describe myself as heterosexual.**

**#29 I am a totally normal heterosexual myself!**

Us-they narratives were apparent in much of the transcription, but differently pronounced. Some blatantly said "us" or "they" repeatedly, and turned conversation focus to "them", while others said "**I don't say "those gays"**" but still use *gays/lesbians* in a categorical and generalizing fashion, and assumed "them" to be the topic. The following quotes were illustrative of the combination of this and positive comments about being non-judgemental:

**#30 If they are gay or not, it means nothing to me! And that they can love others... is fantastic! Just as we... love others! So the way I relate to those groups is really no different than... I can't say "normal people"! But *other* people! Because we are other people too!**

**#31 I don't have any problems... with gays of any kind. As people. Of course I don't! It is people like everyone else! People have different sexualities, and I am completely open to that. The problem is that normal people have prejudices here. (...) I don't use the term "the gays". They are quite ordinary people, for me. (...) I know gays who are just like all other men.**

Several commented about the perceived lack of *research* about the gender-sexuality "connection" or about etiology of "either", or apologetically admitted not reading much of it. Some showed a belief in science, and in my *knowledge* of it, here illustrated by this curiosity:

**#32 Why someone is gay or lesbian... but they really haven't reached any conclusions about that... have they?**

Another expressed certainty about etiology but did not refer to or seem to care about science, and shows an interesting understanding of *individual* innateness and "bisexual" phases:

**#33 I think it's innate... if you are gay or lesbian you are that from when you are born! I believe it may take longer or shorter time... until you get there. But I am not sure that is true for everyone, but at least it is for many! (...) Those who are really... gay and lesbian, for them it is innate! If it is very "in" with bisexuals and stuff, then maybe more people can become *that*! I think that's more like, a phase. That it is more something they try, but they really *aren't*.**



I wrap this up by going back to the gender-sexuality connection to demonstrate a brief exchange that (probably very temporarily) challenged an assumption:

#34 C: Do you think you can look at people and see what sexuality they have? **I believe I can see it in some.** (...) (...) Could you see it in a woman who wasn't masculine? **I think it would be much harder!** So really you can't see it then? **No, I don't think I can see it in everyone.** So what you *can* see is untraditional gender expressions? **Yes. Yes really.** You can't see...? **You can't see sexuality.**

### 4.3.3 Trans\*

I did not expect much experience with “people who trans\*” (Benestad 2004), but in this group three personally knew one. What I did expect, and was surprised *not* to find, was basic terminology, or knowledge of what involved to be the “kind” most visible the media with the “trapped in the wrong body” narrative, attached to the word “transsexual” or “transgendered” – the kind wanting/having had “sex reassignment surgery”. To properly illustrate their non-familiarity, variation and insecurity I chose to present almost all answers/exchanges:

#35 **I don't think about people's sexuality when I meet them. Unless, well, I don't often go to places with many transsexuals (...) Is transgendered the same as transsexual? I am unsure of that.**

#36 C: Do you find ... transgendered, to be good, well-functioning words? **I know people who are trans, who are, what's it called? Transgendered? Yes, no I guess that... That means they are both man and woman, almost like... androgyne?** Often it means people who feel they are a different gender. **I personally have a friend, who is both man and woman, depending on what he feels like.**

#37 C: Do you see yourself as unprejudiced, to different sexualities and expressions of gender? (...) **many things I know that I don't know enough about! (...) transgendered people. I wouldn't call it prejudices, but I am well aware that I haven't understood enough about it.**

#38 C: What do the words... and transgendered... mean to you? **If you are transgendered then you really have... both breasts and a penis, I thought... don't you? There are many of those! Some who are born with it! But that... is intersex (tvekjønna) too... but I thought it went under that? That is something else. Yes okay then it is girls who are boys... like that guy Benestad is like that, transgendered? No. Oh. No. Hm. Then I don't know what it is.** No. Transgendered is mostly used in Norway by those who... mean they are born “in the wrong body”, who want “gender confirming surgeries”. **Oh. Then I get it (...) but those who don't want to change but only dress up...?** You often call it cross dressers, if it is only clothes. Then you call it transvestite, if there is a certain excitation as well. (...) Often transvestites are *hetero men*, who like to wear panties! **So they are actually completely hetero!?** Yes, I believe they mostly are, turned on by women's panties, but wearing them themselves. **Yes.** Then there's *drag*, which is mostly for show. **Yes, I got that one. But they are often gay, right?** Often, yes, but not always. **No. Not always.**

#39 C: What do the words... and transgendered mean to you? (...) **Transgendered, I think that is a very difficult term. I haven't had to relate to it before. (...) If I were to use it, it would probably be in a context... for gays... Trannies. Eh. Maybe in a drag context. Without really**

**knowing what it means.** It is more often used in connection with people who have surgeries and take hormones! **Ok? Boys who remove the penis and...?** Yes, people who feel like something else than what they have a body for. **Of course, I have heard of that! About boys who feel trapped...!** In a girl's body? **No, in a boy's body.** Then they are girls! **Yes. Yes. Right. Yes.**

#40 C: What do the words... and transgendered mean to you? **Someone who perceives that the body doesn't kind of... fit the subject!**

#41 C: Did you know any ... transgendered... growing up? **Does that mean someone who has had one gender but operated to another gender? (...)** Yes. **A good friend of my aunt, well he is now a friend, she was a girlfriend. She is going through the last phase (...)** So he... I haven't gotten used to he she, but yes! (...) **he has been in a lesbian relationship for years... and is still in it... even after he switched genders. (...)** So because of that it's a very confused bit for me, around transgendered, maybe because... when she didn't fit into the common schema, she was almost just given another one.

None seemed embarrassed or concerned with knowledge gaps or own insecurity. Two were apologetic about pronoun use for their own person of reference, but only after I pointed it out. All seemed comfortable speaking about it, and some were eager to learn/sort out words.

#### 4.3.4 Homophobia and heteronormativity

I chose to ask about the word *homophobia*, and not *homonegativity*, because I assumed they would be more familiar with the former and more easily comment and try to connect it to *heteronormativity*. Røthing and Svendsen (2008, 2009) have made a discursive upside-down move in separating -negativity from -phobia, where -negativity is feelings and actions toward others, and -phobia is “something which is turned inwards and is about fear for and resistance toward thinking oneself as anything but heterosexual” (2008:35). These are of course connected (2009:206), but the former does not necessarily involve the latter. I believe this separation may be a good way of rethinking the fear aspect as being turned inward, and that this is part of heteronormative subject formation. I read this as intending to shift the primary anti-homophobic focus onto counteracting self-moulding cultural effects and thereby allowing more agency; this is a very useful redirection, but could not easily be applied *in* my gathering of material, and is therefore difficult to use extensively in discourse analyses. I decided heteronormativity would be a better term to ask about, or introduce, to explore discussions around a more comprehensive, “inwards” normative, and privilege-focused “cultural term” than homonegativity. This was partly also because I planned on dividing the term heteronormativity in two, and re-asking those who were unfamiliar, to get illustrations of lines of reasoning with a new focus on the unmarked. They all explained *homophobia* as what is described as the meaning of *-negativity*; none even mentioned anything about “internalization” of any kind. This tendency of understanding power as top-

down in a hetero-homo binary and not relational, normative and productive (Foucault 1995), was apparent also when we approached homophobia via what to do about “fucking homo” harassment in school; it is understood as only directed at specifically *gay others*, only rarely is it related to gender norms, and shame or self limiting effects are not mentioned. Here are three examples:

C: What does the word homophobia mean to you?

**#50 It is... fear, anxiety and hatred toward gays.**

**#51 Resistance toward people with a gay sexuality!? A *non-acknowledgement*?**

**#52 I use that word quite a bit! It is not directly a good word! Or it is a politically good word. ... It is not a precise word. Well, it is a rhetorical move to call it a phobia. (...) it is rhetorically good to have in the gay movement! To call the others homophobic!**

The first two argue and delimit directionality and relevance of homophobia, and these two are adamant constructivists although the first problematizes categories and the second does not; the third answer, by a “sexual essentialist”, shows awareness of conceptual limitation but finds it politically useful to describe *others* (not *gay people*) as *homophobic*.

Several had, not surprisingly, never heard of *heteronormativity*. What is interesting, as with all these concepts, is *if* and *how* attempts were made to understand and what words they use to respond. I not only initiated exchanges about *normativity* separately, but often gave brief explanations and used heteronormativity in further conversation, tailored to their citations; the responses were very diverse. A few quickly showed *some* understanding, while others guessed or demonstrated they found it hard to grasp and relate to, or seemed not to want to. The responses about *heteronormativity* seem mostly consistent with the rest of each informants’ expressed understanding of and emphasis on social dynamics, and, except for in one case, quick absorption and integration appeared in the same dialogues as some constructivist approach to gender *and* desire. Look at the following answers to my question:

C: Does the word ... heteronormativity mean anything to you?

**#53 No I don’t think I have encountered that! (...) it must mean something like hetero-people ... *establishing* some kind of norm? That they use on others, who have another sexuality?**

**#54 Heteronormativity, I haven’t heard that before! (...) I guess it is about being kind of one track mind on heterosexuality being “the one”!?**

**#55 I understand it as heterosexuality being the norm you are expected to adjust to. A norm is a set of expectations from many sides. Does it mean people are expected to take on the role of heterosexual!?**

The first two have elsewhere expressed sexuality to be innate. The first explicitly demonstrates a focus on understanding norms as *power held by some over others*. The second *guesses* that it is about *preoccupation* by someone, an *active* mindset. The third correctly shows understanding of normativity as a set of expectations, and from that the informant quickly believes, but humbly asks, if it means expectations everyone meets about acting a role; this informant elsewhere focuses extensively on socialization and streamlining in schools. *None* of these connect the concept to *gender*, even upon questions about gender after brief explanation. The following exception on the other hand is an excerpt where I read familiarity and confident connection to *all* gendering, but not production of desire; the person otherwise understands gender as social *and perhaps* biological, but sexuality as innate:

**#56 Heteronormativity is society having a clear perception of how one is supposed to act! ...a pre-understanding in society that you are heterosexual! (...) Of course <it has> to do with gender! (indignation) With it being two genders! In the heteronormative world! And they are supposed to be together. So heteronormativity helps define the gender roles! (...) Homophobia doesn't just affect gay people, but everyone breaking with heteronormativity! That's partly what keeps people inside heteronormativity, that they know there's something out there that will strike down on them! (...) homophobia is the consequence if you break with heteronormativity. Maybe?**

Finally I included some parts from a very different dialogue where the informant is well aware of the concept and finds this particular social norm, including marriage, problematic. The transcription tells an understanding of desires as what is learned in a heteronormative society and in this case I was able to suggest briefly seeing *re/production* of gender as part of that dynamic. This person followed my arguments and gave more “theoretical” responses, by for example using the concepts of dominant/normative discourses:

**#57 C:** What does the word heteronormativity mean to you? Have you heard it before? **Yes, I have heard it before... I believe it is heterosexuality as... like a normative discourse, in a way, yes?** Yes. Absolutely. Do the concepts homophobia and heteronormativity have anything to do with gender? And are they connected? **...Of course they have to do with gender, because homophobia is... a result of hatred toward... two people of the same gender being together! ...** Yes. Does it have to do with *expressions* of gender? **Eh... (thinking)... it might! If one has those prejudices... that gays are like that, and lesbians are like that. If one has stereotypes about it, then yes, it might.** Most homophobes have. **Yes.** (We laugh) **So then it has to do with that, right! (...)** (...) Heteronormativity? Does it have anything to do with gender? **Of course it has if it is the dominant discourse; the normative discourse is very hetero! In our culture! ... the whole family set-up, ... who should have children... yes! (...)** it has to do with gender expressions, yes. **...the dominant discourses... especially in the culture industry, which are very...!** (...) So I would say it *produces* gender then...! **Yes. Mhm. (Confirms)** How is homophobia connected to heteronormativity? **It is the pressure of normality, the whole cultural hetero dominance... the context.** The context that creates homophobia? **Yes. What is obvious and easy to talk about and... (...)** Many who are not... explicitly homophobic, but they're still very heteronormative! **Mhm. (Confirms) Well, everyone**

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**who marries is! Because they perform a very strong hetero culture! I actually think that's a problem!**

The very same transcription explains homophobia as “fear, anxiety and hatred toward gays” (#50) (us-them, and top-down) while a heteronormative *formative* dynamic is interestingly related and applied to a personal life and history where and narrated as influential in this way:

#58 C: Where do you think sexuality “comes from”? *Why*, are you *heterosexual*? (Referring back to “I am heterosexual”). **It is possible that I am very thoroughly trained to be heterosexual... because I am! (...)** I can't say anything else. I am trained at it in all sorts of big and small ways.

## 4.4 Analysis of discursive consequences (Level 2)

### 4.4.1 Introduction

I never had a problem with finding interesting articulations in the transcriptions, realizing how some assumptions were partially confirmed while others were challenged, or appreciating how the complexities I expected were even much greater than I thought; I thoroughly appreciated the material as challenging and diverse. The problem was *structuring* the readings, *after* the more self evident concept based level one, because now there are many more aspects involved; this is a complex system of meaning in just *one* person or text, and in the case of the transcriptions, very informal language. Considering eight individual systems along the *con/text* systems was challenging to say the least, which made it difficult to present a readable discussion. I hope I have found a solution that is palatable so that you are able to follow, and appreciate, my argument. During my immersion in material it seemed almost arbitrary where I started, because all points of entry lead into the constructed “totality”. I find the immense complexity in meanings and realities of people to be obvious and beautiful; to the extent it was problematic to create apparent hierarchies of centrality/origin. My intention has been to keep complexity in clear view, while reading illusively separate corners of meaning.

I decided to start with gender here as well; I think many can agree on at least this one nodal point in the discursive formation in all the material: it is at the centre of it all, with variations of meaning being crystallized around it, a privileged sign the other signs get meaning from. Trans\* turned out to show very interesting aspects of difference, being, doing, gender-sexuality connections and insecurity, but whereas separate treatment made sense until now, it

definitely did not for a discussion; lives and narratives of trans\* are being produced *in* the discourses of gender, and as there has been substantial overlap with sexuality in medical and mainstream discourses, informants connect trans\* to gender *and* sexuality, but mostly gender, so I treat several aspects of gender and trans\* together. The next step is a move to desire and sexuality, where *knowledge*, difference, etiological narratives, and *the closet* are some of the topics. Homophobia and heteronormativity is next up, and this reading connects the two former ones via gender constitution and subject formation to production of affect and expressions. Importantly, when I refer to “someone’s” discourse, I am not implying ownership or separation from others’ discourses; discourses are only *available* to people in formations from which they cite in displaying their more individual systems of meaning.

#### ***4.4.2 Gender and trans\****

##### ***The sex-gender split***

At the most basic level, the kinds of gender discourses that I can read from all my material are exclusively informed by liberal humanist meanings involving an undivided *self* and a body-ontology as primarily *being* “a gender” (*sex*). As expected most related uncritically to a *sex-gender* split, although in diverse ways; some assumptions of a body defined by/as binary sexual difference were always left alone. This humanism informs an intra-discursive formation in my material and is a powerful discourse because of how it has become naturalized and used *across* the spectre of politics about gender. An idea humanism rests on is self-identity (St.Pierre 2000) and this is an understanding of personhood that my theorists have critiqued thoroughly; particularly have Butler’s theories of ethics (2005) connected this to *gender identity* and its humanist illusion of interiority. In all school policies and plans they emphasize humanist values like gender equality, and the assumptions *beneath* these values are hard to question because of the established “natural” position of gender in the discourse. This position is dependent on several foreclosures; first an understanding of *sex* as arbitrary assignment of binary meaning centred on reproductive potential, of the cultural history of the body, and the complexities and the ambiguousness across populations available in a theory of performativity. A different reading of the current type of liberal humanism, is that an understanding of *all* gender as (implicitly) essential is foreclosed. This meaning would take us back pre-constructivism and seems unavailable in most “western” discourses now, the large variations concern *where* the split is, not *if* there is a split. None of these alternative meanings, as expected, were expressed in informant articulations. Two quotes, #3 and #6,

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expressed very *explicitly* their conceptualization of gender as “split” from *sex*; the rest expressed it implicitly, where *sex* was unmarked and gender was discussed. The two textbooks never use “social” or “biological” gender, but there is definitely a split in their citations; their constructivism seem to mean all expressions and activities are *possibly or likely* constructed; there is no opening for *sex* itself to be destabilized

There are many versions of constructivist and essentialist tropes of gender, which, again in “western” discourses, all involve citing meaning as to *where* or how the split *is* (Rasmussen 2006). #3 describes for example femininity and masculinity as “**primarily connected to social gender**” but that certain “male” and *female* characterizations “**give an image of gender!**”; the binary terms *feminine/masculine*, that in an assumed “plain” constructivist trope are completely socially determined in a notion of *gender roles*, do in this quote *not* belong exclusively to the social – there is something in those “primarily social” terms that seems to be readable images “from” the body. I read it not as an initial collapse toward *sex*, opposite of the Butlerian logic, but rather as a displacement of the terms of engagement. Where Butler would say someone that looks/acts *feminine* is performing and embodying discursively enabling and foreclosing norms, this quote demonstrates a way to speak of *bodies* explicitly, in a *social* way that is far from performativity, but also an assigning of meaning different from a “cleaner” split in a constructivist trope that keeps *feminine/masculine* pure social concepts. It is interesting how articulations #1, #2, #8, #10, involving mainly essentialist beliefs around femininity and masculinity, also refer heavily to the *sex-gender* narrative. It seems there is a necessary room within essentialist discourse where constructivist discourse is, to define ones belief against, a room which makes the other belief possible *within* this discourse. This means the *sex-gender binary* is a reference point, also within essentialist tropes, and *other* ways of thinking are foreclosed, as opposed to one trope foreclosing the other. As with *man-woman*, or *hetero-homo*, they are constituted as units; and as Butler explains a relation of copy-to-original (1990), they are necessary opposites within their own logic, and meaning assigned to one referent involves the *exclusion* of the meaning of the other *in* itself, but one does not foreclose the meaning of the other from staying established, rather is dependant on it.

*Sex-gender* seems more complicated for when thought about more closely than the main tropes they have available allow, which sometimes may create desperation (#10) and not knowing how (#7) what the truth is about these things; a truth assumed to exist. More

diverse meaning systems with multiple sliding signifiers are apparent when broken down like I have here, and these are not communicable in a dichotomous discourse without some plain generalization; they result in creative solutions. Some deal with unsure conceptual boundaries, or evaluation of importance, by resorting to “**primarily**” (#3), “**mainly**” (#11) or “**I believe some, but not all**” (#2), or “**it is a bit strange, but maybe it is that some are more vague, that it takes time to develop... maybe?**” (#2), while others do not seem able to face it and perhaps somehow leaves it to non-knowability of an either-or they can not even relate to without someone giving them a missing piece of knowledge. One quote (#2) even tells of a change of mind due to experience with children, going, apparently, from a constructivist trope (Rasmussen 2006) to an essentialist trope, a belief that it must be something essential in expressions of being for example feminine. The two tropes are not far from each other, as both assume coherence of self, binary gender traits with two exclusive sets of meanings (whether “innate” or “taught”), and a sex binary. More complexity seems totally unavailable.

The *cleanness* of the sex dichotomy which I can see in almost all the material, which was in language before the 1970’s sex-gender split took hold, and has since then been discursively sustained and perhaps even strengthened *as* biological (Butler 1990), also forecloses an understanding of what is called intersex morphology and the prevalence and relevance of this toward unsettling binary ontology itself. The biologist Fausto-Sterling (2000) estimates in the book *Sexing the body* up to 4,2 % of a population with some form of intersex morphology, a situation which in Norway would mean approximately 189.000 people. All *realness* of unique “biological”, and definitely social, meaning of these bodies and lives, is foreclosed in a discourse where sex is separate from constructedness (“gender”) and where sex is a clean bio-ontological binary. An understanding of intersex as unsettling absoluteness of the “sex” binary was demonstrated by # 6 who says “**I separate, practically, between biological and... gender. And I don’t see any of them as absolute, not the biological either, really**”; the informant also uses the expression *to be* “gendered” as a passive adverb, and this because intersex children unsettle this person’s understanding of absoluteness. In this exchange sex and gender are discursively separate, and femininity and masculinity are constructed, but neither of the “parts” involve clean binaries!

### “Within” the binaries – feminine/masculine and male/female

Just like “the split” is left alone but imagined and complicated in diverse ways, the exclusive binary *opposition* feminine/masculine is sustained in language but much more “real” diversity



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is imagined and dealt with in very individual ways. The terms *opposite gender*, or *the other gender*, were used by all informants, and at least in the text about gender in Imsen (2005) and Heggen's (2004) books. I suggest two readings that trouble such terms. First, the binary totality forecloses meaning involved in for example saying *another gender*, for example in a way of expanding or multiplying a gender discourse advocated by among others two Norwegian sexologists, Benestad and Almås (1997, 2001); excerpt #7 refers to this understanding, and speaks positively about the increased complexity it could provide. The six gender related dimensions in their model open for understanding very diverse constellations of affects, talents, bodies etc. in all individuals, but does not unsettle the basis – the *reality* of the two ends of each of the spectrums suggested for each dimension; they do not challenge or erase the division of *femininity* and *masculinity* as valuable *in discourse* but make these terms more complicated as well as available and possible natural “talents” (Benestad 2004:6) in all bodies. This model includes the added, but coarsely divided boxes “both” and “neither” intersex morphologies in addition to *male* and *female*, which unsettles the body binary, although not the privileged child-reproductive nodal point position of the pair, the *arbitrary* reproductive relevance critiqued by Butler. Their conception of gender also does not challenge *identity* (more on that below), as they operate with a realness of *gender identities*. In a further reading of an *opposite gender* discourse, *and* Almås and Benestad's alternative to it, the latter is sustained by deferring meaning wherein someone's seemingly “talented” appearances of *femininity* are only normative foreclosures of everything outside a certain normative *femininity* – and thereby of any available opposition to such norms. Almås and Benestad's otherwise much more complex conceptualization of gender, than the *opposite gender* model, still defers enabling, agency, and discursive constraint involved in a notion of gender as *performative*. The traditional and the “expanded” discourses defer narrative possibilities of being involved in *processes* of identifications and subjectivizations, always varying across time and contexts, never “really” *being* anything or having interiority. The terms *femininity* and *masculinity*, when *used with the word “is”*, certainly foreclose diverse and complex meanings *in the discourse*; they foreclose agency for *doing gender* (although Benestad and Almås' model involves changing expressions for those who have more talents than one), and these “talents”, at least in discursive effect, fix gender, or genders, across time and space.

The *opposite gender* limitation is the centre of a trans\* controversy; the medical/psychiatric discourse for example illustrated in the *Resource book* (Læringscenteret 2001:168) only

grants legitimacy to two opposite gender identities, so the health care system can only assign a treatment worthy meaning (diagnosis) to people who say their identity “is” the opposite gender. People who seek help and tell more complex narratives are dismissed as not “real transsexuals” and denied much needed help (Hellesund and Folgerø 2009). This is not the only serious consequence; what this coherent binary does is lock narrative options in discourse by ruling out agency and other more complex non-binary ways of “identifying”, or “dis-identifying”, *away from* a body’s assigned meaning. In this sense, all who cite opposite gender, without *ever* having to attach it to any trans\* narrative, maintain this coherent truth of opposites and foreclose narratives in which to understand or imagine something outside the pair; it is a powerful reality producing discourse where not being a boy means being a girl. This dichotomous exclusiveness is closely tied to the logic of homophobic genderpolicing I discuss later under “heteronormativity and homophobia”. deLauretis (1999) notes about the international version of transgender it “is a trope that fully realizes the nature of the signifier; that is to say, it is meaningful only as a sign, it signifies “I am a signifier”, and bears no reference to a gender, a sex, a sexuality, or a body. No reference to anything but its own discursive nature” (:261 in Rasmussen 2006:115). I disagree, I believe the word *trans* in itself problematically *in effect* refers to and reproduces legitimacy of the gender opposites *and* the sex-gender split, as something real but *transgressed*; this for me makes the *categorical transgender spectre* vocabulary counter productive and in need of deconstruction.

### *Multiplication to unsettle the opposites*

Davies writes about a necessity of moving toward binary unsettlement through multiplication of gendered positions and doings: “There is not one masculinity or femininity, but many versions of each both within and across class and cultural boundaries. That recognition of multiplicity is itself fundamental to dislocating the press of binary thinking...” (2003:xii). As Davies’ book is about pedagogical conversations I agree on the usefulness of multiplications in a process *toward* further unsettling; done only “half way” I read this as not ideal, as there are still “two main camps” (and two *sexes*) baked into the two words, which may sustain the established division. When repeating the two words too much in a pedagogical process one may easily get stuck in constructivist discourse and leave both the split and the grouped behaviour meanings alone; this could at least temporarily foreclose further deconstruction.

In the transcriptions I read multiplication or diversity as mostly absent. They spoke of femininity and masculinity stereotypically and coherently, certainly when attaching gender normatively and inversely to desire. Some resorted to additive notions *for themselves*, saying something like “**I like to look feminine but I also do masculine things**”; such established and exclusive meanings are attached that when behaviour is not deemed *feminine* it *must* be *masculine*. They did not seem to communicate multiple meanings of *feminine* or *masculine*; this is not to say they do not *know* it, it means their language does not display it. A solution I found very fascinating and unexpected in the material, related to the idea of multiplication to unsettle the gender binary, was how some transcriptions involve statements (#2, #7) that consider femininity and masculinity innate *for many, but not for all*; this related to *degrees* of, not *types* of. It seems to me this may be a way of integrating real people’s changes over time, or maybe to incorporate the “unclear” or the “more vague” (#2) people as perhaps “not innate” into the equation, thinking it is innately determined to “be” *feminine* or *masculine* for all those (the “average” in #7) who are stereotypical or common, while not for others. Innateness does not have unchallenged positions in their gender-discourse formations, because their perceived reality understood through an exclusive binary involves something illogical that result in discursive battles and partially fixed truth -solutions. It seems citing such essentialist *and* constructivist tropes to solve seemingly contradictory perceptions, involves having foreclosed other meaning-solutions that could account for apparent “typicality” *and* diversity. The solution also forecloses for example that all “displays” of whichever of the multiple genders, stereotypical or not, are innate in *individual* ways, as with Benestad and Almås’ “talents”. Additionally the essentialist signification forecloses any thought that it may not be “innate” in any, that all diversity *and* commonality are results of cultural/discursive processes. #8 and #9 illustrate a different and more confident way to deal with the “problem”, and with essence, by reaching a conclusion that it is “all or none” when it comes to biological etiology, and so diversity leads to a constructivist belief.

### Gender equality (- likestilling)

According to Lundgren and Sörensdotter’s (2004) study of gender in Swedish schools, the “most common efforts toward gender equality and against re/production of traditional gender role patterns, is working in gender segregated groups” (:52). This is always about letting the girls speak more, dare more, not be objectified, have more room; it is not to challenge the boys’ right to do what “they” do. All these well-intended efforts “erase individual differences and reproduce gender” (:59). The informant with the one quote (#4) about gender that shows

a reading of my *conceptually* intended questions to concern equality and development, also states that maybe the structural changes had gone too far, and refused to engage in any exchange that unsettled that focus. It seems that in this established formation around gender, *equality* too, was such a privileged sign, that all other meanings around gender in society and in language, which were abundant in most of the others, seemed absent from the “map of associations”, also upon further questioning; the informant returned to *women*, to feminist developments and to some work-wise segregation for consideration and safety of *women*. “A mixing of roles” was found to have gone too far. Here, a focus on gender meant an increased focus on *women* and things that were *about women*, or *women's issues*:

**My colleagues, and especially the *women* in the section, often have heavy focus on the *gender perspective* in ... It is a *profile area* for them. And we boys, we *agree*. But don't focus as much as they do? I don't know. We have expressed that we agree collectively. That *women's perspective* should be presented more. In many parts of the teaching. And we do.**

This notion of *women's issues* being added to some *regular* issues, illustrates what I call a *conservative* liberal humanist discourse, with emphasis on rights and labour situation in law and policy, and a logic of inclusion that sustains an ontological, and relevant, division. I read the gender sign as over saturated with gender equality, or perhaps *it* can be said to be a nodal point, with gender having little meaning not directly connected to questions of equality. Some deferrals in this “conscious” and coherent narrative about gender, are thoughts on diversity, complexity, “construction” or agency – what could make up nuanced webs of meaning; not thinking those aspects into gender is what allows the coherent and natural narrative.

### *Knowledge about gender*

Several informants indicated insecurity about etiology when I asked about femininity and masculinity, and got even more insecure when I asked about understanding of gender expressions in relation to preferences: “No, I don't know! It's hard to tell! (laughs)” (#10). This tells of something not known, a perceived lack of *knowledge*, but not a lack that necessarily bothered the informant, and perhaps a *knowledge* that supposedly is available for “telling” through personal perception, but which the informant had not perceived unambiguously yet. Few explicitly connected descriptive *knowledge* of the kind encountered in Imsen's and Heggen's texts to personal etiological conviction about gender; one informant (#11) referred to research in that “**boys are rewarded for what you can call masculine behaviour...**”, and bases a constructivist argument on this. No other based truth in science

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narratives, but rather more personal ones of watching children in being *essentially* different (#2) or seeing more diversity (#7) than purely biological gender would allow for.

In no part of the material is there visible awareness of *essentializing* effects of generalizing knowledge transmission. For example in Imsen (2005) and Heggen (2004) there is no sense of reflexivity, no explicit sense of their own involvement in the knowledge or its presentation. The reason I presented Heggen's comment about no *current* critiques of positivism in theories of youth, is that for a student this may be read as if there are no more such critiques; this temporal delimitation may re/produce assumptions that social studies with critical aims for social and epistemological change are outdated and unnecessary. As such political projects, epistemology and social sciences are cited and compartmentalized as separate things – a move that re/establishes social sciences' methodological narratives, also regarding gender research, as neutral and descriptive in a way where both the normative, the complex and the incoherent aspects are situated as invisible and unapproachable for a reader. The descriptive focus implies an assumption in both books that gender is deemed a valid *construct*, and that differences *between* gendered categories are always very useful and *should* be mapped on a general basis, disregarding large individual, class based and cultural differences. I also read it as problematic that the *social validity* of this knowledge is assumed in this narrative, involving an appropriateness of emphasizing these kinds of "results" to teachers in training so that they may *apply* this knowledge of children in their teaching role. Gender knowledge here involve truths sustained on foreclosure of ways to see outside boy, girl and gender identity; the fields' knowledge-power is *necessarily* supported by these truths; in this sense the master's tools will never bring down the master's house. By assuming "objective" positions the discourses are apparently *removed* from opinions while in my reading they have very real consequences by conveying what is relevant to "know", and most of all, what is *knowable*. Although *one* informant reported concerned awareness for this focus, I suggest more common difficulty in not letting the truths be established.

In all but one (exemplified by #5) transcription I see *some* kind of focus on describing gender differences, but #4 shows by far the most similarity to the textbook citations around gender, in its *complete* focus on *description* of generalized differences and (in Imsen's case) on the structural aspects most involved in gender equality and oppression of women. I read Imsen's, and #4's, narratives to both involve the liberal feminist foci, where oppression and gender in general is about women, and privilege about men. Both also involve radical feminist

celebration and even consideration of women as a coherent group with separate qualities. A reading of the paragraphs moral theory (:475) shows how “caring and empathy” are communicated as moral qualities in women, while ruling techniques (:148) and power is presented as something boys have and use to oppress and maintain privilege over girls. Regardless of possible construction dynamic assumed to be behind this situation, the descriptive discourse can clearly be said to have essentializing effects. These last generalizations deny meaning to the many variations of ruling techniques, its agents, and their reasons for using them, as well as individual differences and complexities when it comes to what empathy and caring can be and what power is. As one informant said, there is a “Mars and Venus” discourse, not only involving differences, but describing battles between “the two”. This type of focus is maintained by deferral of all possible challenges to a constructed gender binary *within* the meanings of that discourse, and #4 similarly illustrates how few other angles or meanings can possibly be read into my questions, because of the coherent meaning and narrative focus the word gender already has in these instances.

### Knowledge about trans\*

I did not intend to present a separate section of trans\* related quotes but it turned out that these variations over misinformation, assumptions and terminology were a great way to illustrate gender-sex-sexuality connections more generally, and how they can both constitute and unsettle each other. I agree with many (Butler 1990, 2003, Halberstam 2005) before me that trans\* involve important perspectives to engage with, when starting, or thinking about, critical conversations about bodies, gender, desire and language. Trans\* concerns “phenomena” my informants know little about; they answer my questions with questions, they have few or no words for what little they believe/know, and they mix things up. One connected the word *transgendered* to lesbian as an alternate schema incomprehensibly close by, a second connected it to “trannies” as being gays in drag, and a third stated “transsexuality” to be someone’s sexuality. One confused the term’s content with types of intersex morphology where people “have both”, and another thought it was “someone who was a little insecure about what kind of gender <they> have”. Yet another related the term to someone “two gendered” or an “androgynous”. This means *none* of the eight cited the same meanings. Not surprisingly then, none knew about political or academic controversies, but most demonstrated that they did connect the prefix “trans” to some way of going against or being outside traditional genders. The word choices and levels of understanding displayed seem unrelated to their overall essentialist/constructivist perspectives mixes on gender, norms,

bodies etc., *and* to their non-/experience with individuals. These vague and *very* partially fixed understandings *could* be entries into further unsettling coherent understandings of gender (and desire), but I suggest that as long as trans-whatever is understood as unique ontology, it might just be thought of as “on the side”, as not relevant when thinking about gender more generally. In that case the discourse and the *knowledge* is “specialized” and not problematic to *not* have access to. An attachment of trans\* to *being* (and *identity*), that can be found in the *Resource book* (Læringscenteret 2001), and in the GAP’s (2009-2012) and SkU’s (2008, 2009b) intensions of *LGBT* competence in schools, forecloses an understanding of trans\* as *doing* and as meanings that destabilize all gender and demonstrates the “phantasmic nature of desire” (Butler 1990:90).

### *Gender roles*

Both Imsen (2005) and Heggen (2004) and several informants used *gender roles* and *socialization* unproblematically<sup>48</sup>; so does SkU in their most recent article about what needs to be talked about in schools (2009b) this is problematic for two main reasons: because of its reinscription of the gendered *binary feminine* and *masculine*, and of the thought of two “sexes” that roles are “taught *to*” (Butler 1990, Rasmussen 2006, Østerås 2007:70). Foreclosures in those regards have already been argued. According to Davies, children are:

“not being pressed into masculinity and femininity as sex role socialization theory suggested. Rather in learning to be coherent ... <and> learning the discourses through with maleness and femaleness are spoken into existence, they learned to locate themselves ... themselves through the bipolar categories ... recognizing the obligatory nature of being identifiably one and not the other, of being one that is also *opposite* to the other.” (2003:xix).

This points to the third main foreclosure; the notion of *socialization* emphasized the undertaking of this by others onto a passive child/person, whereas *processes of subjectivization* (Foucault, Butler, Davies, Rasmussen) emphasize the interaction, the relationality of *self* constantly re/constituted in a dynamic where the subject is “interpellated to mold itself, in relation to moulds that are already there” (Butler in Rasmussen 2006:97). There is agency in this moulding which has no room within an understanding of *gender roles*.

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<sup>48</sup> As mentioned in “Language and translation issues” I also had to use these words as I found no other way to probe for social aspects of gender. This may have foreclosed their associations to other meanings, but my guess is not.

Imsen's (2005) legitimization of a possible problem with little boys not having men as teachers and therefore they lack good role models (:152), is an argument for men in school that assumes how men would compensate for something missing, in this case only *for* the boys, by belonging to a coherent group, filling a role which boys need to learn. The focus on "men's" relative importance as gender role teachers forecloses narratives that would acknowledge that *all* children deserve teachers displaying human diversity that could open up for many different ways of doing gender (Østerås 2007). Such believed coherent and important roles further foreclose meanings of individual needs of gendered role modelling; I read Imsen's text a determinist version of a constructivist trope because the learning of gender roles is presented as something that necessarily happens and should happen (in that role- or culture critique is never encouraged). Regardless of perhaps not *intending* determinism in the constructivist meanings in the gender role narrative, I believe *an essentializing effect* still happens when imposing this mandatory knowledge in TE in an unproblematized way; there is no room in Imsen's text for the question of whether genders may not even being good things to keep "modelling" in education.

### Identity

An interesting surprise for me was that informants did not bring the word identity into the conversations at all, but otherwise illustrate both coherent selves and categorical belonging and narration of others; I think the identity concept is less visible in informal use and more in politics or academia, but I speculate that *consequences* for a reader's continued integration of ontological meaning of delimited self may be quite similar. Identity is a central concept in both the separate and the interdisciplinary developments of psychology and sociology, lodged in some indefinable location between the self and the social, with "active", passive or natural meanings for individuals. In deconstructive terms it is a *fictional* coherence of personhood, constituted in discourse, which forecloses meanings of agency that would lay in a discursive *detachment* from what I read as deterministic ontological "fates". Rasmussen explains an alternative way to give meaning to identity in how a:

"notion of identities as fictions emphasizes individuals' agency in the creation of their own subjectivities and identities. This agency intersects with stabilizing forces that work to continuously buttress heteronormalizing processes (Butler 1997a) and to reinforce the individual's affinity with the familiar." (2006:3).

This understanding sees identity as a problematic performative, as something one takes on from the available narratives of being and belonging, but something that also is restricted by



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that same available selection which in our culture consists of two heteronormative genders; this is a recognition of oppressive social dynamics and limitations as well as a way to see alternatives and some agency. Davies also offers an alternative insight on “personhood” that gives another necessary concept to trouble identity: “the poststructuralist term for the person, subject, signals important shifts away from the humanist conceptions of identity. The term subject helps us conceive of human reality as construction, as a product of signifying activities which are both culturally specific and generally unconscious.” (2003:9). Any such meanings of *subject* or *fiction* are deferred for the coherent narrative of an identity developing from an interior being to be sustained a true. I recognize processes of identification as ongoing in any culture, but it is when certain identities are given legitimacy as relevant, important, positive, interior and coherent, it involves all the more oppressive discursive foreclosing power.

It is interesting that in politics, law<sup>49</sup> and medicine, the otherwise conservative and normative psycho-social notion of *gender identity* (seen in Imsen and Heggen) is only brought to bear on “gender identity disorders”<sup>50</sup> and *gender identity* politics that for instance GAP (2009-2012:14) has responded to when describing and including “trans persons” in its mandate. Similarly, SkU wants people to be “allowed to be themselves regardless of sexuality or gender identity”, and here too, they are talking about being allowed to live/be *outside* prescribed gender norms. Neither makes it clear whether they have any essentialist notions of gender or transgression, but both use *identity* in ways that lend itself, for a reader, to an understanding of coherence and difference; delimiting this area of relevance forecloses political approaches that could have taken a more comprehensive approach to what gender is about for everyone. GAP (2009-2012) says that a typical definition is “individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression, part time or always, stands out from society’s gender norms.” (:14). Formulations and policy meant to show respect for people who self define as “trans” might unfortunately through foreclosure of a more comprehensive perspective serve to sustain a belief that trans\* is a (semi-)coherent *gender identity* group that *are* ontologically different. For a child who learns about this, the narrative of *them* who “are”

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<sup>49</sup> A commission is now considering whether to include *gender identity* under discrimination and protection laws.

<sup>50</sup> A clinic with a psychiatry/endocrinology/surgery team, diagnoses and “treats” some “gender identity disorders” (GID).

*like that* does not allow the child to see its own behaviours and wishes as connected to *also* working within and around gender, just as the so called “trans person” does.

Where *gender roles* are seen as always binary, but culturally and historically situated, identity is a natural belonging *as* ones body (*sex*) (unless somehow doing trans\*) and ones self. Østerås says: “our society is saturated with discourses that contribute to creating and accepting situations that in many ways inflict locked gender identities on children.” (2007:7-8); the *gender role* concept belongs to/is one of those legitimizing discourses. I found Heggen’s (2004) book to be an appropriate point of reference when discussing this particular concept; the implications of the frequency and breadth by which it is utilized in this book has large meaning-implications for a reader. This discursive availability “tell us” (how) to construct *gender identities* to “go with” our equally binary understanding of bodies; a teacher who reads Imsen and Heggen and establishes the importance and naturalness of *gender identity* will not have room in that system of meanings to see how “Gendered identity is constructed as ontological” (Davies 2003:126) with a taught/necessary belief in interiority and un-changeability. It is a word used often in Imsen’s book as well, but where I read it to cite *gender identity* as “identifying as” something essential one *is*, I read Heggen as emphasizing the social- and process aspects of identification. Regardless of angle variation, it is a concept informed by humanist logic (Davies 2003) of *coherence*, and “Humanism also constrains each person to constitute themselves as rational, unitary and non-contradictory, and as if they were distinct and fundamentally separate from the social world” (:10); the foreclosure excludes anything not stable and, if perhaps not meant essentialist, definitely *essentializing*. Importantly deferred by *identity* discourse, and its ontological effects, is an understanding of how “other” is implicated in *self*, an understanding central to practicing ethics of relationality (Butler 2005).

#### **4.4.3 Desire and sexuality**

As with the previous section, and in relation to it, desire and sexuality is a large field with no obvious place to start a discussion; I have chosen to start with different aspects of discourses “describing” (defining!) *knowledge* about sexuality relevant in education. In this part you will mostly see the *con/text* readings read in relation to other theories, while the transcriptions are less visible; this part lays the foundation, along with the previous section on gender, for the rest of the section that involves notions we talked more about, allowing me to discuss transcribed discourses more extensively. Instead of applying the concept of dividing

practices to *knowledge*, which would be very appropriate, I save that to the next part where I discuss the many aspects of discourses that maintain understandings of relevant *differences* between people. Then I talk about the narratives of “*the closet*” and of the “*nature vs. nurture debate*”, before I finish this section around implications of using *queer* as an umbrella term.

### “*Knowledge about*”

“discourses of homosexuality as mental illness spoke the truth about the homosexual; now the discourses of psychopathology speak the truth about the vulnerabilities, propensities, possibilities, and hazards that *inhere* in the developing homosexual” (Harwood 2004:92)

When I asked informants what they thought would be relevant to teach about sexuality, and if they felt they had any relevant *knowledge*, the responses often cited narratives of sexuality as *knowledge* that belongs to research and not in the realm of personal experiences or opinions. It is not possible to challenge their meanings of this, and liberal humanist sexual and gendered discourses in education in general, without “theorizing about the status, conditions of exercise, functioning and institutionalization of these <social> scientific discourses” because they are “produced, exercised and given status by those experts enticed by the language of rationality” (Rasmussen 2006:120). As with gender, at the most basic level the intra discursive nodal point, in the transcriptions and the *con/text*, is such a language of rationality - a notion of autonomous beings which somehow “have” or “develop” coherent and stable categorical sexualities; Rasmussen et al (2004) argues that the “majority of discourses related to adolescence, sexuality, and gender are dominated by liberal understandings ... youth often find themselves in untenable positions, increasingly defined by a dynamic that somehow manages to promote the utility of separating *queer* and “normal” young people” (:2). This is why I start by exploring parts and versions of this *knowledge* discourse that manifest and reproduce themselves, maintaining limited available narratives and concepts of separateness.

### **Social science**

At this point in history we cannot separate the discourses of mainstream sexual categorization from scientific (diagnostic *or* anti-homophobic) categorization, but from reading Foucault (1990) we know how it was that psychology and law in the late 1800’s first designated desire to categorical *beings*, from previously having to do with acts. We can with a historical perspective easily consider how also research and theory on marked sexuality

*now* is all somehow developed in response to the type of categorical understanding I presented in the older psychology textbook (Rørvik 1968); and although it may seem:

“at first glance ... that anti-homophobic and emancipatory personal and social scientific narratives function as counterdiscourses to pathologizing knowledges that identify the subject for purposes of control. ... these <newer> narratives are complicit with the regulation of sexuality by drawing on the terms of a dominant discourse that searches for causality and intelligibility” (Talburtt 2004:31).

What I argue then, with Talburtt, Rasmussen (2006) and Rasmussen et al (2004), is that both diagnostic pathologization and social “descriptions” are *complicit* in sustaining the same dominant notion (demand) of intelligibility and coherence in their discourses and therefore reproduce gender and desire in very similar ways. And although the “martyr-target-victim” narrative based in the social sciences, is not always tied to essentialist beliefs, it “may serve to intensify the cultural drive to understand sexual orientation and gender identity as biology or genetics” (Rofes 2004:42).

### *The wound.*

A nodal point of this liberal GLB/T discourse, that gives everything else meaning although often not explicitly, is what is often referred to as “the wound” (Rasmussen et al 2004, Rasmussen 2006). This is a focus, when thinking GLB/T, on past and present *wounds* (oppression, abuse, shaming, etc.) inflicted by culture. It is an articulatory practice that depends on and maintains this coherent *gayness* discourse which is always a reduction of possible meanings and lives thorough making certain desires and relations very undesirable and/or unavailable. While coming from good intentions, politically and academically, “gay research” involves a “creeping liberalism that repeatedly marshals tropes of victimization and stigma as tactics encouraging support for queer youth” (Rasmussen et al 2004:3). This discursive formation includes strategies of teaching tolerance, efforts in the health sections, and organization’s struggles for rights and protections; it is a narrative that encompasses the whole understanding of sexual categories today, being central in the ongoing constitutive separation from the unmarked. The central part of this wound *research* called “living conditions” (NOVA) (Hegna et al 1999) is most relevant indirectly and non-specifically through the very *public* discourses of pain and misery (Hellesund 2007, Thomassen 2008, Bolsø 2008a) established in its wake. The problem-focused approach was, and is, part of an ongoing international trend of sociological research (Rasmussen et al 2004, Rasmussen 2006, McInnes 2008). According to Talburtt a suicide- focus and discourse especially, by researchers and educators, began in the US in 1989 and “served as the cornerstone of this

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discursive incitement; it became a refrain that since has been cited and reproduced over and over” (2004:28). It is extremely difficult to unsettle such a refrain and call it questionable; likely important for this difficulty is the impossible wound-critical position of being seemingly *against* something understood as empathetic and crucial toward suicide prevention etc.; here we see a parallel to a similar impossible position of *intolerance* discussed later.

The 1999 rapport asked people who “*identify*” as gay or lesbian, and then presented knowledge about and gays and lesbians on those results; this is problematically one dimensional also from a sociological perspective, a problem later responded to in research by for example Pedersen (2005) and Hegna (2007b), by including dimensions of “fantasy” and “behaviours” in response to critiques of the 1999 rapport’s sole focus on identity. Within Rasmussen’s (2006) presentation of the problematic essentializing notions of *difference* in both essentialist and constructivist tropes, it is explained that this “improvement” of mapping ““fantasy, behaviour, identity” (FBI) <is> a triangle used ... to “account for differences ... without displacing the authority of essentializing tropes of identity. In the framework provided by these <FBI> categories, it is possible for individuals to make choices about their behaviours and identities” (:89-90), but not their “real” feelings/beings. This is a discourse about sexuality that easily positions itself as more multifaceted and better than previous research, but as for foreclosure of discourses of performativity, agency, complexity, change, a refusal to *identify as* or *say you are*, and a decentered *self*; it is still a discourse that completely conserves an ontological *realness*.

Since that 1999 NOVA rapport first in/formed a national understanding of a miserable situation, the research based interpretations of all-important firm identity development has been added as a crucial focus to minimize “risk factors” in youth (Moseng 2005); this is also part of international trends that establish through political and research discourses that *queer* youth have specific “subcultural needs for information and community” to form a necessary a stable unitary *identity*, building self-esteem and forging peer relationships; these needs “have become foundational in social scientific narratives of queer youth” (Talbert 2004:28). The next added “fact” that “gay and lesbian youth” is more likely to experience bullying, threats and harassment and develop harmful reaction patterns (Moseng 2007), has only added to what Rofes calls the already “hegemonic narratives of depression, substance abuse ... and suicide” (:57); the generally wounded narrative of misery here and abroad. The

problematic illusions of coherence attached to this identity mantra, as argued under *gender identity*, is the discursive and political *demand* for, and belief in, *intelligibility*, that one can be read as a liberal autonomous subject (Butler 1990); the processes of subjectivization in a liberal discourse involves that “Intelligibility, <is> rewritten as affirming, ...the happy narrative end, even as the premises of intelligibility remain unquestioned.” (Talbut 2004:31). The recipe to avoid as many as possible wounded effects of the culture, for youth as well as adults, has been discursively established as a firm and unambiguous identity; this positively assigned value is a very explicit blockage to conceptual critique of identity or of anything based on identity.

The Moseng 2007 results, interpretations and presentations are severely skewed (Bolsø 2008a, Røthing and Svendsen 2008); 15,6% of all the girls and 10,6% of the boys (Moseng 2007:21) *did not agree with the question* about what they identify as or whether they were unsure about what to identify as: all these were erased from relevance, a much larger group than the unambiguous “GLB identified” or “unsure” (4,6% girls and 4,8% boys). My focus is not on research itself but on its assumptions, its communication, and its discursive and social effects; regardless of poor research quality<sup>51</sup>, Moseng’s interpretations are communicated locally and nationally by written and web based media<sup>52</sup>, with very little resistance or alternative available in the already ongoing public discourse of misery. Most of my other *con/text* material is also influenced by, or directly includes, such wounded knowledge of *gayness*. Adding up those three research projects, argue no other GLB knowledge has gotten as much overall media coverage or consequences in political, educational and mainstream discourses. Regardless also of further epistemological and ontological challenges to this type of research *in academia* (Bolsø 2007, 2008a, Røthing and Svendsen 2008), its legacy survives in the mainstream discourses through high levels of communicability and sensationalism that makes it readily available for focus and use by media, organizations and

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<sup>51</sup> In the method section the rapport reaffirms the researcher’s focus on unambiguous identities (Moseng 2005) by stating whose experiences are deemed relevant (Moseng 2007:21). Bolsø (2008a) states: “<Moseng’s> statistical material is conspicuous (tvilsomt), the interpretations are conspicuous ... and the understanding of identity in a gender research context is antiquated”, and I would add that *at the very least* these 15,6% of overall youth point to such a large problem with the operationalizations of sexuality and the social validity of the research results that it makes the results dismissible.

<sup>52</sup>A few examples are: Aftenposten 2007, HiO Journalen 2007, Dagsavisen 2008, Nettavisen 2008, Halden Dagblad 2007, Nrk 2007, Vårt Land 2008, DinSide.no 2007, Bergensavisen 2008

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politicians<sup>53</sup> alike (Hellesund 2006, 2007, Hegna 2007b, Bolsø 2008a,b), and the “language of pain” is firmly embedded in discourses used by activists, academics, journalists and others (Thomassen 2008, Hellesund 2006, 2007). It was very apparent among all my informants, although often implicitly, that the negative and sad foci was absorbed and used in their very different reflections, and behind personal motivations to “help them”, counter “negative treatment of them”, or “be available to them” in class, regarding marked sexualities in both lower and higher education, because, as one informant said: **“I am very glad I don’t have to be in that kind of situation myself! (...) those things you kind of escape as hetero!”**. The angles are established as both formal and informal “knowledge about” and *how/why* people talk and approach “the issue”.

Connected to the *past and present* wound are the many voices referring to the projected *risks in the future* of the next generations of GLB youth so these are “often depicted as an acutely endangered minority” (Rasmussen 2006:132). One side of this is everyone’s understandings of this “group’s” purported risks, where living a gay youth is seen having to be or become problematic. This produces political pressure to respond, which again involves that “new social authorities” such as clinical, educational... psychologists” are brought into play where “the emergence of risk as danger *in potentia* <is> to be diagnosed (and managed) by experts” (Rose 1998:63 original italics, in Rasmussen 2006:121). Although more explicitly talked about in Rasmussen’s dialogues than in mine, we have the same impression of “expert” based projected risks into our informants (:132). This is a self enhancing cycle which involves policy, research, bureaucracy, funding, media, and organizations marking and remarking certain “beings” as risky. As illustrated in the GAP (2009-2012) and OC (2006-2009), this past, present and future *wound*, is *the* one incentive and prime justification for national and local efforts with anything to do with sexual diversity and education. With this focus at all levels, all destabilizing perspectives on desire and identity are foreclosed from educational politics, including TE; one can not question the group, because then one discursively undermines “their” firmly established needs and risks.

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<sup>53</sup>More such research gets produced continuously (Kjønnforskning 2003, “gay research” website) and made relevant for policy and efforts. The budget presented by the Government in late 2008 decreased funding for LLH and SkU but increased funding for research, and especially about “living conditions” (Gaysir 2008).

### Direct discursive consequences of the wound

Another important problem with this research and the wound in general, is the separation from the vast context of performing and policing gender and sexuality as general issues in the contexts of all youth; the *illusory separation itself*, not only from “others” but from gender, which makes such truths even more problematic. For instance, the macho “boy bullies” could from my perspective easily be exposed and related to as wounded “victims of” homophobia, influenced in severely oppressive ways by masculinity norms involving performance of always crucial difference from “gender inverted” gayness. The application of liberal gayness knowledges explicitly and implicitly in education is illustrated in the TE and school plans, in school textbook chapters (Røthing and Svendsen 2009), and in the *Resource book* (Læringscenteret 2001). It communicates the wound with all its aspects and concepts, which is also a stated wish from LLH (LLH.no) and part of what SkU wants (SkeivUngdom 2008, 2009b). As Nyhuus’ (2001) thesis about “The Norwegian gayness discourse” explains, “the gay people” successfully claimed, in the transition to the new liberal politics, *the right to define what was important* and which were appropriate moves toward better conditions “for them”; this ongoing representation- and ontology based insistence on also defining pedagogical “inclusion”, crucially maintains a position of difference in discourse (:194,198); it allows no room for more comprehensive perspectives, for example exposing gender norms as the central productive discourse/power.

### Sexuality education

My focus has never been on sexuality education<sup>54</sup> per se, but on gendered discourses in TE and in schools more generally; I do not believe the potential for critical dialogues lay in this “sex-ed” format (Sears (Ed) 1992), but rather that the epistemological implications of this format are a big part of the obstacle to critical approaches. I return to this delimitation, but discuss here in the *knowledge* section two aspects of the position sex-ed has in narratives of sexuality *knowledge* in schools. None of the student informants who were questioned about teaching/learning around sexuality, challenged the designation of sexuality *as knowledge*; they complained about focus on STDs and reproduction, in line with the pupils’ unsatisfied sex-ed experiences reported in Møllhausen’s (2005) study, as opposed to what they believed would be better in focusing on for example attitudes, relations, media, pornography and

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<sup>54</sup> I chose to use *sexuality* education as opposed to sexual education, in line with what is done in Sears (1992). I find this works to gather sex information and sexuality norms under a larger notion of sexual pedagogy.



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expectations. They also expressed a need for *more* and *earlier* sex-ed, but none mentioned any potential problems with it being designated a limited time and space in relation to how that easily defines sexuality *out* of the rest of the pedagogical relation. For their roles in the *knowledge* narrative, *content* and *delimitation* will be the aspects of sex-ed discussed next.

In sex-ed the main focus is on normative unmarked sexuality, as demonstrated in the *Resource book* (Læringscenteret 2001) and by Røthing and Svendsen (2009), but here I limit the discussion to sex-ed content based on *gayness knowledge*. Researchers tell us of in general *positive* inclusions (if any), although often stereotypical, in sex-ed situations; teaching about *gayness* in general (mostly designated to sex-ed) are for two pedagogical reasons (Røthing 2007, Røthing and Svendsen 2007, 2009): *for* the invisible “others” - to not trouble pupils who *are* or think they might *be* LGBT, and *about* “the others” to create tolerance and respect in pupils that are (assumed) *not* LGBT. According to them (Røthing 2005, 2007, Røthing and Svendsen 2007, 2008) there are plenty of good intentions on the part of both teaching plans (Røthing 2004) and teachers when it comes to teaching about *gayness*. But, while recognizing good intentions, they also criticize the discourse and the narrative involved in the sex-ed and textbook material they have investigated, saying:

”Sexuality is depicted as something stable and set, something the individual has and is, and it is expected that one is *either* hetero *or* gay. (...) if one were to find out about sexual attraction toward people of the same gender, they are encouraged to first make sure it is a stable condition and not just a teenage phase that will pass. If it turns out to be lasting, if they really *are* homosexual, they are encouraged to happily take on a gay or lesbian identity and “come out” to family and friends.” (Røthing and Svendsen 2008:40).

This focus on ontological stability and realness, with subsequent important *identity*, reads as directly based on Moseng’s (2005) conclusions, and is in line with Moseng’s (2007) omission of the larger group which disagreed with the whole *identity* question; in sex-ed this is the *gayness knowledge* that is given to pupils about realness, development, belonging and *identity*. What is presented to TE students is similar, in the “gayness in school” lecture, in the TE *Resource package* (Smestad 2008) and in the *Resource book* (Læringscenteret 2001) for teachers; this illustrates the kind of discourses and *truths* that are available to teachers *for* sex-ed. There is a separate section about *gayness* in the latter book, regardless of most of the “facts” (like “living conditions”) presented not having *anything* to do with relations or sexuality but rather *the wound* and strategies to show empathy and teach tolerance. The heteronormative discourse is maintained throughout both resources; *gayness knowledge* will always foreclose critical perspectives on “normality” or privilege.

One thing is the designation of *gayness* mainly *into* sex-ed, but on a more general note it is problematic to presume to take sexuality out of the remaining school situation. It is easy to read foreclosures of complex and unavailable aspects of desire implicated in delimited sex-ed narratives: there is an understanding of language as descriptive and able to transmit *knowledge* and there is “confidence in the capacity of language to name and delimit sexuality.” (Gilbert 2004:112); these two epistemological assumptions rest among other things on the foreclosures of sexuality as connected to gender and omnipresent in education and of language not being descriptive but rather have a truth -constitutive force. There is a designation of *gayness* to a spatial and temporal delimitation in TE as well, and the yearly optional lecture on “gayness in school” seems the main alibi this TE institution has with regard to this (again) delimited “topic”; the same foreclosures are necessary here.

Perhaps the most serious discursive consequence, in both cases, is that in the narrative describing how teachers are in general supposed to know and think, there is no room for *otherwise* demanding or expecting critical approaches to sexuality, certainly not in any sense of being educated toward ongoing dialogues with pupils about general relational and social issues of bodies/desire. The student informants all said they had so far not learned anything useful in TE toward any type of sexuality teaching, and none directly or indirectly expressed *competence* in any of the areas they thought to be important *for sex-ed*. They mostly expressed sexuality to be a delimited area of specialist *knowledge* they are not educated in, and which had to be spoken of during designated times. I take this problem of a reproduced epistemological delimitation to be just as central as the claimed truths *in* the sex-ed classes because “sexual pedagogies” are present in every aspect of schooling; a more comprehensive understanding of this is what is argued by Epstein and Sears (1999). They understand “sexual pedagogies” as involving “at one end ... formal sex education and teaching in schools aimed at sustaining or undermining hetero/sexism and patriarchal gender regimes; at the other (...) production of sexual identities in conditions not of our choosing” (:3). I argue with them, it is of little use toward unsettling binary thinking, or even just preaching anti-homophobia, if one only approaches it in select classes; outside those classes and in other classes “borders are policed... people <are> being interpellated into dominant forms of heterosexuality (...) policing may be seductive and seduction may be a form of discipline.” (:3).

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Personal knowledge narratives of exposure and experience

As opposed to the formal sex-ed *knowledge* the informants feel they do not have, they do tell of experiences that gave/gives them understanding or insight *about the group* perceived as GLB/T people. I believe this informs the perspectives (*knowledge*) they apply in their educator roles just as much, seeing that experience-based attitudes are very visible in the discourses cited. Several also refer to *gay* friends/relatives in positive narratives of knowing about *gayness, as a topic*. Excerpt #21 gives a very different illustration in a connection between the experience, as a 10 year old child, of being subjected to an adult's erotic interest, and calling the adult "a gay person", to generalize about "the fact" of how *gays* and *lesbians* and others are "put together differently". Interestingly, since the encounter was not experienced as harmful, this informant thought it may have coloured the (generalized) perception of *gays* and *lesbians* positively. This connection of paedophilia to *gays* and *lesbians*, is not seen as the person as problematic to narrate, rather I read this as how the person perceives developing *knowledge of* difference between "hetero" and "gay and lesbian people". It is otherwise explicitly anti-homophobic, so the use of such (for me) politically incorrect narratives and connections do not foreclose meanings of "homopositive" experience-*knowledge* legitimacy.

Difference

**"It is not something you are used to, coming from a hetero rural culture. Then you are taken aback, when two boys kiss, it is kind of like eh... I don't know, if you have grown up with polka your whole life, and then someone starts playing saxophone in nine eights beat in the apartment next door... you aren't pissed of... that is if you are open to music, but you will still think this here, this is not like what I have heard before!"**

This is difference and unfamiliarity, expressed by an informant. It is, to me, a beautiful metaphor about how something all new is experienced, something which for this music loving person is read (heard) as so fundamentally different. I would argue that the "*fundamental*" aspect of this metaphor of perception of difference is based in a discourse placing desire categorically in people's beings, so that "their" kissing is so radically different from (just) kissing, to the extent it is experienced as unfamiliar instead of familiar – just another kiss.

Rasmussen applies Foucault's notion of *dividing practices* to deconstruct the difference-constituting effects of speaking of sexual categories and *identities* in education and politics. Foucault explains in *The subject and power* (1982) that "dividing practices are utilized in the name of reform, salvation and domination" (Rasmussen 2004:132). This is an understanding

Foucault applied, among other places, to understand the new conceptualization of “same sex” desire to *different beings*, or *subjects*, by legal and psychiatric institutions in the late 1800’s, this historical foundation for the social science knowledge and effects discussed above. Foucault problematizes this formalistic discursive development and its “reality” constituting effects and “conceives dividing practices as operating to produce social and personal identities through spatial and discursive manipulation” (Rasmussen 2004:132). Foucault sees this dividing practice as further problematic because of how these created “identities, or what he terms categories, <are> instrumental in the production and pathologization of desire” (Rasmussen 2006:60). In this Foucauldian sense I can make the sweeping remark that *all* discourses relying on dividing practice of sexual identities *produces and pathologizes desire*. I will discuss many aspects of this which lean on each other and on that founding difference to politically, pedagogically, personally and socially produce desire in essentializing ways.

### **Marking the self**

”As long as the categories are continuously repeated, not the least by gay activists themselves, the privileged heterosexual position is maintained” (Bolsø 2008a)

The informant behind #24 says: “**The word gay means a lot to me! Because it has been a long process to be open about it. (...) Well when you don’t have a word you feel like you are nothing at all!**”, and illustrates how an important dynamic in the maintenance of the hetero-homo binary is peoples’ perceptions of the importance of self marking, of expressing ones being and/or proclaiming/defining ones identity. The quote even lets us read directly the emotional foreclosure imagined; the difference from a stable hetero is already given, so that not having a word in this formation means a feeling of not being anything at all. Oppositely, having a word somehow directly grants you realness. The perception of *important* self-marking informs educational discourses (such as Røthing and Svendsen’s 2008 research classrooms), visible in books such as *Gay Kids (2008)*, *New Sexualities (2005)* and others. Nyhuus’ thesis describes the historical development behind “gayness discourse” by analyzing how “the gay person”, as opposed to other previously diagnosed and criminalized “deviants”, contributed to maintain its own deviance by increasingly demanding and claiming to be the only possible expert on it *self*; this performance was to be developed extensively (2001:187-188). Nyhuus further tells that “those who did not take part, or worse – denounced it – were segregated as their own categories of homosexuals; the victims and the unworthy.” The victims were seen to not have enough strength to perform their difference and mark it by identification, but the

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unworthy were seen to be strong enough but refusing; the latter became a threat to the intentions and claims to coherent group interests behind the *gay* political project and these received the silence treatment to the benefit of the weak victims. To empower these victims, “the worthy homosexual reinforced their own category and began to infuse the deviance with positive value and pride”; this all heavily enhanced the power of the previously only *externally* imposed dividing practices and instead of challenging the normality-deviance division it seems there was “agreement among gay people and politicians, that the gay person was to be moved over into the sameness-difference discourse”. This focus on self marking, further established *by* the exclusion of non-marking, is how rights were secured from then on and how the power of normalization has been maintained (:187-194). The silence treatment and the threat perception can also be seen today, for example when Moseng (2007) refuses to include a large portion of the youth’s answers because they delegitimize the claimed realness and coherence of categories and the importance of marking oneself for individual and political reasons. Similarly one can see it in the polarization between *pro-queer* and *anti-queer* positions (Bolsø 2008a,b), and freezing out of view and relevance the “queer-” and gender theory approaches to sexual politics (Bolsø 2008b) in *gay* politics where *queer* politics are unworthy and perceived to undermine that same realness and importance of self-marking. Whether this fearful perception is realistic is something I will get back to, but there *is* a tendency for people to fight to preserve the specificity they attach to their *identity* and for this fight to enhance the stability of this part of public discourse.

The second part of #24, that “**many still have problems with being gay! So it is important... to be open about it**”, illustrates another aspect of the incentive to identify *one self as*; the solidarity with others “like” oneself who struggle with it, and the assumptions that disclosure is desirable and that one should exemplify a pride-stance. The pride infusion in “*gay*” discourse, told of by Nyhuus, is still very visible in texts that emphasize being out and proud, such as *Gay Kids* (Chepstow Lusty et al 2008), Moseng’s 2005 and 2007 studies, *New Sexualities* (Pedersen 2005), GAP (2009-2012) and OC (2006-2009), and the typical incentive Røthing and Svendsen tells us about from schools, where once *being* is confirmed, happy and proud *identity* and out-ness is the important and logical next step (2008:40). Solidarity *and* pride is caught up with *being* something, and can only be understood in opposition to shame, the overturned previous affect connected to such deviant *being*, thereby maintaining this binary as legitimate inside discourse; shamefulness is possible, but not

“correct”. For this discourse of solidarity and pride to have meaning, there is a stern deferral of any possible meaning of own desire as performative and unintelligible and not relevant to some stranger’s equally incoherent desires, there is no room for not *being* one or the other, or for *not* identifying without that being a position of non-solidarity and shame.

## Identity

“The idea of a homosexual identity, open or hidden, is the basis of the gay political efforts.” (Bolsø 2008a).

Identity demands realness; there are essentializing “assumptions that tie a person’s identity to an array of “necessary consequences” and performances.” (Rasmussen 2006:63) and locks a person into performing the necessary, and avoiding the impossible, consequences of any authentic identity, whether *GLB* or *hetero*. In the case of coming out and marking yourself, this *process* itself may “serve as a marker of authenticity, signifying the essential nature of that identity.” (:63). Rasmussen, like Foucault and Butler, is critical to this focus on identity and out-ness and tells of how Foucault “had disdain for the term identity because of its associations with essential notions of the subject.” (Rasmussen 2006:60). Rasmussen extends this critique toward identity now being interpreted both “within the bounds of essentialism and constructivism” (:62). #33 illustrates a combination of the two –isms, and the belief that

**“it may take longer or shorter time until you get there. (...) Those who are really gay and lesbian, for them it is innate! If it’s very “in” with bisexuals, then maybe more people can become *that!* I think that’s more like, a phase. That it is more something they try, but they really *aren’t*.”**

These “two” directions, as far as they structure relations of power, involve ethical consequences of strategic deployment of terms based on either, or both, in education (:63). For example when *Gay Kids* argues that one should not experiment but first find out what one really “is”, and when the schools in Røthing and Svendsen’s (2008:40) study encourage pupils to be sure it’s not a phase before taking on a “gay identity”; such discourses are similarly *informed* as #33 and they may have similar discursive *consequences* as to which desires are accorded realness, how people enable their own desires to be/come real, and how they foreclose “realness” and lasting discursive legitimacy to desires not limited by gender. I will return to the blurred division of essentialist and constructivist tropes.

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## Minority

The dichotomous construction of majority/minority is founded on coherent categorization, on “us” and “the others”, and allows for hierarchically ordering people (the “minority”) into value laden quasi coherent groups of people with “their” assumed problems. It has a firmly essentializing aspect to it, continuously designating whatever the minority “is” to always be a minority; it forecloses all possibilities of imagining a more arbitrary subject formation where if seeing and enabling people differently there would be no minority – or majority, only diversity and more agency. The TE plan states that the Norwegian population consists of the majority, and in addition to this there exists different minority groups. This discourse is discriminating and oppressive to everyone as it privileges likeness over differences. In addition to this foreclosure, minority discourse has no room for intersectionality or nuances of peoples lives overriding relevance of desire/relations; liberal notions of double or triple minorities, as is typically seen explained in *Gay Kids*, and in GAP (2009-1012:32), of how “gay immigrants have it twice as bad”, is not counteracting this lack of nuance in thinking sexuality but rather applies and reproduces simplicity and determinism, several times over.

The concept of “sexual minorities”, as it is used today in for example GAP (2009-2012:44), does not *plainly* involve a smaller part of the population (despite such an repeated explanation in *Gay Kids* (2008) and in *Norwegian Gay Research* (2001)). “Minority” is never neutral but alludes to identity politics, tolerance approaches, and mainstreamed notions of stigma and oppression in a language of pain. Minority and tolerance feed off of each other and so does “rights” which is focus brought up by several informants. The us-they discourse used in #30 and #31 are closely connected to a *knowledge* that “they” are a minority, “they”, the “other people” (#30) are positioned as a different and always smaller group who “we” can have problems with, or not. Such for-or-against positioning always forecloses non-relevance of difference. As with other concepts, there is no such thing as *describing* a minority, it is *produced* as meaning by the difference-relevance put into play in the “minority” designation.

## Processes of subjectivization and identification

Rasmussen again relies on Foucault in the understanding of *processes of subjectivization* (2006:73). As presented in level 1, all the informants used GLB and H categories to take up a subject position; this is illustrated by quotes #20, #21 and #23-33. These quotes show how informants not only identify themselves, but also others, *as* something, designating

themselves and others to subject positions, as descriptive of permanent being. This designation is in concert with the social science narrative, supporting the basis for affective foreclosure and the basis for a language of pain, a discursive effect completely separate from intentions. The subject (-ifying) narrative is an incentive to identify *as* one of those categories used. This connects the processes of subjectivization, to the need to be one or the other: a need met in the *processes of identification* (Rasmussen 2006:71). Rasmussen argues that the two processes are not synonymous even though *identities* are tied to possible subjectivities; “Subjectivization does not require individuals to be interpellated through mechanisms of identification to secure the working of power knowledge over them... specific discourses can work upon you – can subject you – without necessarily winning you over in your head” (Nixon 1997:316 in Rasmussen 2006:71). This is what allows the position of those who in Nyhuus’ (2001) study were described as unworthy, the ones who refuse to *identify as* even though they are *subjectivized* by others around them and by the essentializing “realness” (egentlig) speech of for example the FBI triangle supporters discussed above who subjectivize people into *being* by saying that fantasies are “*homosexual fantasies*” regardless of non-identification on the part of the person fantasizing. When *Gay Kids* (2008) state people “who get crushes on persons of the same gender *are called* (kalles) gay” they participate in processes of subjectivization to make identification seem natural and logical. This passiveness implied in the being *called* gay forecloses all meaning of agency in the matter of *identity*, as well as change; if it had said “they often call themselves gay”, ontological meaning would not be *as* firmly established, and identifying agency would relatively speaking be more available.

When *identity* categories are in #23 something we *need* “to talk to each other”, this, in my reading, involves incentive to support a process of identification that lines up with the ontological assumptions implicit in processes of subjectivization. #23 acknowledges how they are “**supposed to include a lot of people, who are very different! So they will never be perfect!**” but insist they are necessary to not “**loose something else**”; this is what Rasmussen calls “passionate attachment to subjection” and to notions of political necessity. There is no room for seeing *constitutive* effects of category use in this discourse, only seeing that that they do not “*describe*” perfectly. Quote #22, on the other hand, shows the one informant who recognizes how “**the categories are very detrimental for many**” in a sense where they have effects in people’s lives whether they want to or not. I read the #22 excerpt to imply that the informant knows this intellectually, but is not sure whether one can say the



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categories are not still useful, saying “**they might be useful in a certain phase**” partially buying into the strategic essentialist argument of political necessity; this is a “combined” position/citation by a person I otherwise read as poststructurally “inclined” in understanding of discourse and culture, although not applied to meanings of bodies as discursively sexed. Rasmussen states that “differing conceptualizations of processes of subjectivization and identification influence the manifestation of an array of essentialist and constructivist tropes in discourses related to sexualities and schooling.” (2006:8); #22 is a variation troping critical to effects and simplifications, but the person chooses to still use the words while working in education and in self-description. This is a variation where incoherence is not foreclosed in the stated ideal discourse, but perhaps reluctant use of categories may contribute to the processes in a classroom *as* much as non-reluctant use. Words that make subject positions real, necessary and available will always have consequences for production of both gender, desire and identity in students and pupils, as there are always genderpolicing (and affect-foreclosing) *effects* of any *possible* designation as a “gay” subject.

### **Art of inclusion**

*Inclusion* is tied up with all the issues minority discourse is. It is used as a positive term in all liberal discourse, and just as tolerance (discussed later), it is a term with such negative associations attached to its opposite, exclusion, that this non-possible position of exclusion itself sustains inclusion’s usefulness as a discursive tool and focus in politics. I have argued how social scientific and mainstream discourses are now so closely tied together that they involve the same dividing practices and describe the same truth, although perhaps less unambiguously in private speech. All the social elements, and political and discursive dynamics, involved in wanting or demanding inclusion, or granting it, are exercising the art of inclusion, another useful concept in Rasmussen’s *Becoming Subjects*. This art is applied to many aspects of society and education and an inclusive curriculum is one of them. As I argued with Nyhuus, the focus of sameness and difference involved in such “please include us” politics, also involves “drive toward normalization” (Rasmussen et al 2004:5); this is a foreclosing drive that always “has the propensity to codify ... identities as stable categories with fixed meanings” calling for “normalizing interventions, such as role models and curricular inclusion to build tolerance and self-esteem” (:5). This connection can be illustrated in GAP’s (2009-2012) statement of government “LGBT” general policy intention: “The goal is a society characterized by openness, tolerance and inclusion.”(:5) and specifically should the material and environment in schools to be “inclusive of <LGBT>

people in the same way as for everyone else.” (:21). LLH, SkU and now the learning goals of the teaching plans (2006) demand manifestations of the political art focus, by inclusions of textbook chapters or paragraphs with positive descriptions of what it is like to *be* “GLB”, to “come out” as “GLB”, and “GLB” crushes and families alongside other unmarked examples. I argue that when considering discursive effects of perceived being, realness and agency it matters little whether inclusions are positive or negative; they involve the same essentializing message of desire’s coherence and knowability. “Artful” meanings are maintained for instance by deferral of binary-unsettling meanings and of explicit visibility of the now unmarked relations.

Yet another relevant foreclosure involves how “methodologies of inclusion inescapably produce their own exclusions” (Rasmussen 2006:46) because if everyone’s included, then there is no exclusions and hence no inclusion. That is why “inclusive education is an oxymoronic organizing concept” (:46) For example, no one speaks of inclusion of people with intersex morphology in the curriculum - as mentioned we might be speaking of 189.000 people. Only recently did LLH and GAP (2009-2012) include some understanding of trans\* in their *GLB/T* policy, and last time it was the “B” that was included. “The identity categories are historically based in defining and excluding”, says Bolsø (2008a), but in an ongoing sense; I am guessing intersex could slowly become next. There is always a hierarchy of importance, and feeling of who has “obvious” room at the table, *because* these liberal politics are *based on* a logic of inclusion, which involves “continuously delimiting the bounds of what might be accommodated” (Rasmussen 2006:13). We may read this in at least two ways: it always excludes, and always involves individual foreclosures and enablements in production of necessarily coherent difference-meaning.

Rasmussen is concerned with the potential of *art criticism* and the many discursive obstacles to undertaking it. First of all social science research keeps re/constituting the wound and “there has been a focus on telling people how LGBTI-identified teachers and students are suffering and how people might strive to be more inclusive of them.” (2006:35); reproduction and citation of the wound is a necessary part of the discursive formation which sustains the drive for, and justification of, the art of inclusion. Secondly, what is also involved in wound-discourses is an idea that “virtually any overtures on behalf of LGBTI teachers and students should be applauded simply by virtue of their rarity and degree of difficulty” (:35). As inclusion is established in discourse as something struggled hard for, the

people struggling are logically respected and irreproachable within this liberal discourse. Rasmussen states: “There is a tendency to valorize those who struggle (research or teach) in the name of inclusivity. Such a valorization is problematic (...) if it acts as an impediment to a critical consideration of the exercise of the art of inclusivity. Instead, like art, inclusivity (...) can never be conceived as (...) somehow beyond criticism by virtue of its good intentions.” (:12). I add that one can, and must, respect the good intentions, but never let them foreclose the critique.

### **Representation and exposure/visibility**

Assumptions of intentions, relevance and quality of exposing, visiting, or teaching “as” a gay person have commonly been present in the more theoretical anti-homophobic academic literature, in more empirically focused research, government allocations, as well as activist and institutional school strategies<sup>55</sup>. As part of national (GAP 2009-1012:28) and local (OC 2006-2009:10) policy and budgets, both LLH and SkU are funded in part to give workshops or speeches at schools around the country; this is how representation and exposure come together with representative knowledge/experience. The young workshoppers represent GLB/T/queer youth, and refer to some of the social science truth about coming out and identity, but also speak more anecdotally, about how it is to live *as* GLB/T youth.<sup>56</sup> I have already suggested foreclosures involved in these truths and of identity; I will now read the narratives and discourses of representation and exposure in some of the exchanges I had where I asked about the potential usefulness of this type of “house-calls”. One was mostly focused on whether gays would be better at speaking about gay people in a critical way regarding etiology and other surrounding values:

**There is no reason to assume that gays would be any less biased than hetero people! (...) They have their assumptions bound up in political perspectives and values just like heterosexuals! (...) For example one who is oriented toward, sort of a biological explanation would also be informed, far into their own arguments, by that *core* thing!**

I read this to illustrate how the informant does not conceive of what was perceived as *gayness* information as communicable in any representative way because it is bound up in perspective; this statement does nothing to unsettle the coherence of *gays*, but seriously

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<sup>55</sup> For example. SkU 2008, 2009b, LLH.no, Smestad 2005a,b, 2008, TE plans 2003, Teaching plans 2006, Østlund 2006.

<sup>56</sup> I know this from communicated with some of SkU’s people working with school visits, and through them also know some about LLH’s work in the same area.

questions the possibility of representation of a groups unproblematic GLB/T competence about it self. Another quote shows the most concern about the *appearance* of the people presenting, in fear of reproducing stereotypes which would *misrepresent*:

**You have to use it as a resource (...) There are probably many who have never seen a gay or a lesbian! ... it would probably be very clever to have a totally normal, argh... (I laugh), but it is the stereotype! – One they can't see it on! So they won't get it! (...) if you take one or two they can't see it on... They might think they are boyfriend girlfriend to start with, and then they are a gay and a lesbian! (...) With two stereotypes it would be like automatically *the way they are supposed to be!* (...) That's why I think it would be more fun with someone who didn't show at all. If they understand that these are, okay, they are "ordinary people" (signalling quotation marks) because I think many people think it is a separate kind of group."**

In the narratives cited in this excerpt I can read no concern for the representative knowledge, insight or belonging supposedly relayed. Instead the informants concern that pupils would have their stereotypical thoughts about "gay people" strengthened can be read as a wish to unsettle the gendered understanding of sexual categories. Although, the assumption that all "hetero" people look "normal" gender wise, does not seem to be a stereotype this discourse has room for questioning. The next speaks of competence and knowledge based in personalized narratives, and suggests a friend (who "is") could come and visit a class:

**"<I am for such talks> if they are based on questions from the students. ... if you share something personal it will create trust! That this means something, and that this is true! (...) <You> have to have faith in those who are part of that group, that they in fact have more knowledge about it, and other ways of communicating it! Than a teacher! (...) I could get that gay friend of mine! And said "this is my friend, and he is gay! And you will get to ask questions, about sex and love, and everything!""**

I read from this statement how several assumptions of representativity, competence, group coherence, relevance of sex, meaning/relevance of exposure, and "true" stories are tied in with each other in a liberal and engaged approach. It is an narrative about *exactly what* is relevant to speak about which critically challenges the notion of visitors or teachers knowing what pupils need or want to know, and challenges the thought of being educated about *gayness*; *gayness* knowledge and experience is here only situated in the *personal narratives*, which seem able to represent others' narratives from "that group".

I read two unsolicited statements as also relevant to consider representation or visibility as attributed meaning in conversations *in TE*. The first does not necessarily imply representation, but rather personalization of an experience and (presumably) a shared perspective:

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**Well there are confrontations... and then you easily get a discussion, of course, about... bible interpretation and all that. (...) but in class this gets personalized, right! And I often think that's the best way! Personalizing the sooner the better! (...) So if anyone is... a lesbian or something, who can take that role!? Then that is very good!**

This illustrates an emphasis on providing access to immediate, or real, knowledge about a certain perspective; I understood this to mean that it could allow the non-lesbians in the discussion to perhaps understand how a *different* position actually involves a different reading of the bible, and that this interpretation could be granted validity among the listeners based on the real and personal student speaking out and playing that pedagogical role. The last quote for now emphasizes presenting positive examples of “normal” “gay people”:

**if anyone <here in TE> has very narrow ideas about sexuality, and about different sexuality... I use my closest ones as role models and examples, that there is nothing abnormal about it. (...) I think that since I have some experience with it, and some *positive* experiences, and maybe can exercise some positive influence, then I choose to do that!**

This to me reads like a narrative where positive representation, regardless of proximity or indirectness, is the important strategy toward breaking down “narrow ideas about different sexuality”; this implies that “narrow ideas” mean negative attitudes toward “them” as a group. Any thought of unsettling the group coherence, or of seeing the possibility of sporting narrow ideas, seems deferred in this meaning system where “selling” likeability is the key to get “hetero people” to like “them”.

This all assumes several meanings of *representation* and the nature of relevant competence and they cumulatively show similarities and differences to how informants consider representation, exposure and visibility, although they were not questioned explicitly about these as concepts. They also illustrate large discrepancies between convictions, consequences and foci based on the different perceptions of usefulness or relevance. What kind of understandings and attitudes may be re/produced or foreclosed in pupils, when/if teachers and other adults relate to representation, *being* and *knowledge* in these ways? Visibility/exposure is based on representation, and I believe, along with Talburt (quoting) Roof, that “indeed, visibility often “leads to identity rather than to any deconstructive consciousness of the category gay” (Roof 1996:146)” (Talburt 2004:33); in other words I read the notions representation/visibility/exposure as connected to “identity” and *being* and involving the same assumptions and foreclosures. One of these I particularly want to relate to is in regard to the impossibility of representation spoken of by Laclau, which states that the only available means of representation are the *particular* differences, and when these

particularities *presume* to represent a “totality entirely incommensurable with it” (Laclau\*), this, in discourse theory, is called a hegemonic relation, a *foundational* problem for representation and politics.

### *The closet*

As expected all informants used words like “coming out”, “knowing about”, “knowing he is”, “hard to tell people about” and “hiding it”, often many times and in different versions. These are all examples of discourses which cite the assumption that being “GLB” is a secret to be known - or not, told - or not, hidden - or not. As illustrated in many formulations in the *con/text*, “coming out” is seen for example as difficult, brave, liberating, important, and something one necessarily has to keep repeating in a heteronormative society. The *notion* of coming out or the *notion* of gay as secrecy is never problematized in any of the material; none of the informants even approached the coming out necessity as an unfortunate thing, it seemed more like “the way it is”, in their discourses there is no room for it to *not* be a secret. This epistemology is of course maintained by the more general liberal discourses of sexuality. Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* (1993) is a classic text in the “queer theory” tradition. Among other things it compares homophobia to other forms of oppression and emphasizes what is definitely unique, in the oppressive *assumptions* haunting this constructed social category of invisible people, and its secret (!) sexuality, being oppressed in strangely logic-resistant ways. Sedgwick’s analysis incites us to “enlarge the circumference of scrutiny” (:46) and points to *knowledge* construction itself, and understands the epistemology of the closet, sexuality *as* epistemology, to be *the* instigator of the now accepted narrative of private/public in all of society; “This very specific crisis of definition has then ineffaceably marked other pairings to modern cultural organization.”(:48). Sedgwick explains that as soon as the concept of “homosexual persons” was introduced, sexuality became something you could potentially know *about* people, and through the norm/deviance binary non-heterosexuality became *knowledge* constructed as secrecy, secret persons, while *hetero* occupies a public but unmarked and invisible position in the illusionary homo-hetero binary Sedgwick describes as *pseudo symmetrical*. Homosexuality *has to be* constituted as a secret in our socially constructed public/private binary for it to survive as what we know it as; this supports the heteronormative status quo, – and secrecy as a notion in sexual epistemology is a central problem in and of itself. Sedgwick argues that “gay identity is a convoluted and off centering possession if it is a possession at all; even to come out does not end anyone’s relation to the closet” (:54); *the closet* is still there, stepping

out of it doesn't make it fall apart or become inconsequential. This is *a secret*, until it is revealed, and then it is *still* a secret, just an *expressed secret*. As such being in or coming out is not the problem from a discourse perspective: "homosexuality" as hidden or revealed knowledge, along with all its connected meanings, repetitions, limitations and heteronormative assumptions, is problematically sustained by the closet-discourse.

When the TE agent behind #24 says: "**The word gay means a lot to me! Because it has been a long process to be open about it**", it points to a large discursive investment in the openness, that is *the non-secrecy*. It also attaches *the word gay* and its coherence to the secrecy/out-ness; once you *come out*, or every time you *come out*, you ontologically claim the word you come out "as". Rasmussen (2006:21) argues how:

"Teachers and students may have different investments in the in-out binary (...) <and> motivations in deploying discourses of coming out and the closet <, but> it is important to recognize that these discourses are absolutely fundamental to contemporary understanding of sexualities and ... schooling."

Because of the dynamic of this binary and the authority of the dividing practices "discourses associated with the closet and coming out (...) <are> central to some influential applications of the art of inclusion" but unfortunately "the *imperative to come out* fails to adequately consider the exclusions it produces." (:26, my emphasis). Rasmussen's statement here can be read to mean both the seemingly direct exclusion of people who somehow *can not* "come out" from an "out" community, and from a larger perspective the exclusion of other meanings of desire than one which designates "one" sexuality to always be secrecy. One specific problematic meaning that is deferred from the formation "the closet" is a part of, is an understanding of desire as changing over time; in a "coming out" narrative one is effectively locked as what one "comes out" as, and there is permanent realness connected to it. Therefore Rasmussen argues that one displaces the key discourse of coming out in educational research around sexualities, and considers instead "a new set of related questions ... of temporal dividing practices" (:152), a subdivision of dividing practices locking not only *in* place (realness/difference) but *over* time. Considering all these foreclosures and the direct and indirect problematic assumptions connected to coherence, it is not given that "coming out" should be a goal or expectation in education, neither by/from pupils, students, or educators. "Coming out", or encouraging it, will always reproduce the epistemological and ontological assumptions tied up with it.

### *Tropes of essentialism and constructivism*

One of the “findings” that struck me as most surprising in my informant material is how there seem to be very little consistency to how individuals perceive the different roles of bodies, societies and cultures in the developments and expressions of people’s desires and preferences. This I realize is due to my own perspective with convinced and consistent assumptions and use of gender/sexuality discourse; not that I expected people to communicate assumptions about discourse, but I expected them individually to be more consistently oriented toward essentialism or constructivism as I perceive these to be the most available and “simple” epistemological and ontological narratives. Alternatively, I expected more consistent uncertainty; for me it was surprising to read that parts of a system of meanings was firmly established, whereas meanings I believed would “logically” follow were definitely up for discussion in fairly disengaged discursive battles. This tendency towards unproblematic “combo-solutions” in my material would probably not have surprised Rasmussen, who reminds us first of all that: “Essentializing tropes of identity have many foundations” like transhistorical narratives, ascribed scientific underpinnings, or primarily strategic reasons.” (Rasmussen 2006:67). Depending of which of these are cited, a reading of it will give many different possible combinations with what may seem as constructivism, or some kind of emphasis on culture. In this sense a critical “discussion of tropes of essentialism supports (...) arguments that constructivism and essentialism are not dualistic; there are many varieties of each.” (:67). The problematically constructed binary of nature and culture, pointed out by among others Butler and Rasmussen, is visible in *specific* articulations in both Hegna et al (1999) and Chepstow-Lusty et al (2008), who claim to “not take sides” in whether one is “born or shaped this way”. From a discourse theory perspective there is no such thing as not taking sides in a supposed debate on etiology when the discourses speak *for* them, reveal assumptions, and involve consequences. The format of the debate itself, from “both sides”, is also grounded in epistemological and ontological assumptions of coherence and relevant “group” difference to debate etiology *over*. The descriptive language used throughout the texts not only relatively speaking “takes sides” toward some essentialist assumptions referring to identity as *being*, and speaking of “finding out” and “knowing early”, it also legitimates the nature-nurture binary. This way it explicitly forecloses any other thought-approach to “explaining” desires/preferences.

Some do explicitly “take sides”. Here is an aspect of *political* positioning through language: Nyhuus writes about how in the Parliamentary rapport following Hegna et al



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(1999) they are attempting to “distance themselves from the term *legning*<sup>57</sup> by emphasizing that “*the word orientation is chosen on purpose in stead of the word legning. Research shows there is gliding transition between gayness and heterosexuality, that the two orientations are not locked as opposite polarities. The word legning points to a biologically determined perception of emotions and sexuality, something which the research is increasingly reserved toward*” (PR 2000-2001:7 in Nyhuus 2001:200). Nyhuus argues that the understanding of *orientation* that is presented in the rapport never “challenges the foundational understanding of a nature “underneath”, only how delimited or gliding this nature is.” There is still implicitly and explicitly traces of an understanding of “*legning*” in sentences like “*problems with discovering and coming out as lesbian or gay*” (PR 2000-2001:31 in Nyhuus:200). Therefore Nyhuus’ reading suggests that the “use of *orientation* in the rapport does not represent a break, it is exclusively a cosmetic linguistic change”; the reason for this discursive development in policy is thought to be that in politics, “the constructed nature of the human ... is still foundational and necessary to legitimize the gay person” (:200). Despite “recent” (1980’s -->) developments in politically correct language, supporting constructivist ideas and identity political movements, “*legning*” has still been used for legitimacy reasons by the church, and partially by LLH (Bolsø et al 2003). Now something has happened in the public discourse that has made “*legning*” reappear as more common again, also in policy (Regjeringen 2009b). I expected my informants to predominantly use *orientation* or maybe to be “self corrective” and make sure to say *orientation* as the dialogue progressed. I realize now that *I* assumed “*legning*” was so politically incorrect that no one would use it, especially in conversation with a researcher with obvious interests in sexuality. What I found was that *all* eight informants used “*legning*” repeatedly, only one used *orientation as well*, on *one* occasion, and this was a person consistently citing essentialist tropes. This is very interesting considering the publicly problematized history of the word, how the dialogues involved specific exchanges about political correctness, and the fact that they represent all intersections of demographics *and* otherwise *very* varied and mixed understandings of ontology, etiology and politics of sexuality. So it *may seem* they take sides in citing “*legning*”, but they all vary in the assumptions beneath. “*Legning*” seems to have lost its discursively established essentialism, or never had it, for my informants. Bolsø et al (2003) emphasizes possibilities of change

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<sup>57</sup> See about meanings of “*legning*” and *orientation* under “Approach”, in “Language and translation issues”.

opening with a more *definite* and comprehensive discursive movement from “legning” to orientation. I disagree; I believe it makes little difference if there are no positioning effects of it anymore (publicly or privately), and I believe both involve categories with *essentializing* effects of the difference-relevance and coherence itself. The categorical coherence is what forecloses understandings of language, contingency and agency; positioning *within* the essentialist/constructivist binary only reproduces the binary’s legitimacy and the gender-coherent delimitations of the categories.

In Butler’s model “sex, gender, and sexuality are ... defined by their “constitutive instability”; therefore, none of these categories represents the truth of one’s body or ... authenticity of one’s sex, gender, or sexuality. In seeking a movement beyond essentialism and constructivism, Butler (1993) places an emphasis on deconstruction.” (Rasmussen 2006:69). This “movement beyond” for me means deconstructing “both sides” assumptions, the binary relation between, and the combined versions, regarding desire and its relation to gender. I tried in the preliminary informant analysis to give room to show this in a cumulative way because of these very varied explanations; on one side it does not matter about the explanations when categories are used in education (heard as coherent, with essentializing consequences), but on the other side they make up different formations so the systems of meaning would need very individual deconstruction. Each solution is not relevant for deconstruction here, only the extent of variation and the liberal intradiscursive nodal points (*sex* and sexual categories). I find the notion of *troping* useful because it “describes “the processes by which all discourse *constitutes* the objects which it pretends only to describe realistically and to analyze objectively” (White 1978:2, original emphasis in Rasmussen 2006:85). As such tropes are part of the “complex machinery for producing true discourses on sex” (Foucault, 1990:68). No matter the intent and intellectual approach to desire (and gender), I read any written or oral troping which relates to essentialism and constructivism without unsettling these, to “operate as instruments of heteronormalization” (:85); as such from my perspective it always forecloses agency and ethical relationality (Butler).

### *Queer – used as an umbrella term.*

Consider the distance between these two statements about *queer* people:

“Those who call themselves queer seek to escape the disciplinary and normalizing power that lies in the culture’s categories for gender and sexuality.” (Bjørby 2001:325)

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**#19 “queer is an expression I don’t use! ... I think it just means a *direction of gay!*?”**

The first quote is one way of defining *queer* which has to do with self-marking as a *queer* norm-critical person, and some who use the Norwegian word *skeiv* might define it similarly, but my experience with SkU tells me that more often *queer*, used by members, is a more “plain” umbrella term, that covers GLB and perhaps T; I have often heard the expression “*queer and trans*”. LLH on the other hand, is *somewhat closer* to #19, where *queer* after the *queer vs. homo* battle of 2004 was *added to the list* of sexual identifications representing the organizations’ member base (Bolsø 2008a). As illustrated in the presentation, *queer* was not used, and often not liked, by informants. Cumulatively quotes #14-19 illustrate how there is a low degree of consensus about what *queer* means (but always descriptive and GLB/T related) as they had such disparate ways of speaking about it, and such different investments in the liking or disliking, and in the non-use. These discourses all foreclose having *queer* involve a meaning of a perspective, a critique. As long as *queer* is used as something which people “are”, “identify as”, or “call themselves”, however critical or not to GLB/T categories, or “normalizing power”, in educational contexts it may very easily be read as a relevant and real difference from “normal” and have just as essentializing effects as GLB/T.

As mentioned, the SkU promises to “work for each individual person’s freedom to be themselves regardless of gender identity and sexuality” (SkeivUngdom.no). SkU is inspired by some perceptions of “queer theory”. I read the perspective SkU communicates as a hybrid constructivist model which aims to “give necessary room for diversity in gendered and sexual expressions” and is affected by *liberal* ideas around freedom to “be them selves”, and around a right to define ones own *gender identity* (Bolsø 2008a). They also argue for *gayness* and *gender role* information in schools (SkU 2008, 2009b) and worked toward what are now “equal marriage rights for gay and hetero people” (SkU 2009a). I read their use of *gender identity* and *gender roles* to stand in a defining opposition to constructed biological *sex*; in this sense SkU’s discourse does not unsettle the *sex-gender* split *or* binary gender, and *forecloses* the possibility to see *sex* as binary-attributed meaning. It also forecloses a deconstruction of *hetero vs. non-hetero*, as they leave a notion of *hetero* alone. The notion of *gayness knowledge* also maintains *queer* as a plain umbrella term for a semi-coherent group (researchable) which has no room for meanings that unsettle *knowledge* or the wound’s epistemology, relevance or consequence.

#### 4.4.4 Homophobia and heteronormativity

These two concepts are so connected in my system of meanings that they seem impossible (and maybe counterproductive) to pry apart, but I had to build up the following section based on how *my material* to varying degrees displays assumptions about a connection (or not) of homophobia to gender, or to heteronormativity, however that is asked about or described, or to some of the other concepts I have previously discussed. These variations illustrate ways more complex perspectives are foreclosed from informing anti-homophobic strategies. I start by making general comments about the meanings attributed (or not) to homophobia in the *con/text*, and then in my dialogue material; these thoughts are brought together to suggest both the firmness and the discursive patterns and cracks in the liberal “homophobia wall of common sense”. This leads over to discuss the conceptualizations in, and foci of, anti-homophobic strategies in education. Most specifically this includes an examination of the discourse of *tolerance* through what informants expressed about it, and aided by researchers’ analyses of the concept both generally and about “homotolerance”. Then I enter into further discussion about the concept of heteronormativity (based on presented material) and about heteronormative subject formation and affect foreclosure and enablement as consequences of homophobic discourses and discourses of homophobia. The last part illustrates, with some new inserted dialogue exchanges where I hypothesize normative formation and enablement, the assumptions and the resistance in action and shows individual citations in responses to the coherence-unsettling premises behind the questions.

##### *Discourses of homophobia in the con/text*

The use of the terms normal, and “production of normality”, in Slatten et al’s (2007) anti-homophobic approach illustrates a discourse with no room for the perspective that the “homo-hetero” binary pair is always understood in hierarchical terms; one marked outsider category of “gay” *sustains* the borders and normality of the unmarked insider category (Butler, 1990). From this perspective, it is impossible to try to “normalize” what is the constitutive outside to “the normal” when the *difference* marked by the categories *itself* maintains the asymmetrical binary (Sedgwick 1993, Butler); this involves a “blind spot” to a normative *reproduction* of heterosexuality. This same discursive foreclosure is demonstrated when Sundnes expresses (Langsether 2005) that new and better terminology in teaching plans (“variations in sexual orientation and different forms of gender identity”)

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“opens for something more than heterosexuality being normal”. In Oslo County’s action plan (2006-2009) it says that “research shows” that those who know someone GLB have the most positive attitudes, and *therefore* a good anti-homophobic strategy is to additionally have someone “who themselves are gay or lesbian” to come teach about *gayness*; this relates to all the problematic aspects of representation and coherent *gayness knowledge* ledge treated earlier. The wound of homophobia in OC (2006-2009) lines up an importance of help to “come out”, representative role-modelling, and building youth’s competence about “how it is to be lesbian and gay” to improve “living conditions”, as aims to be met by the finding good literature to teach about *gayness*; LLH now has a library in Oslo for this anti-homophobic purpose. The well established density of the liberal discourse in this approach to homophobia involves all foreclosures previously discussed about those concepts.

SkU emphasizes a anti-homophobic perspective on *gender roles* (SkU 2009b) for better teaching about *gayness* (SkU 2008), as well as narratives of “bullying based on sexual orientation” (SkU 2009a); their understanding of homophobia clearly involves awareness of gender norms, but homophobia is not expressed as in any way *constitutive* of sexualities or coherent gender performances. The strategy also states “work toward a more *inclusive* school is now the main priority” (SkU 2009a my emphasis); inclusion involves problematic assumptions discussed above. The way Oslo County’s “GLB” plan speaks of homophobic bullying includes “unwanted sexual attention in the form of gay-related derogatory words”. Interestingly here homophobic words are *sexual attention*, when shortly after it reads that they are a way of “sanctioning unwanted behaviours that break with gender stereotypes”. This is another example of partially grasping and emphasizing the gender aspect of homophobia, but there is a limit beyond which the categorical and sexually focused discourse forecloses more complex and mutually deconstructing meanings, as illustrated by saying all youth would benefit from an attitude change toward *gayness* (OC 2006-2009:10).

The explicit omissions of “cultural homonegativity” and “transgressions to gender” underline the relative importance Slatten et al’s pamphlet (2007) attribute to readers realizing *gendered* social dynamics in cultural guidelines; this anti-homophobic narrative admits to such dynamics but effectively de-prioritizes them. This may be read as pragmatic, due to time constraints or readability, or a clever prioritization of foci; the reader may trust it and take from it that approaching gendered dynamics *is not as important* as being “hands on” with homo teasing. My reading suggests that this explicit de-prioritization cannot be done

without *counteracting* any possibilities for changes to underlying problems, for some readers perhaps even more than if not mentioned. This discourse and delimitation sustains an image of usefulness to readers who want to be “hands on”, which is always already connected to “the wound” and its coherent symptom-focus, which forecloses preventive gender-dynamic approaches to homophobia. From another direction the non mention of homophobia in Heggen’s (2004) and Imsen’s (2005) otherwise *gender descriptive* textbooks, demonstrates unmarked sexual and two-gendered narratives; there is no mention, and no connection made between gender and sexuality. These texts operate within a formation foreclosing meanings of homophobia both on a gender-narrative and a gender-constitutive level.

### *Discourses of homophobia in the dialogues*

Homophobia is not connected to gender norms until upon further “leading” questions. All eight describe homophobia as negative affect “toward gay people” (as in #50-52). That most easily admitted a (suggested) connection to gender, hints to this as *available* meaning, often via personal or individual narratives. Two considered it, as part of heteronormativity, to shape (police) gender performances. Most only considered homophobic “people” to believe *gays* are feminized/masculinized and therefore to suspect *gayness* when encountering “wrong” expressions. One exception shows a strong belief in science that makes truthful meaning-connection between homophobia and gender unavailable:

...does homophobia have anything to do with gender? **I don't think so! ... What does that question mean? I am not afraid of gender!** No? There are many who are afraid of... *transgressions* of gender... of *gender roles*. **Yes?** And then it is often based on that, that they are homophobic.... **Then... it, yes I observe that, that some... have problems with that... but I am very unsure about how I would explain it! I haven't analyzed it! ... I am very unsure about why a good deal of men do it! ...** Yes eh.. it is often related to own experience of it, of gender, as “correctly” masculine! **That is a field I haven't studied! And that I can not say anything about!** But you can assume connections, when you... **Yes, I can assume connections, well, you can speculate about it, but I don't think that is a good basis for making up an opinion...**

Here a strong epistemological belief in science forecloses further deconstructive perspective on homophobic gender norms – or gendered heteronorms, as apparent in the resistance and deflection I met when we spoke of heteronormativity. In all eight understandings of homophobia I suggest that directionality and categorical coherence involved made it *more or less* un/available to see how homophobia affects everyone’s gender expressions; meanings of foreclosure of affect seem unavailable.

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*A comprehensive model of homophobia discourses.*

David McInnes (2004) provides a useful distinction between “homophobic discourses” and “discourses of homophobia”. The first can be used to describe “that set of things that are possible to say about sexuality and those things that cannot be said because they are “homophobic”” (including “statements, ideas, ideals, principles, omissions, silences”, etc.) (:224). I chose to not include any *explicitly* homophobic discourses in the con/text, they are only involved through assumptions *about them* elsewhere in the discussion. The second, called a “second order discourse”, which I find to be the useful application, is the informal and “formalized” side of the discursive formation (in all my material) around the nodal point of “gay”/“GLB”; this includes first of all the scientific “descriptions” and the informal misery/empathy/solidarity-narratives connected to *the wound*. It also involves all terms and approaches related to or in some other way perpetuating the relevant difference homophobia is based on, which means for example GLB/T resources, GLB/T discourse in the media, identity based policy, “minority” legislation, exposure and representation. As McInnes states, the second order discourses are generated to deal with the damage done by the first, but it “does its own kind of damage by the assumptions and determinations it makes” (:225). As *gayness* generally is discursively surrounded by negativity, and the *knowledge* about “it” and politics around “it” are all based on a perceived/real<sup>58</sup> negative situation – again based on homophobia – all these discourses of *gayness* are discourses of homophobia. The importance of gathering all these coherence based concept and narratives under that term, is to argue how they all play parts in reproducing the wound, reproducing the cultural norms, and reproducing the illusion of coherent and relevant difference; all of which again reproduce homophobic discourses.

In both orders “sexuality operates as a defining term, overriding considerations of gender and conflating issues of gender into and under the umbrella of sexuality” (:225); these orders allow for gendered, and sexed, binaries to be left out of the discourses and out of the approaches, and this was visible in all the material. When gender *is* included/connected in the con/texts, or teased out of informants, it is “overridden and conflated” into and under sexuality. The deferrals of gendered meanings in *discourses of homophobia* especially, that somehow perhaps reach further, and are “legit” and politically

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<sup>58</sup> I can not say “it” is real when the assumptions behind the representation are, in my perspective, fictional; regardless of my awareness of sad situations for many, it *can not* be generalized meaningfully.

“important”, are what makes mainstream understandings of sexuality what it is today; they have essentializing effects and maintain constructed differences as relevant. To cite Talburt (2004) again: “these narratives are complicit with the regulation of sexuality by drawing on the terms of a dominant discourse that searches for causality and intelligibility” (31), and as I will show, this second order also reaches well into *uses of heteronormativity*, even though this is a conceptualization conceived to be used critically *against* causality and intelligibility, and rather putting gender in the central position (Butler 1990, 1993, 2004).

### Anti-homophobic approaches

#### **Focus of anti-homophobic work in school – for whom?**

In Røthing’s (2007) and Røthing and Svendsen’s work (2007, 2009), also brought in under “sexuality education”, they distinguish between two kinds of anti-homophobic approaches that they say are most common in Norwegian schools: one narrative is intended “for them” and one is “about them” (2009:61). A dialogue example of the latter is from a faculty informant who says: (7) **I never speak of, bisexuals and gay people in a negative way, but rather in a positive way! (...) Because I know so many who mean something to me! And how people are, that is just something to accept, that one is different...** This is an “about them” discourse, which additionally can be called explicitly “homopositive”, an attitude-operationalization used in Anderssen and Slatten’s (2008) research on attitudes toward “LGBT people”, with Røthing and Svendsen’s “homonegativity” on the other side of the attitude-toward-them spectrum. All teaching “about them”, as observed by Røthing and Svendsen, are intended to foster “homopositive” attitudes among assumed “non-GLB” people, which means installing “explicit judgements that homosexuality has a desired place in our society just like heterosexuality” (Anderssen and Slatten 2008:33). When schools apply combinations of these approaches, these are in accordance with for example OC (2006-2009) text stating anti-homophobic school intentions of both “building down prejudices and strengthening gay peoples identity and self esteem” (:10); here is apparent that the discourses of homophobia have politically incorporated both “for” and “about” approaches as important. Some texts, like the Manifest against bullying is focused on efforts “for them” in emphasizing “prevention of harassment and demeaning acts based on gender or sexuality (“legning”)” toward “having no children subjected to demeaning words or actions” (Regjeringen 2009 a).

In 2008 SkU (2008) expresses a need for teaching “about them”, *about gayness* and *about sexual orientation*, in TE and in schools. They connect this intention in under a wish



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for a national centre for competence about “gender and gender equality in school”, where a “specialized subject” with “knowledge about” GLB/T people is offered to for example TE. On the other hand another text from SkU (2009b) text communicates “for them” *and* “about them” importance in TE and school anti-homophobic teaching. All in all, I can not read from these two texts a common policy on articulating intentions, and regardless of more gender emphasis in 2009 than most involved agents, both equally draw on dominant discourse (gender roles, equality, identity, knowledge about, etc.) and maintains illusions of intelligibility around gender as well as sexuality.

Røthing and Svendsen problematize this focus on “the other” as the basis for both approaches; both are versions of an “art of inclusion” and when any “construction of LGBT teachers and young people <are made to be> objects of *pathos* or *empowerment*, it deflects analysis away from the broader social mechanisms” (Rasmussen 2006:20). “About them” is problematically about the wound *intended* to create empathy and in turn tolerance and accept (Røthing and Svendsen 2009:63), but not necessarily doing it (Røthing and Svendsen 2009:64, Rasmussen 2006:19) because it “ignores teachers’ and students’ investments in sustaining heteronormalizing processes within educational contexts.”(Rasmussen 2006:20). According to Røthing and Svendsen “about them” is most common in teaching done by teachers, not by “representatives” brought in. “For them” is a more common approach, focused on visibility and positive role-modelling, done for example by LLH or SkU visitors, and the “homophobic teasing” pamphlet (Slatten et al 2007) mainly focuses on efforts *for* protection of *them*.

I fully agree with Røthing and Svendsen (2009) when they argue that both types of approaches always have a reproductive “othering” effect that always maintains a problematic assumption of difference. Based on that effect and more they propose a third approach to homophobia, which redirects the focus onto “those and that which creates othering and marginalization (...) <and> the processes that makes some appear as the others”. They call this third approach “teaching that problematizes difference to create change” (:61); I argue with them that it is not enough to “hinder harmful interaction between pupils” (:65), because, as they say, it is impossible to create substantially less homophobia (in their *inwards*-meaning) “as long as heterosexuality appears this valuable” (2008:43) and as long as the sexual landscape and is framed by homo-hetero discourse (:46). I come back to their third approach at the final level, but for now I will move on to take a closer look at the concept of

tolerance, one of the main articulated goals in the discourses of homophobia I have discussed so far.

## **Tolerance**

“Tolerance is recognized as one of the most important goals of Norwegian compulsory education.” (Afdal 2005:14).

### *Tolerance in the dialogues*

Because I knew tolerance was a central concept in anti-homophobic education, I asked specifically about it and explored informants’ meanings; interesting responses help me discuss this concept, and its consequences. This following line-up serves me as, again, a cumulative illustration of differences and similarities in informants’ understand the term; notice how they differently critique, and often defend, a term they are strongly ambivalent about:

C: What does the word tolerance mean to you?

**#42 tolerance is in a way to be able to... *stand* (tåle) that people are different from you. (...) It can be perceived as a passive word (...) a certain distance in that word maybe!?**

**#43 ...the students throw around the word tolerance... while in reality it is the opposite. (...) And that’s how it is in society too, that you think you are so tolerant, respecting the human rights and stuff! But when it gets down to it, it is the opposite!**

**#44 Tolerance means a kind of *openness*, and... *acknowledging* attitude in meetings with other people. (...) in the reform (...) tolerance is a concept that appears again and again. But it isn’t *defined* or *operationalized* further! (...) the whole reform is full of those political fashion words!?**

**#45 I use “tolerance” quite a bit. It reminds me what Mette Marit said at a homo conference... that tolerance without respect can be... *suffocating*! - being tolerated but not respected, there is something condescending about it, maybe? (...) That yes, we can stand you. But how it is used it’s a nice word. It is a “plus word”! ... everyone wants to be tolerant! (...) how it’s usually used it means ... be open to others different than oneself. I think maybe one should emphasize more... the value of diversity, in itself! To be different is a value! It isn’t something I should tolerate!**

C: What does it mean for you to be tolerant?

**#46 If you are tolerant then you can sort of tolerate that everyone can be different from you (...) I think it is important to be tolerant (...) But you can’t just be tolerant to be tolerant, and then you are really not! (...) But that’s how it is with everything. You have to be it “for real”!**

**#47 I perceive that being tolerant, as in a way accepting everyone, and not stigmatizing and categorizing something as “they” and “them”! ... being more concerned with other things than what groups they belong to (...) When you tolerate something you can be a bit indifferent (...) Like you are just going along maybe, when you tolerate something...**

**#48 You want to see yourself as tolerant! ... that you are open to what others say and mean and do! (...) and I accept that, without trying to convert them! (...) we are very quick to call ourselves tolerant, and then when it comes down to it we are not, at all! ... you see not tolerant (“ikketolerante”) people as very fundamentalist, or very... arrogant... so those are very negative**

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**words! To not be tolerant! (...) because of that, you clearly want to see yourself as tolerant! But that is probably “wrong” (...) yes, well, it can be sort of conceitedness!**

**#49 I am not sure! (...) I like to see myself as tolerant, and that is pretty striking, that I like to put myself in a category that as far as I’m concerned could be called *empty*! (...) I kind of feel that *tolerance* is the wrong word, because he doesn’t do anything that *challenges* me in any way!**

This is my selection from when we spoke of tolerance as a concept *explicitly*, where very diverse terms were used, such as indifference, emptiness, conceitedness, openness, acceptance, respecting human rights, non-categorization, non-emphasis on difference, non-stigmatization, suffocation, condescension, nice word, passivity, plus word, distance, and acknowledgement. Although most were to some degree critical when asked explicitly, several otherwise cited tolerance uncritically and positively in talking about how *gayness* is “included” in plans and curriculum; I will get back to this paradox below.

One of the approaches and solutions to both racism and homophobia in education is baked into the concept of tolerance - to teach pupils tolerance toward the different “others”. TE agents are mandated to relate to TE and school plan-documents where tolerance is an unproblematized value to communicate and model in the teaching role; all informants were aware of the repeated presence of in the plan documents. In my reading teachers are not “technically” permitted to allow homophobia; they should directly counteract harassment of “GLB pupils”, and prevent more of it by teaching tolerance (and about *gayness*). But, as #44 states, it is never operationalized, never explained what it is or should be; so we might ask, what is tolerance, what does it mean to teach it, and what does it discursively *do*? The first question is a conceptual one, applicable not only to tolerance of “different” sexuality, which I will discuss from two theorists angles. The latter two will be approached on the basis of the former discussion but applied to the field of sexuality and heteronormative subject formation.

What seems to be at the heart of conceptual tolerance is some sort of disapproval or dislike; according to Afdal’s (2005) study of tolerance and curriculum “The objection-condition accompanied by acceptance or non-interference create a double condition that most often is conceived as distinctive for the concept of tolerance. If one conceives tolerance as acceptance or non-interference independent of objection, tolerance is constructed with a simple condition.” (:104). Except for #43, which describes the problem with tolerance as people who in politically correct discourse are claiming to be it, really are not, all the statements are critical to the term itself in one way or another; it seems in all of them to be some vague or clear sense of the “objection condition” being problematic. The objection is what Brown’s

(2006) Foucault inspired reading of the concept discusses; it argues that the term signifies, in every possible field and discourse, “the limits on what foreign, erroneous, objectionable or dangerous element can be allowed to cohabit with the host without destroying the host” (:27). Brown traces the history of the concept and the effects of constructed difference, while Afdal has gathered empirical material in education to discuss current uses at different levels; this necessarily involves different outlooks on potential and consequences of tolerance discourse.

*Difference is a pre-condition for tolerance.*

I have discussed many other aspects of difference and will not repeat them unnecessarily; I start by arguing assumptions of difference involved in tolerance discourse, to consequently establish meanings in the *connections* between tolerance, homophobia and heteronormativity. With the emergence of the modern subject, this conceptual discursive development went from tolerance of beliefs to what is now a tolerance of identity (Brown 2006:38), or what may be called *difference made relevant*. As sexual desires became the truth of a subject, it was *this* truth that demanded the tolerance of subjects; tolerance as it sustains belief in the objects of tolerance and sustains a reproduction of that underlying “essential” difference. In a way tolerance “tacitly schematizes the social order into the tolerated” (:44) and people easily have “psychic costs” of being marked and feeling objectionable. Advocating tolerance only perpetuates subject formation which “intensifies the totalizing features of the subject” (:45); it *exaggerates* what is understood as the “otherness” of the tolerated ones. A defining feature of tolerance discourse is how it “covers up” its involvement in reproduction of normative status quo, its identities, and the antagonistic effects of differences. Brown describes tolerance discourse as performing “a certain blindness to the heightened regulation of subjects” (:38) and goes on through reference to Foucault’s notion of biopower, being a “distinctly modern form of power that involves the subjugation of bodies ... through the regulation of life rather than the threat of death” (:26); tolerance is in this sense a very “effective instrument of contemporary biopower while appearing only as a genial neighbourly value” (:38) where the one tolerating remains deceptively neutral, unmarked and irreproachable (:45). Applying this notion of hidden effects, we can see that as tolerance “essentializes and reifies sexuality ... <and> covers over the workings of power and the importance of history in *producing* the differences *called* sexuality” (:47).

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In Afdal's text difference *is* acknowledged as "essential in how tolerance is conceived" and that therefore "the less conceived difference ... the less need for tolerance ... the more fundamental difference is conceived ... the more need for fundamental tolerance" (2005:257); but problematizing difference or constitutive effects is *not* the primary focus of the study, which I believe allows Afdal to not exclusively see tolerance as problematic. I am partial to Browns reading, based on my theoretical focus on production of difference being negative in it self as it *in effect* involves unethical narratives and demands (Butler 2005) and foreclosures of agency and desires (Butler 1990, 1993, 2003). But in reading my material, I found it helpful to consider the in-betweens and paradoxes of intentions and single conditions presented by Afdal. The uncritical ways of *using* tolerance (not explaining it) by some informants coincide with Afdal's findings that teachers display a "clear tendency toward a thick, positive and single conditioned concept" of tolerance (:323). This means perhaps that tolerance has gotten a new meaning when applied as an approach, that it has come to mean something closer to accept or respect. This can, Afdal considers, be thought as "leaving free", which do not carry disapproval, but there is still a notion of difference, in mine and Afdal's material; the attitude of non interference in "leaving free" still implies possible interference.

In light of these considerations, and of my reading of the notion of tolerance in the plans and in other parts of the *con/text*, I suggest it must be *possible* to see "current" tolerance as being assigned positive meanings by the readers and actors because I believe it *can* be *intended* as a single conditioned accept for difference, or "leaving free" those who "are" different. I read informants as stuck between *sensing* a single conditioned intent in vague mandates, *and* the problematic double conditioned genealogy of the concept. As with *con/text* discourses none challenge the foundation of difference, but several want to teach and model "good" of tolerance *and* distance themselves from "bad" tolerance. It also seems firmly established *necessity* of tolerance is constituted by what is perceived to be its *necessary* "opposite", *intolerance*. This, as #48 illustrates, can be an impossible position, because "Tolerance not only produces, organizes, and marks subjects; it also delineates a purview and the availability of alternatives to tolerance." (Brown 2006:29). The prospect of "fundamentalist" or "arrogant" (#48) intolerance may be perceived as worse than possible "emptiness" or conditionality of a term with good intentions. Regardless of good intentions or necessity for lack of options (to intolerance), the effect of tolerance discourse in approaches to homophobia is another aspect which I will discuss now.

### *Tolerance, homophobia and heteronormativity*

Based on their research of sexuality education, Røthing and Svendsen (2008, 2009) critically discuss the concept of “homotolerance”, as an established Norwegian value, alongside “gender equality” (2008:34). They point out that this does nothing to unsettle the “homo-hetero” binary, and most importantly, from my perspective, it maintains a culture where “homosexuality does not appear as a safe and available choice for the future.” (:34). They argue, and I agree, that “homotolerance” can be said to *create* homophobia in the sense they use it, involving negative attitudes toward ones own possible *gayness*. This is because while all the assumed “hetero” pupils are taught “homotolerance”, a “desire to not be the one who needs tolerance” is created (:38). Othering is always a product of tolerance speech, but most importantly, it ensures through what Brown speaks of as conceit of neutrality, that *heterosexuality* is reproduced as “normative, privileged and – in our opinion – what the pupils are taught to desire and reach for” (:37). In this sense, tolerance as mandated anti-homophobic approach, along with culturally forbidden *intolerance*, play important parts of heteronormative re/production of desires and subjects; with the rest of the liberal discourses it *produces* two simplified and *apparently coherent* subject positions, with all the gendering and affective “guidelines” involved. In all these ways complexity, non-difference and non-coherent gender/desire is deferred for this discourse to be sustained.

### *Homophobic bullying and heteronormative formation*

The logic of gender and inversion “born” from the moment “homosexuality” was characterized as *being* (Foucault in Rabinow 1984:322), is a part of heteronormativity, it is that “lining up”, where “opposite” desire involves “inversion” of gender. This is how gender norms now inform homophobia. It is not so that there is a truth about gender and more diverse sexualities *oppressed by* heteronormativity, rather, Egeland and Jegerstedt remind us, “that is not the point; sexuality can be done more diversely, but that brings us no closer to a true sexuality” (2008:74). Truth is always a regime saturated with power making it “a production, a regulation and a distribution of specific statements about gender and sexuality” (:74). This truth-quality is what makes it, as Butler would say, “malleable” and “open for rearticulation” (1993b). There will always be discourses about bodies and desires, each with own foreclosures and established meanings. Heteronormativity is sustained by specific discourses, some I have already discussed at length; the topic now is “heteronormativity” in my material, suggesting discursive consequences of those particular comprehensions. At this point I have reached the culmination of the level two concepts and narratives, where

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discursive consequences are close to indistinguishable from social consequences; this makes the following four sub-sections an appropriate bridge to the next level.

### **Homophobic gender policing and heteronormative formation in school.**

It seems only a matter of angles and foci how academics apply theory to seemingly separate subject formation and production of affect, which are rather intimately tied together. In heteronormative subject formation, the complex relationship between the processes of identification and subjectivization perpetuate coherent differences as they exist in language; embodied desire and perceptions of gendered being are products/aspects of these processes, complex layers of discursive enablements and foreclosures, seemingly even more unavailable to challenge in liberal discourse as their meaning seem even more clearly situated in/from the body. To understand heteronormativity is to understand these discursive processes and layers. Based on the material I have divided the discussion of heteronormativity and heteronormative discourses and dynamics in three: I start with the previously presented exchanges about the concept, along with comments on how heteronormativity is defined in the *con/text* material, to argue discursive assumptions, resistances and foreclosures. Then I discuss “GLB identity development” (formation in a heteronormative discourse) as it is emphasized in the discourses of homophobia in the *con/text*. Lastly I treat excerpts where I asked about heteronormative effects *indirectly*, having them speculate about manifestations of pupils’ hypothetically different desires by “formative influences” in a differently enabling culture.

### **Heteronormativity – analyzing uses of the concept.**

I asked about the word heteronormativity, and its possible relation to homophobia, because I was interested in displays of *knowledge*, lines of argument, and the (expected) resistances involved in responses and follow up. There was as expected little familiarity with the term and it was limited how much I could explain in that context, but I mainly said something involving cultural “expectations” and “assumptions”. Two informants (#56 and #57+58) knew the concept quite well, and expressed relations between it and homophobia and gender as obvious. In their cases this term has strong established meaning, one attached to a constructivist and one to an essentialist trope, but there is in both systems, in my reading, deferral of an understanding of *sex* as attributed meaning, and of non-meaning of sexual difference, for their meanings to be sustained. As for the other excerpts (#53, 54, 55), who did not know the term, there are other *attempted* angles and different levels of non-

established meaning, where #55 stands out as independently grasping the expectations of heterosexual “roles” involved. None of these were able to independently come up with *or* integrate relevance of gender after my initial explanation, which to me illustrates general difficulty with connecting gender and sexuality; this makes sense when I know that at least #53 and #54 are clear on sexual (and partially gender-) essentialism. From *my* perspective it seems more unlikely to not connect the two, as in the case of #55, when expressing convinced constructivist beliefs; the foreclosures of connection-meaning are necessarily very different.

As mentioned, none brought up “internalization” when they spoke of homophobia, neither in a traditional shame-sense, or in the constitutive sense Røthing and Svendsen point to in their use of the word. All excerpts collectively illustrate there is no clean connection between which variations over essentialist or constructivist tropes around gender or desire one is citing, and perceived understanding, or levels of understanding, of heteronormativity. They do not have explanatory narratives, levels of familiarity, *or* perspective on “nature and nurture” in common, but an overarching idea all eight have in common is the liberal foundation in their discourse: the body as *sex* and the marking of sexual difference. These commonalities are important and tell me that some deferrals might sustain all systems, first of all seeing *sex* as an arbitrarily assigned meaning; a non-meaning of gender-categorized sexual difference is another – tightly connected to the first.

In the *con/text* the term heteronormativity is also used in a few ways; for example in a local “GLB” policy this statement can be read: “the term heteronormativity describes that it is taken for granted that everyone in our society is hetero (Kulick 1996). One of the consequences is that it is up to each individual to tell about their homosexual orientation” (OC 2006-2009:15). The ontological notion of *being* “hetero” is counterposed to a “*homosexual orientation*”, which is like the “cosmetic” discursive political positioning indicated in by Nyhuus (2001); it seems use of *orientation* attempts to indicate etiological openness or irrelevance, but when read in the same paragraph as “*is hetero*”, the hierarchy is clearly communicated. There is no indication of norms *doing* anything in this “definition”; it is a static understanding foreclosing meanings of formative effects and of effects for people understood as “hetero”. There is no recognition here of *gender* having anything to do with heteronormativity, as opposed to the inclusion of that in my next example, where heteronormativity means that “heterosexual orientation is almost always is taken to be an



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implicit assumption when people meet. (...) Heteronormativity concerns both sexual identity and gender identity.” (GAP 2009-2012:13). The way I read this, understanding *gender identity* to be part of heteronormativity concerns implicit heteronormative assumptions of people not “being trans”, as it usually is that way in the discourses of homophobia and in all GLB/T discourse; *gender identity* has little to do with gender “for regular people” or as a general social process of (fictional) identification. Here *heterosexual* is an orientation, perhaps seeming less hierarchical than the last example, but it is just as coherently different from GLB. Butler’s use of heteronormativity as a perspective on general subject formation is far from the coherent “beings” assumed to be affected in this last paragraph. Many layers of truth-assumptions are sustained by there not being room for understanding *productive* aspects of discourse involved in Butler’s meaning of the term. I suggest that such “definitions” applied in anti-homophobic approaches can not result in unsettling of *knowledge* but rather integration of a liberal *knowledge* of how it is to *be* GLB/T in a society where everyone expects one to *be* hetero. The way “heteronormativity” is used or related to in the material, the term has in different ways been resignified and integrated in *the wound* and coherent discourses of homophobia; it has lost its unsettling potential and joined discourses used to create empathy and tolerance *for “them”*.

### **Heteronormativity – the subject formation.**

One is, within the truth of a *heterosexual hegemony*, interpellated through processes of subjectivization and identification (Rasmussen 2006:73) to take up available gendered and sexual subject positions through heteronormative and coherent discourses. I discussed these processes under “differences”. The points made there are relevant here in further discussion of homophobic gender policing and how people come to do gender and desire as they do. But first the formation of a coherent self organized around gendered and sexual binaries.

The emphasis on unambiguous *identity* development in the *con/text* points to an interesting logic that in my reading attempts to encompass *becoming* something you supposedly already *are*. It seems that you *are* before you have an *identity as*, which is a truth that forecloses any meaning of becoming or changing, or not *being* a sexuality or having a *sexual identity* at all; it is a combination of tropes that has consequences in for example how it legitimizes approaches, such as saying “internalized homophobia can pose a substantial threat to gay or lesbian people in the development of their homosexual identity” (OC 2006-2009:7). A meaningful delimitation of “internalization” of homophobia to an “interiority” of

those who *are* “gay or lesbian people”, and *their* processes of identification, can only be done through a separation of homophobia from gender norms, and through ontologically separate groups. The productive (affect-foreclosing) meaning of homophobia advocated by Røthing and Svendsen (2008, 2009) can not make sense in a discourse with such delimitation; their use of the term homophobia involves *everyone*, which explains why, from available narratives, most people take up *hetero* positions and desires. This is an impossible meaning in a discourse where “internalized homophobia” is only harmful to the marked few.

Regarding the formation of subjects toward taking up gendered positions, this is not something discussed much in the *con/text*. In Imsen’s textbook the statements around *gender identity* display a logic comparable to the one in the *gay identity development*: the assumption of one becoming what one already is, troping with essentializing effects, foreclosing formation and a possibility of not taking up a gendered (*identity*) position and not already *being* a gender. Trans\* and intersex meanings have also no place in this formation of coherently developing *a* (correct) gender identity based on an interior *self*, something also visible in the dialogues about trans\* where informants could not seem to fit it into their understandings of gender or sexuality, or tried to fit it into coherent meanings available to them. Butler’s perspective unsettles both tropes and is unavailable within the *identity development* discussed above.

### **Heteronormativity and production of gendered affect**

“Durkheim himself noted that “a child’s taste is formed as he comes in contact with the monuments of taste bequeathed by previous generations” (<1897> 1951:314)” (Costello 2001:44)

Many theorists, in addition to (and often based on) Butler and Foucault, support my insistence on how a person’s experience of desires, gender and proclivities, are shaped in particular ways in this heterosexual hegemony, how “the interrelationship between disciplinary power, normalization, and processes of subjectivization and identification ... intersect to produce and compel certain “micropractices of the self” (Rasmussen 2006:77-78). Gender and desire is constituted in relation to each other, and so the meanings of *heterosexual* genders and desires are shaped by *différance*: what they cannot be. When Sundnes’ (2003) study of harassment in school confirms that there are no terms for shamefulness within *heterosexuality* for boys and that “the only risk of bad reputation the boys have is related to femininity” (:85), this is an example of boys being gender policed into what is normative and *other than* shameful, where they are able to counteract suspicion of

gayness by “aggressively trying to pick up girls” (:85); they are interpellated into doing and feeling gender and the desire that comes with it.

I had an assumption ahead of this project that none would display similar perspectives on powerful discourses and heterosexual hegemony as I do. This assumption was close to correct, except (#57, 58) who had expressed how discourses constituted all understanding of meaning, of *performance* of culture, and how heteronormativity was a dominant discourse which *produces* gender and thoroughly trained one to be heterosexual. I read this transcription as an uncommon perspective on language and relativity, in which I believe a further deconstruction of *sex*, or “application” of thoughts of heterosexual hegemony to the otherwise clear understanding of discourse, would not be very difficult. Based on my assumption, I thought the understanding of normative effects might be very different if I asked the informants about it from another angle, to see if that made other possible meanings available. I attempted to ask in less conceptual terms and left out and instead posed a more mundane hypothetical question: “Do you think school, and teachers, may have *formative* influence on pupils’ sexualities... on what kinds of sexualities pupils actually develop?” after which I elaborated in some dialogues. Before I move on to the other informants, I visit how this same informant as behind #57 and #58, who theoretically understands subject formation and production of affect, is *more unsure* when asked in less theoretical ways (in follow up):

If there is no open lesbian or gay person. And the pupils will assume they only have hetero teachers. They will never think of anything else. (...) What kind of formative influence do you think that has? **Well that is the normal picture! And breaking with it is extremely hard! (...) It is so conform, you know.** Yes? So the teachers have enough power... to actually shape... ? **Yes! Yes!** And produce hetero-children? **Yes. Yes absolutely. Or yes, eh... be a part of confirming it anyway. If they don’t... what you are to begin with, that you don’t quite know, but yes... confirming heterosexuality.**

This points to the possibility of having such different investments in truth assumptions in theoretical as opposed to more mundane contexts, resulting in different deferrals. It is also an interesting contrast to the next excerpt specifically replying with a concrete narrative:

**Yes! And I can give an example! I have a friend, a teacher. (...) She was asked questions ... about homosexuality (...) <in> grade 5! (...) she said she was bisexual and liked dating both girls and boys. (...) a few months later two girls <in her class>, were holding hands and were girlfriends (kjærester). Yes!?** Whether it has a long term effect or not I don’t know. They had in a way received permission? **Yes! Well she is their main teacher, (...) and she is a role model! (...) And when she comes out and says... (...) (eager) ...recognizes it as, yes! Yes, as an option, so... if the two girls, well, if they are lesbian or bisexual, she doesn’t know...** That doesn’t have to be something to establish, either? <the informant ignores my reply and repeats how there *is* formative

influence.> ... Many think it is something one is born with, you either are or you aren't. **Oh. No.** Then the teacher can't do much either way! **No. No no, no. No, I don't think so.** (born with a sexuality)

I read no display of understanding of discourse or any *constitution* of truth meaning or shaping of "self" in available narratives, only an overall (#12) constructivist notion of *socialization*. I could not read any expressed problems with use of categories or finding them limiting or lacking in nuance, or even with using the word "homosexual". This person's potential deconstructive process of own meaning system would perhaps be more easily based in discussing concrete examples and suggestions than in theoretical reasoning and application, as the former may make meanings of contingency and constitution available. But then, the "sex" binary may have such a privileged position, and in this not so theoretical discourse, be less available for unsettlement than the previous person.

Moving into some quite different formations of meaning, I had one very stern rejection of possible influence who just said: **No, I don't believe any more would be made, I think those who are there, are there.** This conviction involves such established meanings of what desire and "being" is, that considering *any* conception of formation, of production of affect, or constructivist *socialization* development is unavailable. Unsettlement would involve many more layers of established meaning, binaries, coherence and temporal stability than the previous two excerpts. The next quote shows how another essentialist trope is cited to answer very differently, citing notions of natural diversity far from the former articulation:

**Yes I definitely believe so. (...) and I believe that they (the teachers) *should not!* On the contrary I believe they should communicate an attitude that it must be *okay* to have different types of sexuality <legning>. ... They should communicate an attitude that we humans have different sexual orientations, and that has to be okay.** Mm. Do you think it could have a formative influence and create more diversity in the future? Instead of a "hetero class"? **Yes I believe it can! And that is the reality about the natural which is my perspective, and my project to speak of in class. ... the actual reality.**

This assumption is interestingly close to the position Egeland and Jegerstedt (2008:74) warns against, in which one believes there is a *natural* diversity "oppressed by" heteronormativity, but this informant has displayed no integration of the term heteronormativity and unproblematically (#25) uses categorical language. In other words, this essentialist discourse is *not* established by foreclosure of social/normative *foreclosures* of affect, it just assumes there is a bigger share of "non-hetero" people in an "actual reality"; an opening up can *show* a differently distributed (but still categorical) reality, but not *make* more diversity. Any notion of enabling influence on affect is unavailable due to a privileged

position of the natural and real, an establishment made possible by a deferral of any relativist perspective on truth.

Other excerpts below were able to consider that maybe different norms would produce different pupils, but considered in very different ways. The first resisted to the question:

**eh... until a certain age maybe, in some? Yes. That you don't dare. To explore your *actual* sexuality, or to stand for it and accept oneself!? You believe there is an *actual* sexuality? Yes. If the pupils have a feeling that <they are>... (...) then I think it may *destroy*... (...) (I try to explain further about formation and potential and the talk goes on) Not just "hinder the actual ones", but actually... "develop"...? Do you think that? I think so and hope so!? (...) that by creating an attitude around it that is positive, just like the attitude to heterosexuals, then I think it can contribute to strengthen that pupil to be it self (seg selv)! (...) (resistance and deflection of follow up, rewording the same meanings, but finally:) I believe a more open world would at least *allow* it, but if it had *created* it, or *lead* to it, I don't know. (...) If it is *creatable* or if it is something they *have inside* and dare to let out? I have no idea.**

This problem with taking in the meaning of the question itself and repeated focus on *allowance* and *realness* is a somewhat similar to the excerpt with "actual reality" above, where social influence can allow what is now oppressed. It is a very different way of answering, and there is more insecurity about truth, but there is some "overlap". The informant seems to believe school influences "can not make", but says, perhaps due to my repeated questioning, that "I have no idea". Regardless, what appears most firm is coherent sexuality and interiority, which means foreclosure of incoherence and relationality in a contingent production of desires. The last quote illustrates investment in the question which none of the others expressed at all, a logical problem with meaning read from my questioning:

**... I believe so maybe, but that it can be both? ... but I can't understand the relevance, regardless, I feel that taking a position regarding social or biological is just a way of getting into some kind of troublesome "for or against healing" ...**

This tells me of the unavailable positioning in a simple nature-nurture dichotomy, as *both* positions for this person relates to the politicized question of healing/curing "gay people"; the former trope (nurture), which is closer to what the informant otherwise expresses, is understood to be "for" healing, while the latter, which the informant expresses scepticism toward, is seen as against healing (which is positive). I read an attempt at solving a logical impossibility by refusing to relate to either-or, or when forced saying "maybe both". This could be a good entry way to unsettling in a way that tries to move *beyond*, as the informant thinks that both, separately, *and* the binary, are unsatisfactory; this may provide crucial *motivation* toward attaining a different perspective that could solve the frustrating dilemma

within this discourse, with room only for coherent products of nature, nurture, or a mix. I do not know what to say about particular foreclosed meanings here, because the perspectives presented as available are also recognized as insufficient and somehow untrue, which makes the discursive formation consist of several discursive battles with few fixed meanings.

In my reading of *all* these excerpts, and across all the investments in, and citations of, personal, social, or theoretical narratives of explanation, there is no visible belief in potential agency, contextually limited or not, in the children we hypothesized about. The same goes for the rest of the transcriptions. In the systems of meaning informing constructivist tropes, where people are somehow *socialized*, and essentialist tropes, where they just *are*, there is little room for agency; there is determinism in the coherencies within “both” ontologies. One of the oppressive and unethical aspects I see as consequences of these tropes is that “Agency, whether linked to sexual desire or activity, or to projects of crafting the self and relations to others, is relegated to the domain of the unthinkable” (Rasmussen et al 2004:7).

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## 4.5 Analysis of social and ethical consequences (level 3)

- And some argued and selected suggestions based on my theory and analyses

### 4.5.1 Introduction

What has become apparent regarding what I set out to explore, is that this is, as expected, a *con/text* and a group of people which in all the material cites massively normative liberal and heterogendered discourses. But at the same time the informant citations are also much more messy, insecure and inconsistent than I could ever have imagined. I do not consider it useful to return to the varied individual meaning citations illustrated so thoroughly above, so I will only suggest social and ethical consequences from the more general discursive citational patterns. Variation is a finding I expected but *not at all* to such an extent and I read it in two ways. It hints to necessarily even more individually adjusted pedagogical approaches than I hypothesized, which is perhaps challenging in its degree of demand. On the other hand, it also supplies more breaks and cracks within their individual “logics”, *and* perhaps *among* differently citing people in a discourse focused unsettling group situation (challenging each other); both give me *more* optimism than expected. Access to this messy variation in *knowledges*, experiences, citations, non-/investments and dis-/engagements are all important pedagogy-relevant aspects; the stability and the messiness is, as an overall picture, very

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relevant toward further research about *just how general, how adjusted and how open* TE learning *could* be appropriate.

While I think the variations are relevant for potential pedagogy, the apparent stability and discursively simplified “wall of common sense” in language is what has analyzable social/ethical consequences to suggest initially. So, at this last level of analysis I will do four things. First I gather most of the suggestions of from the last chapter into a more comprehensive proposition about social and individual consequences of the established and foreclosed meanings. This part will function in relation to the previous level, as that one did to the level before; I will make cumulative comments and suggestions. The perspective here is broader as I have taken the main heteronormative commonalities and stabilities defining the citation of those discourses, such as *sex-gender*, difference, the wound, and gender/sexuality conflation and separation. Second, I relate the perspective of Butler’s ethics to the same overall pattern of citations; these aspects have general and serious ethical consequences that beg suggestions for alternative citations and different approaches to TE. Thirdly I return to in/coherence, which also beg some suggestions for efforts; in this part I consider the use of some books applying “queer theory” to education to unsettle peoples citations in TE, how this may have worked in relation to citational tendencies just analyzed, and incoherencies I find effect-wise problematic. These three first parts all somehow “naturally leak over” into also being suggestive to some degree. The final part suggests different pedagogical and discursive approaches that analytically follow from what I have pointed out as foreclosed, unethical, difficult, necessary, in/coherent etc.; these last arguments have to do with teacher’s education but also teacher’s considerations and impacts *in* school, and come both from my analysis directly and my theories, and from other selections of insights. They must be read as *very* preliminary suggestions for pedagogy; the exploration of citations and potential was the project, what could follow need to be explored much further.

#### **4.5.2 Concrete social consequences**

The triangle of “parts” in the heterosexual hegemony is for the most part falsely separated in all the *explicit* meanings cited; this has many implications. When educational mandates and strategies around gender focus on encouraging gender equality, they do so completely detached from approaching heteronormative meaning and *production* of gendered bodies (*sex*); this undermines any possible attempt to critically approach the oppressive

exclusiveness baked into the gender separation that is attempted made “equal”. But when the “most common efforts toward gender equality and against re/production of traditional gender role patterns, is working in gender segregated groups”, this only reinforces patterns of gendering (Lundgren and Sörensdotter 2004:52); two separate meanings continue to be attributed and assigned and in some way or another kids will always be limited by having to perform and embody meaning of *not being* and meaning *the other*. The only way out of this interpellation into *exclusionary* narratives, where “Schools and the broader society produce sexual and gender identities, and students are compelled to mold themselves into forms more or less in place” (Butler and Connolly 2000 in Rasmussen 2006:97), is if the now relevant difference is made *irrelevant*<sup>59</sup>. This importantly involves not only *sex*, desire and *sexual identity*, but also *gender identity* and the available trans\* narratives. In reifying realness of ways of *being* and identifying, binary gender meanings supports the diagnostic system with delimitations of “real” and legitimate needs, with serious health consequences. But *on a much larger scale*, the way available, unavailable and forced trans\* categories are narrated inside and along the liberal *sex-gender/desire* narratives, *sustains the borders* of normality and *makes it impossible for everyone* to narrate, embody, and mould the *self*, and narrate others, less unethically, and to identify in less discursively constrained and more individual, relational and changing ways.

The current gender equality- *and* anti-homophobic approaches (academically, politically and pedagogically) are based on assumptions that keep focus at all levels, *on women/girls* and *on GLB/T people* and not the larger normative and productive systems. This is the result of assumptions of one-way oppression and power concepts and relevant and coherent *difference*. The constructed divisions *necessarily* involve hierarchical evaluations; if no value and relevance were attached to the difference now allegedly describing a *minority* and allowing its possible *inclusion, toleration* and *coming out*, these terms would not apply. This reproduction of relevant and coherent difference has structural, affective, relational, shame-wise and social/ethical consequences that produces poor health *for some*, limited agency, relations and desires *for all*, unnecessary separations in social spaces, and all kinds of other homophobic (“inwards” and “outwards”) effects.

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<sup>59</sup> Or we might say *only* medically and reproductively relevant, but just to some degree, so not to keep medicalizing what is now called intersex morphology; I’d rather say *variations* of bodies with large *tendencies* toward reproductive potential.



Rasmussen tells us how *the wound* and its projected risks has several very real effects:

Continuously reiterating the horrors (...) <is> problematic for two reasons. First the repetition of these statistics can produce a distancing effect whereby readers (...) may come to “disavow and deny our human implications in moral realities” (Robins 1996:77) (...) Second <it> may be problematic because <it> perpetuates the belief that such stories somehow ameliorate the perceived crisis (...) <And>, these stories also deflect research and pedagogy away from (...) operations of heteronormativity ... toward focus on individual/group pathology.”(2006:144-145)

Additionally there is the very real effect the wound-narrative has on some youth; one of Rasmussen’s youth worker participants told how some kids are reported to “get caught up in the drama and pathology created around being GLBTQ and develop self-destructive behaviours because it is expected of them.” (:142), and I believe there is no reason to think that cannot happen here too. It seems acute to think about “what sort of subjects tend to be produced <directly> by discourses of risk and violence” (:144), by teaching them an “unavoidable narrative” (Hellesund 2006, in Bolsø 2008a). Extending this logic, such risky lives are not tempting to “mould oneself” into, and as such may this risk deter people from affect and relations, and ensure heteronormative formation, as discussed late in level 2.

#### 4.5.3 Applying Butler’s ethics to self, being and narration.

“Learning from and about sexuality asks us to confront our vulnerabilities and to imagine how this thing we call the self is made from the fragility of our relations with others and the world.” (Gilbert 2004:124).

I described in the section on Butler, and I have not so subtly alluded to, especially in the last section on heteronormative formation, that the way liberal humanist and heteronormative discourses construct subjects, bodies, affects and relations into illusive coherence, in an *unethical* social reproduction. This is another summary reminder, of how this reproduction happens through endless citations of meanings in many aspects of social, academic, educational and political communication: this formation involves *sexual-* and *gender identity* categories, *gender* and *gayness* research and *knowledge* (like psychological and sociological gender descriptions, the wound and the closet narrative/coming out incentive), anti-homophobic approaches/narratives (such as minority-, inclusion- and tolerance speech, pride narratives, and teaching *about* or *for* “them”), and the binary *sexes* and *genders* underneath all understandings of desire and gender equality; this whole formation sustains, and is sustained by, the illusions of coherence, truth, difference and an undivided *self* that are problematized in Butler’s theory of ethics. The only part of this I have not discussed from

the material is the notion of undivided *self* with separate interiority. It is arguably, even more than *sex*, the most invisible and self-evident (hence not *explicitly* referred to) in all the material. It provides crucial meaning to the intra discursive formation and is a central part of the unethical citational pattern, and it is absolutely necessary to approach along with the rest.

The perspectives on heteronormativity and ethically violent narration certainly allows me to argue *against* homo/hetero and all other *gendered* narratives in education, whether in curriculum or speech. Here is where notions of *performative* gender and desire come together with opaque views of *self* and other. With no prediscursive “natural” gender- or desire categories it is unethical to sustain narratives/discourses that imply any such “natural” coherence. Some of the *con/text* material supports additive/expanded *identity* discourses, such as when LLH in 2004 *added queer* to the GLB list (Bolsø 2008a), and when SkU works for *all gender identities*. Whereas Jagose and Halberstam support this approach and argue for “the value of proliferating sexual and gender identities as a strategy to disrupt regulatory heteronormative practices” (Rasmussen 2006:60), Butler is sceptical to the strategic value to be gained in a proliferation of “identificatory taxonomies” (Rasmussen 2006:61); this is because it will always involve exclusionary logics informing affects, expressions and relations, along with for example realness/authenticity aspects, and temporal closures. *Identity* discourse is also deeply problematic because it makes it difficult to see how one is implicated in others and the other way around; *identity* makes people believe they do not “owe” themselves to others and their own discursive contexts: that they are anything but opaque to themselves. Informed by Butler I believe such *being* and self-ownership allows not only less agency, more self-centeredness and individualism, and less responsibility and empathy.

Agency is necessarily conditioned, and right now obstructed by mixes of *constructivist* meanings leaving the body alone as *sex*, and *essentialist* meanings insisting on natural differences; increased agency could come from deconstructing those mixed citations, the totality of the “debate”, and their shared essentializing implications in language and politics. Hetero- *and* homonormative performances of gender and desire *could* through that become recognized as unnecessary and limiting, no matter how “unconscious”, “chosen” or “natural” they have seemed. But it doesn’t have to happen immediately and completely; change may become *more* available discursively and culturally, and expressions, desires or relations may *to a lesser extent be* foreclosed. Butler’s insights about of *just how saturated*

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society is with naturalized/ing normative citations clearly acknowledges such a challenge as an extensive process that must always be ongoing and preferably as comprehensive as possible; I see pragmatism in this perspective to be about *preventive changes for the future*, not meeting homophobia *on its terms* now.

An other Butlerian implication for education, based on my analytical discussions, involves that assumptions in pedagogical TE *texts*, should *at least* be read critically and *questioned* for validity and *at best* completely revised. Butler theorizes *comprehensive* ethical problems, implying idealness of comprehensive approaches; this problematizes delimitations to subjects, or attachments to one type of text or speech. But my thesis is about *exploring* educator citational patterns and the possibilities to pedagogically unsettle them, so while also *advocating* textual changes, I choose to primarily explore what it would involve to facilitate educators to (always want to!) not only *not* speak/act ethically violent when *relating* students/pupils, but *also* to have the incitement, motivation and courage every day to critically read, with their future students/pupils, all of their con/*texts*.

My suggestions are serious and controversial. Some would disagree with my interpretation, but I believe Butler's arguments all together imply that all citing of *sexual identity* categories, and for example "gender equality", stands in the way of re-signifying the meanings that make up all the normative, oppressive, affective and phobic reproduction in the first place. In my material all agents and writers are performing an unethical reproduction, unfortunately, given all the good intentions. I could be open for discussing the totality of this argument when applied elsewhere in society, but I argue that my interpretation and theoretical argument *applies very specifically to schools and TE*, which is where so much of formation and production starts, and it is possible to be pragmatic in a long term society-changing sense.

#### **4.5.4 More on in/coherence**

There are two foci on in/coherence in my project. There are the foundational epistemological and ontological illusions of coherence; this informs my whole analysis' reasoning/motivation, execution/approach and intention/consequence. At another level, about one of my research questions, is if/how I can analytically "find" incoherence in the citations, and if it can be used to introduce *more coherently* truth-critical stances to themselves and their con/*texts* and pedagogical responsibilities. These levels, of applying

understandings of useful incoherence-exposures (Laclau and Mouffe) to problematic illusions of coherence, and thinking the importance of good coherent and continuous critique (Butler), are relevant simultaneously. Another aspect of incoherence I planned on involving more, but which in favour of my material had to be minimized to the following pages, is about the many publications applying “queer theory” to education in one way or another. I will not address which different audiences these may have been intended for, as such my critiques may not seem fair, but that being said, I have considered many of these texts *with TE in mind*, thinking how they might be read there, by people like my informants.

My reading suggests that by far the most of these texts position themselves in some *for me* theoretically incoherent place between constructivist (essentializing) uses of for example *gender roles*, *gender identity*, and *queer* as an umbrella term, and for example Foucault’s *identity (not affect) formation* and use of Butler’s word “heteronormativity”. An example of this from Østlund (2006), who states: “If you stand for democracy and equal rights it is necessary to see and challenge our heteronormative gender system. It can never be okay that non heterosexual kids have so much poorer health than heterosexual kids.” (:28). Østlund *also* communicates how basing categories on gender is somewhat arbitrary, and that it doesn’t have to be *being*, but it is right now. A reader may take away many meanings, but the text does not *overall* communicate a possibility *or* necessity to undermine and stop citing the wound, categories, or rights-discourse in this not-so-critical application of “heteronormativity”. Some texts use constructivist notions unproblematically while others deeply problematize words in one section but still use them elsewhere. The majority of texts<sup>60</sup> deals mainly with, or at least refer to, a constructed group of people who are written about as *queer* or *GLB/T/Q* students and teachers; the effects of many aspects of heteronormative society *on “these” people* are analyzed and described theoretically or anecdotally in books or article collections. What I find most ethically pertinent about applying “heteronormativity” to a field, the formation of affect, activities and expressions *for everyone*, is only mentioned in some texts. This supports, in readers, a delimitation of relevance where a “heteronormativity” focus disappears into the wound – to talk of *gayness*

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<sup>60</sup> Listing for example: Ambjørnsson 2005, Bustos 2007, Epstein and Sears 1999, Fields 2008, Glazier et al 2007, Kehily 2002, Lenz-Taguchi 2005, Letts and Sears 1999, Lundgren and Sörensdotter 2004, Martinsson et al 2007, McInnes 2008, Talburt 2004, McInnes 2004, Harwood 2004, Gilbert 2004, Pascoe 2007, Pinar 1998, Pinar and Rodriguez (Eds) 2007, Røthing and Svendsen 2008, 2009, Sahlstrøm 2006, Sears (Ed) 1992, Talburt and Steinberg (Eds) 2000, Østlund 2006.

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knowledge and empathy with gays in a heteronormative culture. I do not believe there can be lasting changes to a reader's cultural reproduction, when heteronormativity is not always also kept in focus *as productive* and *as* a result of for example that *gayness knowledge*. One exception I want to mention, which deals with the problem of keeping the categories troubled throughout, is Rasmussen (2004, 2006); the issue is solved with a version of a double move by *consistently* writing "GLBTI identified people", pointing to something some people do – in contextually limited processes of identification – never to *being*. This adds agency and consequently involves more of a different temporal perspective, where identifications and affects may change over time with changes in *con/texts*. The texts also focus mostly on heterosexual hegemony and formation as a totality with generalized population effects; I read this solution as the best available for TE readers' relative "incorporation" of constant unsettlement in approaching homophobic culture/effect: always seeing it in the larger context of ongoing/available population effects.

For example, the recent book *Sexuality in school* (2009) by Røthing and Svendsen, which is potentially the most available and applicable because it is in Norwegian and *directed* toward teachers and TE, is in my reading very useful in its research based and thorough critique of current approaches and its suggestions for new approaches. But I am left with, firstly, the one same old problem of it – *in effect* – constantly reifying the ontological status of the identity categories as used throughout. They write that their "point is first of all to show how children are shaped to become heterosexual from when they are very young, and in that way protest against the perception that *heterosexuality* is (the most) innate and "natural" (:50) and that "Sexuality ... can best be understood as something which is shaped and evolves in social interaction" (:49). From *my* perspective it is then incoherent (not *coherently* critical) that they still write *opposite gender*, "minority", "majority", *gender roles* and *gender identity*. They problematize *sexual identity* as a deterministic and static concept, but not *gender identity* in any similar way. Further it can be read several times about how teaching should rather "extend the horizon of options/possibilities" (:47) for the pupils, but I believe the encouragement can be most likely read to be about those who *already feel/express*, those who *do not dare*, or those who *are unsure*; I can not find any substantial mention that would make a reader think of "extending the possibilities" *for everyone* to begin with, *before* they are "shaped to become heterosexual" (:50). I question whether readers would manage to grasp and then focus on the generalizability of production when so many of the cited discourses and angles are still essentializing and still concerned with someone in particular. I

am afraid this may leave coherent bodies and meanings in place; regardless of critique and well intended good concrete suggestions of questioning privilege and un-markedness, it may send new teachers into class with the same citation of realness and it is ultimately pupils' individual readings of the foci and meanings cited by those teachers that have effect on them.

Many of these *queer*/education texts point out important heteronormative dynamics and *con/texts* and could each perhaps be useful in different ways for different TE readers, interacting with and meeting resistances in their personal investments and experiences. I am arguing about usefulness of these texts for TE and educators, and I consider them not coherently critical enough; what I want to recommend is using for example this last mentioned Norwegian book in TE but ensure critical reading *of it as well*, along with other texts (such as the *con/text* ones); all could be introduced as entryways for problematization of both *knowledges* and approaches to homophobia and heteronormativity. Independent TE readings are not ideally recommended, but I think, with a good critical facilitator in TE, it would indeed be *very* useful to contrast such texts' different foci/angles/discourses with each other and have the different thoughts critically read/written about; that would relativize relevant goals, strategies and citations.

#### **4.5.5 Closing in on some suggestions...**

“keep the formation of gender in view and uneasy...” (Rasmussen et al 2004:12).

An addition to critically reading, and writing about, the many variations of *text* surrounding gender, desire and education, I believe, on a generalizable level, that TE agents need *most of all* help toward exploring *their own* assumptions and to discuss how they are involved in sustaining meaning systems and relations with social/ethical implications; similarly they need to talk about assumptions in discourses they hear around them in their everyday lives. But first on some potential problems: I can not say anything about what kind of “real” consequences that one agent's (illustrated in #4 and discussed under “gender equality”) insistent and exclusive focus on gender differences and *natural* sexual variety would have in a classroom. I experienced it to stand out from the other dialogues and warrant a specific mention of this distinctness' possible consequence for pedagogical suggestions. It firmly foreclosed some topics, angles and connections that were common among all the others. It was also by far the most discursively consistent throughout and I think maybe when all meanings inform each other in such fixed and coherent ways, this has some effects in a

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dialogue meant to unsettle meaning. It obviously intersects with other factors, but I want to suggest that a very fixed system may be a bigger challenge (for this person *and* a teacher/pedagogical dialogue partner) to unsettle than those less fixed, or temporarily fixed but less confident; in these the discursive battlefield to a larger extent seem to offer cracks and room for new meanings.

This leads me to an analytical “finding” I have not written much about, that concerns pedagogical consequences of resistances and engagements; I read *most* informants as having fairly low levels of conscious investments in their own discourses and opinions. As they mostly understood anti-homophobic efforts to be about and for *GLB/T people*, the motivation that was expressed, concerns that specific type of anti-homophobic goal, and *gayness* teaching based on concerned empathy. But this was at fairly low levels; “the topic” was for most expressed to be important socially and institutionally, but not sufficiently to personally invest themselves time- and effort wise. I am not sure what to suggest when it comes to how to *initially* motivate TE agents enough to start having deconstructive dialogues; even though they may very well not realize what a deconstructive learning dialogue/process involves, they have to *want* to contribute for example toward less homophobia *enough* to be open enough to participate. As such, the two *surprising* findings that are most interesting with regard to my exploratory thesis questions, *and* with regard to pedagogical suggestions, point in two potential-wise directions: the extensive cracks and openings in meaning systems and citational choices, where there seem to be a surplus of meaning and informants in a not very concerned way are lost in contradictions, makes me have *more* optimism than I had, but the low levels of investment toward approaching their own contradictions point pessimistically to *more* difficulty in engaging in ones *own* role than expected.

There are some related and problematic narratives I want to specifically discuss before I go on, and these have to do with how to pedagogically relate to *identity*, and to the scientificity and the wounded risk narration. First, Holliday (1999) firmly states, about “the comfort of identity”, that “perhaps comfort is to be feared since it is discomfort, displacement, disruption which moves (*queer*) politics (and selves) forward into a more complex and less exclusive or complacent place”; Rasmussen extend this and names it “an ethics of discomfort”, what “might be conceived as an appropriate theoretical response to essentializing tropes of sexual and gender identities” (2006:94). This is an argument I concur with; I believe *the thought* that risk-decrease, safety and belonging through *identity* is logical

and *necessary*, is a blockage to unsettling dialogues, but as Rasmussen says, and my material supports, people are “often resistant to an ethics of discomfort” (2006:94-95). This issue of letting go, first of all, of own comforts, and emphasizing others’ comfort for sakes of solidarity or empathy, is a large roadblock to an unsettling type of pedagogy. Second, and this was illustrated by some informant, is how many actors, including “educational institutions; students; teachers; ...<are> implicated in the ongoing construction of tropes associated with scientificity. ... particular tropes ... <are> authoritative *through* recourse to scientificity” (:81 my emphasis). Here faith in science is the main belief system to challenge, and this is critical if to unsettle the narration of the wound and projected risks. To challenge an underlying scientificity in a context of mandatory pedagogical topics and texts such as those illustrated in level 1, is both immensely challenging and incredibly important. Related to both those obstacles, I must also bring up that not only do dividing practices and identity politics *saturate* the major disciplines in education; individuals are personally invested in the ideas:

““Dividing practices are critically interconnected with the formation, and increasingly sophisticated elaboration, of the educational sciences: educational psychology, pedagogics, the sociology of education, cognitive and developmental psychology” (Ball 1990:4). It might also be argued that these “educational sciences” ... are generally focused on seeking to improve the school climate for all students. Accordingly, dividing practices interrelated with these sciences ... may appear to be developed as a result of struggles to protect the rights of individuals” (Rasmussen 2006:82).

The situation this creates, and this is apparent in most of my material, is that people “may develop passionate attachments to these dividing practices.” (:82) as they are important to experiences of feeling empathy and engagement. Informants may not be consciously invested in their citations, and may not want to invest much in further educating themselves to meet issues of gender and sexuality, but they certainly *are* invested and “passionately attached” to their own empathetic attitudes toward the *LGBT people* they perceive gender, sexuality or homophobia to be about. Perhaps that, for some, is useful toward initial motivation, but it may very well also involve large resistances *in* a potential unsettling process.

The following sections are on work I, after all this, consider to offer useful experiences and insights, both for further research and attempts at unsettling pedagogy. Again, they are preliminary introductions that come in addition to the project’s main exploration.



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### *School learning*

There would be little use in exploring deconstructive approaches in TE and its agents, if I did not believe a similar but obviously adjusted approach was feasible in schools. Davies' book *Shards of glass - Children reading and writing beyond gendered identities* (2003) presents an optimistic and thorough but sober argument that supports my assumption, that it *is* difficult, but definitely possible and an ethical necessity. Davies repeatedly bases the research and argument in how desires are produced in the discursive gendering of children's bodies as they "take up as their own the obviousnesses, the patterns of interpretation and the patterns of desire" (:6). But deconstruction of authoritative *knowledge* and illusions of *truth* are also argued for on a general basis; it is about how to provide/allow the children tools to see historical, cultural and individual differences in perspective and perception and importantly the gender approach in focus is not disconnected from all other culturally (discursively) constructed *knowledges* and differences. More specifically, Davies writes about finding "ways of interacting with children and ways of speaking and writing that disrupted the apparent inevitability of the male-female binary. (...) to open up the possibility (...) of movement in and out of a range of ways of being" (:xi). There are concrete research supported suggestions about approaches with children, involving for example: talks about divisions like child and adult, good and bad, boy and girl, having different meanings in different cultures and times; about how one identifies with characters in stories and acts in ways to be like that; about how positions may give power or powerlessness, about how experiences of belonging vary in interactions with other positions; about how expectations of skills, emotions, *heterosexuality*, marriage, family and gender typical work are visible and invisible around them, and many other things. (:3-7). The children in Davies' research did understand the concept of discourse when introduced in basic ways, and they did understand how children develop investments to specific positionings in specific discourses (:3), such as in fairy tales read in school.

Davies offers hope for the potential of pupils' receptiveness and interest; optimism is from my perspective even more available for pupils than adults, simply because they have less fixed meanings to begin with, less confidence, and a desire for agency illustrated here:

"Children have a boundless, exploratory energy and a passion for understanding – not necessarily the content of any lesson, but of life itself. They want to talk about their experience of the social world and their embeddedness in it, their emotional bodily relations to it, and their pleasurable experience of competencies in relation to it. Their endless energy in talking about and exploring their experiences and their desire for agency are central to the opening up of a different kind of

agency – one in which they are able to see and articulate the very fabric in which they are embedded.” (:201)

When focusing on this agency the children deserves and can have, Davies speaks of a kind of agency which has to do with 1) an ability to recognize discourse as constitutive, 2) “The ability to catch discourse/structure/practice in the act of shaping desire, perception, knowledge”; and 3) “engagement in a collective process of re-naming, re-writing, re-positioning oneself in relation to coercive structures.” (:201). Some of the goals Davies outlines are about introducing pupils to a discourse that lets them see the “discourses and storylines <and> the cultural and historical production of gendered persons that they are each caught up in. (:2). This involves somehow letting them see that they “make themselves and are made in the discourses available to them.” (:2) and this must be done for them to be able to build strategies to start extracting themselves from “the psychic and bodily patterns of desire that restrict them” (:13). As with TE un-learning, it is about *both* themselves as individuals *and* about culture/discourse, and about seeing “intersections between themselves as fictions (...) and the fictions of their culture” (:2).

What was pointed to in Davies’ research as the most challenging aspect was for children *and* adults to break the child-adult binary; teachers can not tell pupils what meanings to read, they have to “undermine their own embeddedness in the authority of adult-child relations” and “give them access to new discursive possibilities (which they may well resist)” (:39) for *using* and *understanding* language, and for trusting themselves in both. This is a difficult and complex pedagogical move as it must balance the authority to keep control, and the offering of autonomy in readership and learning. It is also difficult for the pupils, because “Assumptions about the teachers’ interpretive authority and the authority of texts, assumptions ... of authorship, the nature of student-teacher interaction ... <and> the relation between knowledges and the person must all come under critical scrutiny” (:42). Importantly also, is that this critical deconstructive reading should (ideally) not be *additional* but “fundamental to the curriculum itself” (:42). As for age appropriateness and understanding, Davies insists that it is quite possible to start introducing the “difference of texts, genres and discourses at the earliest stages of literacy training” (Luke 1999:150 in Davies 2003:65).

I read Røthing and Svendsen’s book *Sexuality in school* (2009) to involve many of the same intentions as above, of “teaching that problematizes difference to create change” (:65). They base their suggestions on their research about what I previously have presented as

approaches “for them” and “about them” and focus heavily on ways of ways to speak without *othering* effects; I will only include some of the most concrete considerations here. They, like Davies, emphasize the usefulness of questioning why so many become heterosexual, and the importance for teachers of maintaining the angle that “children *become* heterosexual or homosexual as they grow up” (:49 my emphasis). They also support my pre-project assumption, and what is supported in my material, that unlearning is a very individual process, as *knowledge* + experience + language is performed, and invested in, so individually. Further it is important to question “homo-tolerance” and the relationship between accept and wantedness, as well as include “discussions about understandings of normality ... and *why* something is perceived to be more normal than another” (:69) to allow pupils to see why and how something appears obvious and privileged (:66). It is recommended to keep in mind firstly that there is discrepancy between what a teacher says and what pupils perceive to be said (:70); secondly to be aware that much new learning, and definitely this kind, often involves *unlearning* and getting rid of old ways of seeing the world to allow new ones. Thirdly to be aware, and prepared for, that this approach can create crises, provocation, insecurity, fear and confusion (:71).

### TE learning

There are many similarities among unsettling education at any level, but I believe the most distinctly unique about TE is its political and social mandate and responsibility; I would argue that deconstructive approaches can be likened to a personalized gift, but for people in educator roles it is much more than an access to new thoughts, feelings and expressions, it is about helping many young people to be allowed the same (and to not become teasers or teased). Before moving on to three theorists’ insights, some things are useful to re-emphasize: first the connection between heterogendered and other curricular normativities such as whiteness, ablebodiedness, and middleclass and sub/urban contexts (Margolis et al 2001, Røthing and Svendsen 2009); all normativities involve value systems from implicit and invisible curricula and challenging heteronormativity may be easier when presented in this larger context. I want to also remind about the whole “stew” I have made; if to unsettle the value, relevance and believed coherence of sexuality and gender, one must refuse to use as many as possible of all the other terms so firmly involved in this formation; this means to *never* unproblematically cite related “inclusion”, “representation”, “tolerance”, “minority”, *identity* or *closet-* discourses in TE, and preferably never let others “get by” with doing it either. The history and variety of trans\* meanings and doings can also be a very useful TE

tool, to critically unsettle gender *knowledge*, and demonstrate both agency and constraint, and the “phantasmic nature of desire” (Butler 1990:90); class discussions of *where* “the split” is and how they speak of gender in relation to it, is likely similarly useful to relativize meanings. I also believe that a way to work toward less unethical subject formation is to start by facilitating TE agents to realize their own opacity to themselves; this could allow educators to not be so quick to give or demand coherent narration through being “out *as gay*”, encourage pupils to tell if they *are* “GLB”, teaching “gay pride” or “tolerance” toward groups and “their” differences, or endorsing minority *identity* politics or even *GLB/T/queer* social groups. Rather they could enable diversity *without* supporting illusions of coherence, and speak of how we are constantly re/made in relations with others.

Lenz-Taguchi (2005) uses a blend of Butler and Derrida to speak of constitution, “subjectification” and deconstruction in an insightful article<sup>61</sup> on unsettling dialogues in TE. The author argues that: “instead of teaching truths and teaching truthfully we have to teach differently, by means of relating to, activating or using students’ desires, fears and pleasures in the teaching process” (:245), but also reminds us that one of the problematic aspects is how, as such, *the personal* is very important, but how the modernist notion of personal experience as “true and authentic”, can get in the way of deconstructing it and its relative perspective. The proposed way around this, then, is to “think about experience differently, to make it productive in other ways within the learning situation (...) I would say that we need to put the concept of voice and experience ‘under erasure/*sous rature*’ (:249-250). An important proposal is about encouraging/facilitating the taking up of positions to look from different perspectives and understand contradictions in ways of knowing, and what different ways of understanding does to us (:247); this works toward understanding contingency in formalized *knowledge* as well, such as social science, “so that students come to realize how different social science theories and discourses work the realities of research data differently, and generate different kinds of answers” (:248). Lenz-Taguchi also argues heavily for deconstructing and reconfiguring imagery of *the teacher* as holder of *knowledge*, and “trying to understand the students as co-constructors of knowledge rather than receivers” (:248).

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<sup>61</sup> “Getting Personal: how early childhood teacher education troubles students’ and teacher educators’ identities regarding subjectivity and feminism”.

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In an article<sup>62</sup> in *Youth and sexualities* Harwood (2004:88-100) illustrates an analytical type of research approach to discourse which I believe could be applied in an adjusted form in TE; I believe one would perhaps have to think of examples, entry-points, questions etc. to get it started, to facilitate further deconstructions by/among the students. It is inspired by Foucault's genealogy and involves *four* (related) *angles of scrutiny* of a discourse; it can be of a larger formation, of a narrative, or of a concept. The first is about *emergences*, which consists of discussing where and how a notion emerged. The second is about *contingency*, the ways in which it keeps being spoken into existence, or as Harwood says: "What contingency offers, is to draw attention to the practices upon which such emergences are reliant" (:92). This is perhaps the relativizing angle I would, and many theorists seem to, emphasize the most, or one can say the other angles are part of this one; rationalities and its emergences and "network of contingencies" can be traced and shown to have a history. (Foucault in Harwood 2004:92). The third angle, *discontinuity*, is tracing definitions posited as having continuity, because the apparent continuity lends legitimacy, but upon closer examination it is discontinuous, showing contingency. The fourth, *subjugated knowledges* (disqualified or local), can have great value in this approach because exposing them may be a "litmus test" for the dominating knowledges, and draw attention to power and production of those knowledges.

Ricker-Wilson insists<sup>63</sup> it *will* be difficult and it *will* be frustrating, and that the *rapport* between dialogue partners in such unsettling conversations is *everything*, stating that: "Clearly the specific relational interactions in which <the teacher> and each of his students are engaged are crucial to determine the "extraordinarily difficult conversations" (Pinar et al 1995:48) he can have with each of them, and the outcome" (Ricker-Wilson in Glazier et al 2007:153). As Davies insists about non-authoritarian pedagogy in school, Ricker-Wilson similarly insists about TE classroom "control": one must be aware that it is "dependent on the actors and situation, requiring sensitivity to one's own and student's ever changing desires and epistemic resistances" (:155). Sometimes it requires "gentle nurturing" to "manipulate students into taking responsibility for making meaning"; other times it may mean letting go of all control over classroom conversations; and "at another moment it might

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<sup>62</sup> "Subject to scrutiny: Taking Foucauldian Genealogies to Narratives of Youth Oppression".

<sup>63</sup> (in "Learning to read critically. From High School to College to Teacher Education" written by this author and three more, in a dialogue).

depend on refusal to “rescue” students from the cognitive cul de sacs in which they become entrapped.” (:155). Like Røthing and Svendsen remind us about pupils, Ricker-Wilson argues about TE students: “There is nothing innately empowering about this. On the contrary, it can lead to confusion, resistance, anger, and other responses indicative of epistemic and ontological crisis” (:155).

After all these analytically based ethical and social arguments, and the insisting, optimistic and sober insights, I want to say in closing that it is necessarily a challenge which is specific to each person, and the processes need to be adjusted in duration and “depth”, but I argue that a discourse focused *approach* is useful at all levels of education, from across faculty, to small children. It will certainly be difficult, but fully possible; getting them started may be the largest obstacle, but I strongly argue the system openings are large and available to discuss and unsettle, for a motivated, patient and skilled facilitator. I uncompromisingly hold that if disregarding all my critical arguments against current politics/pedagogy and reproduction to be “pragmatic”, *any* potential short term benefits *will always be outweighed* by participation in the much larger underlying social and ethical problem itself, now, and for the future.

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