

Boys life – college essay



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Hanna Rosin's article "A Boy's Life" focuses on a child, Brandon Simms, who was born a boy, but preferred to act, dress and grow up as a girl. This is a controversial issue in which people are no longer referred to as male or female, but as transgendered. Rosin expresses conflicting viewpoints about gender roles and identities and how they are established. Some professionals believe the brain controls gender identity while others believe it is genetically programmed at birth or how children are raised.

Tina, Brandon Simms's mother, was told transgender was a fixable condition and that she should not give into Brandon's behavior or allow him to play with girl's toys or dress in women's clothing (553). It was thought that Brandon might have over identified his mother as protector of the family, disassociating gender roles (549). Dr. John Money believed "Sexual behavior and orientation as male or female does not have an innate, instinctive basis... we learn to be male or female" (554). The results from Dr. Money's case study, which a young boy was castrated after a botched circumcision did not support his theory and in fact proved his theory was invalid (554). Geneticist, Eric Vilain, opposes Milton Diamond's theories by stating, "there is no evidence of a biological influence on trans-sexualism" (557).

"Becoming Members of Society" expresses the idea that gender roles and identities are learned. Devor mentioned "children initially acquire the values of the society around them almost indiscriminately... they absorb the generalized standards of society of what is correct behavior" (530). Children associate physical attributes to gender identity regardless of anatomical attributes (529). Devor refers to a number of studies performed on children of varying age groups and their means for determining gender based on

appearances of dolls. Devor also mentions the idea that children believe gender can be changed by changing clothing choices and hairstyles (529).

While children begin to establish gender identity at an age between 18 to 24 months (528) it is a heated debate as to whether it is the brain controlling gender identity disorders or whether it is socially or genetically driven, impacting children as such young and innocent stages of their lives.