diversIT- women* in IT

Why are we talking about women in IT?

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AGENDA

Women* in IT

01 **Diversity**

Statistics, Gender Theory, a Short Video

02 **Visibility**

Dame Stephanie Shirley - Her Story

03 **Concluding Question**

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Diversity

First, a few numbers*…

- In tech workforce **27,6%** identify as female

- **17%** of tech companies have women as CEOs

- Women in tech companies mainly work in marketing, operations,
  design, etc.

- Almost **92%** of developers are male

- Computer Science has one of the **slimmest pay gaps**:
  with women earning 94% of what men earn

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First, a few numbers*…

- **78%** of women feel that they have to work harder to prove themselves

- **50%** of women who enter the technology field abandon it by the age of 35

- In the US, **20%** of computer science undergraduate degrees go to women

- Twice as many male teenagers report an interest in learning computer science than female teenagers

* Source: Center for Women and Information Technology, 2022, https://ncwit.org/

So, why is that?

A bit of theory…

- **Sex:** biological traits, i.e. reproductive organs and physiognomy, **male** - **female**

- **Gender:** cultural meanings attached to sex, **masculinity** - **femininity**

3 examples of gender theory:

- **Essentialism:** Sex and Gender are the same: embodied men are masculine, embodied women are feminine → there are only 2 genders

- **Constructionism:** Sex and Gender are not the same: gender is a social construct

- **Performativity:** Gender is a performance, discourse, ever evolving

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"Teaching gender is not indoctrination: it does not tell a person how to live; it opens up the possibility for young people to find their own way in a world that often confronts them with narrow and cruel social norms. To affirm gender diversity is therefore not destructive: it affirms human complexity and creates a space for people to find their own way within this complexity."
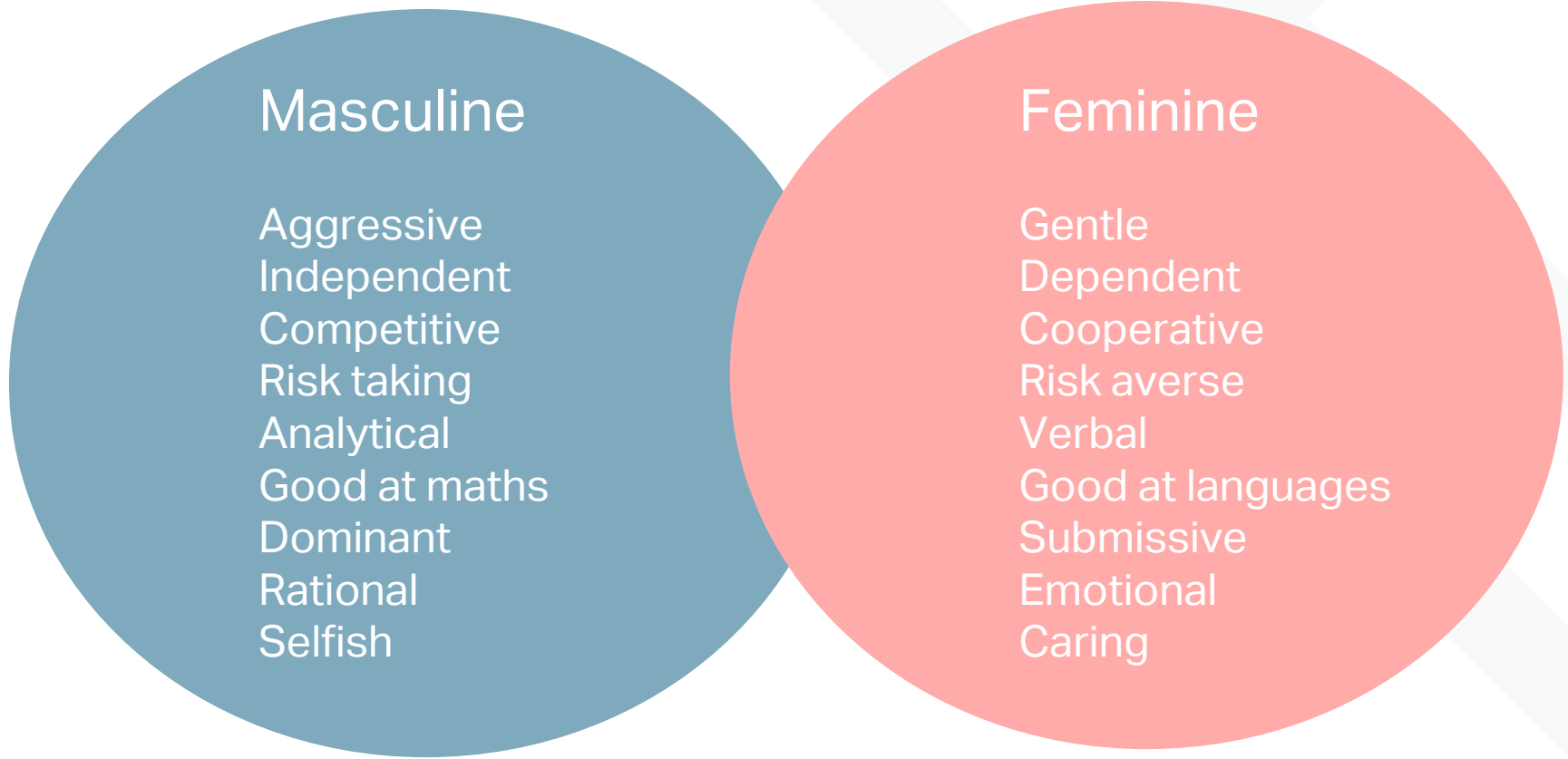
Judith Butler

Concepts of Gender: Masculinity vs. Femininity

Masculine

Aggressive
Independent
Competitive
Risk taking
Analytical
Good at maths
Dominant
Rational
Selfish

Feminine

Gentle
Dependent
Cooperative
Risk averse
Verbal
Good at languages
Submissive
Emotional
Caring

Why is that a problem?

➤ Typically feminine traits are valued less than masculine traits in society

➤ Therefore, being a woman, which is associated with **femininity** is valued less than being a man, which is associated with **masculinity**

➤ Justifies stereotypes; rewards gender conformity and punishes gender non-conformity:

　e.g. women, who are assertive: bossy ; men who are emotional: soft, pussy, etc.

➤ For women: unconscious bias, authority gap and lack of role models

➤ Limits people in their life choices and discriminates

➤ Perpetuates social inequalities: worse paid jobs,

　less leadership positions, female founders, low pensions, etc.
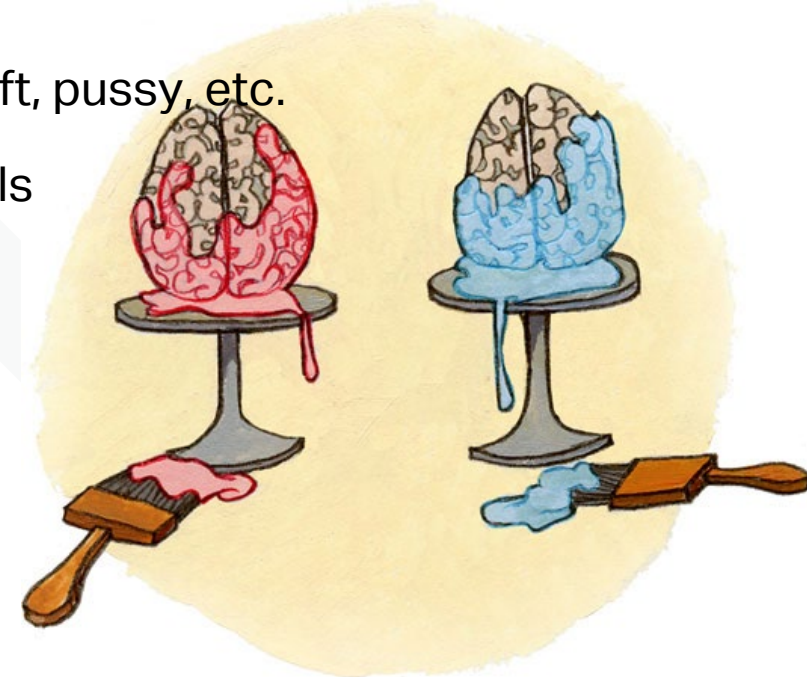
And then there is:
Motherhood

Picture: https://www.withlovebecca.com/working-mom-memes/
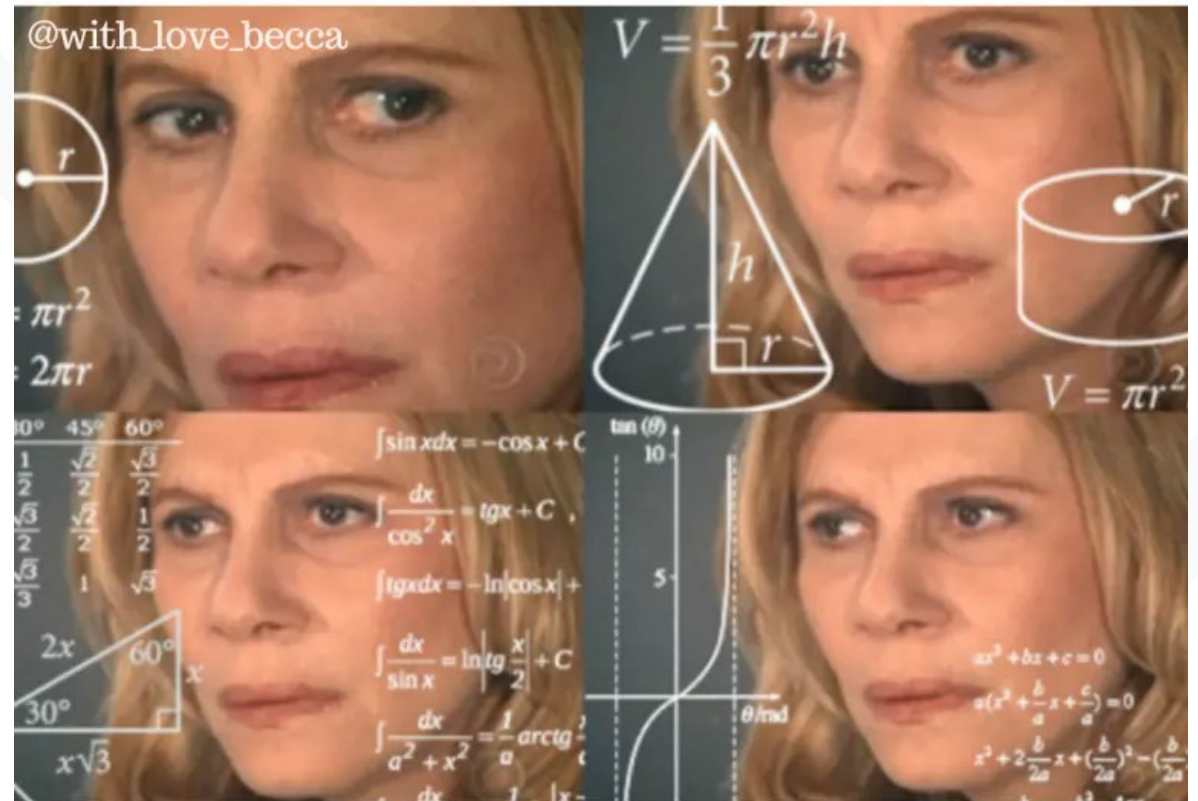
"Gender equity isn't just about representation. We need to terminate gender bias at its root by fixing our organizations to make them inclusive, flexible, supportive, and equitable to women."

(Dr Amy Diehl, Harvard Business Review*)

*Source: Research: How Bias Against Women Persists in Female-Dominated Workplaces (hbr.org)

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Visibility

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Dame
Stephanie Shirley

Dame Stephanie Shirley:

Born in 1933, Holocaust Survivor

Founded Software Company *F. International Group* in 1962 a company of women and for women*

Stephanie changed her name to "Steve" in written communication

1975 equal opportunities legislation forced the company to let men in

"You can always tell ambitious women by the shape of their heads: They are flat on top for being patted patronizingly."

*Source: Ted Talk by Dame Stephanie Shirley: *Why do ambitious women have flat heads?*

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Concluding question:
Do women have to "act like men" to be successful in IT?

Thank you for listening.

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