Abstract

Currently, neo-liberal and postfeminist discourses position girls as “having it all”. Girls’ hyper-visibility in the media and in popular culture suggests that they “run the world”, and therefore no longer need feminism. At the same time, girls are also often positioned as in trouble and in need of saving, or ‘angry’ and in need of control. So how do girls understand what it means to be a girl in society today? In this thesis, I attempt to answer this question as well as how girls negotiate and navigate the complex and often contradictory hegemonic discourses of girlhood. Finally, I seek to understand how girls both consciously and unconsciously resist mainstream representations of girlhood in ways that allow them to critique larger systems of oppression. I also explore the potential of using media production as a form of resistance among girls. In particular, I explore the question: What stories do young girls tell in their own media produced texts? Do these stories run counter to dominant discourses and images of girlhood or do they reproduce dominant discourses?

Keywords: girl power; postfeminism; girlhood; resistance; media literacy

CHAPTER 1: Introduction