



## **Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Un/Defining the “Girl”**

— Shauna Pomerantz

### **The Problem with Definitions**

When I was invited to participate in a panel, entitled “Disciplinary Definitions of the Child,” at Congress 2009, I was a little confused about what to do. I teach in the multidisciplinary department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University, and I do not think of myself as having a discipline per se. My research is located at the crossroads of feminist sociology and youth cultural studies, and my training is in the field of education. Given this background, how could I offer a *single* disciplinary definition of the “child”? More importantly, why would I want to? My research seeks to dismantle the humanist drive for classification, particularly in relation to young people. Such a drive empowers western researchers to colonize the “objects” of their studies, rendering them safe, knowable, and “Other” (Fine; Said; Tuwahi Smith). I did not want to reinforce, however inadvertently, the ways in which young people continue to be obsessively

dissected and fixed by “moral panic” (Cohen) and “single certainty” (Barthes).

Further, as the other contributions to this forum make clear, the “child” is a social, cultural, and historical construction. Patrizia Albanese points out that official and legal definitions of childhood are vague and confusing. A child, she notes, can be anyone under ages ranging from six to nineteen, or can be any age at all as long as he or she is single and resides with a parent (138). And as Mona Gleason suggests, the “child” has a history unto itself. In her discussion of Philippe Ariès, she notes that childhood did not always exist. In the Middle Ages, for example, children were treated as “little adults” (125). Over time, Gleason explains, the sentimental value of children grew as their economic value waned, prompting cultural shifts in how children were treated. Children came to be seen as in need of protection and adult supervision. Conversely, Julia Emberley explores the idea that the

“child” is represented more and more as the child of experience rather than the child of innocence. The child of experience has been inducted into the adult world of knowing—knowing pain, knowing death, knowing war, and knowing the need to testify. As a result, the “child” can also be the “adult.” Given all of these variations, locating one True definition of the “child” is not only impossible, but also undesirable.

While the shifting social, cultural, and historical contexts of the “child” presented me with difficulties in coming up with a disciplinary definition, the “child”—as a category—did not totally jibe with my own research, which focuses on social and cultural constructions of girls and girlhoods (see Currie, Kelly, and Pomerantz; Pomerantz). While the “girl” is subsumed under the word “child,” girls are rarely seen within the parameters of this term. In many bodies of literature, particularly anthropology and sociology, the “child” is gender-less, sex-less, and desire-less, leaving no room for a discussion of girls, or gender as it intersects with “race,” ethnicity, class, and sexuality. And in other bodies of literature, particularly classic cultural studies and popular media accounts, the term “youth” tends to refer to young men (McRobbie), rendering girls virtually invisible as participants in or creators of youthful cultural practices (Kearney). So, while girls are indeed children, they are also constructed through distinct social, cultural, and historical trajectories that make the “girl” a unique

entity from the “child.” While the same could be said for the “boy,” during the early-twenty-first century, girls have become an “incitement to discourse,” whereby they have been obsessively written about and represented as in trouble and out of control (Pomerantz). Such moral panics include the “mean girl” crisis (Fey; Simmons), the Ophelia complex (Pipher), and the girls-gone-wild syndrome (Levy; Hardwicke), to name but a few. As a result, girls have endured an enormous amount of surveillance, bad press, and negative labelling, making deconstructive interventions crucial in order to counterbalance the harmful effects of this discursive formation on girlhood (Kelly and Pomerantz).

To reconcile myself to the panel, then, I had to find a way to talk about the “girl” without reifying the disciplinary definitions that I sought to critique. As a result, I framed my talk, and this resulting paper, in feminist post-structural theory. In so doing, I hope to move beyond definitions altogether and instead locate the “girl” within multiple and competing discourses that have culminated in a body of knowledge on “who” girls are and how they are allowed to “be” in North American society. As Alison Jones famously notes, “Girls become ‘girls’ by participating within those available sets of social meanings and practices—discourses—which define them as girls” (159). With Jones’s words in mind, rather than focusing on definitions of the “girl,” this paper seeks to trace some



The “girl” is talked about  
as either excess or lack,  
good or bad, nice or mean,  
chaste or slutty, aggressive  
or passive, fat or thin,  
healthy or unhealthy,  
powerful or submissive,  
a real go-getter or  
completely out of control.



of the more powerful discourses that have constructed girls through various disciplines in the social sciences.

Based on the work of Michel Foucault, Nancy Fraser defines *discourse* as “historically specific, socially situated, signifying practices” that link “the study of language to the study of society” (185). This description is useful in that it moves the conversation away from definitions, which presume fixed and stable Truths, and instead highlights the idea that language and research constitute, rather than merely reflect, reality. But, while this stance critically explores how girls have been discursively produced, it also acknowledges that girls both take up and resist these circulating Truths when they negotiate their identities in the social world. In other words, disciplinary definitions of the “girl” are both constructions (i.e. artificial classifications) and lived realities (i.e. real experiences) at the same time.

### Caught in a Trap

The “girl” is one of the most talked about—and delineated—social categories in North America. Yet, rather than generating more and more ways for girls to “be” in our society, this proliferation of discourse has limited possibilities for girls, trapping them within polar states that regulate what they can say and do. These polarities condemn or condone, pathologize or normalize, ignore or glamorize, girls. As Valerie Walkerdine notes, the “girl” is always accused of being “too something and not something enough” (“Girlhood” 15). The “girl” is talked about as either excess or lack, good or bad, nice or mean, chaste or slutty, aggressive or passive, fat or thin, healthy or unhealthy, powerful or submissive, a real go-getter or completely out of control. The “girl” should be kind, helpful, attractive, tasteful, tame, and smart,

but should not be sexy, sexual, opinionated, loud, angry, or intimidating. The “girl” should be media savvy, confident, and brimming with self-esteem, but should also be polite, sweet, quiet, and modest. In fact, as Christine Griffin argues, dominant meanings of girlhood function through a series of contradictions that make the “girl” an “impossible subject” (42).

As impossible subjects, girls are defined and regulated by an overarching dichotomy: the “girl” as object and the “girl” as subject (see Gonick, “‘Girl Power’”). In the first category, the “girl” is an object of the researcher’s scrutiny, concern, and derision. As an object, the “girl” lacks agency, is viewed as a cultural dupe, and is in need of adult surveillance for her “own good.” Research based on this pole is prescriptive in tone, as in, “We need to protect girls from harm!” and demoralizing in tone, as in, “Girls are so clueless!” In the second category, the “girl” is construed in exactly the opposite way. She is a subject with agency and the authority to control her own life. Popular cultural narratives and marketers have ascribed power to girls through sloganeering, consumerism, and neo-liberal constructions of the “sassy” individual. Research based on this pole is celebratory in tone, as in, “You go, girl!” and “Girl power!” After exploring these two poles in more detail, I will offer a third option, one that is predicated on a feminist post-structural stance that eschews binary oppositions and narrow definitions in favour of generativity and the proliferation of

difference and complexity.

### **The “Girl” as Object**

The “girl” as object has a long history within the social sciences, effectively working to erase, ignore, or chastise girls. From this perspective, girls are treated as naïve innocents who are not strong enough, savvy enough, or smart enough to withstand our “girl poisoning” culture (Pipher). As a result, girls are generally framed as lacking control, power, and brains. As well, this perspective leads researchers simply to ignore girls, or, as in the case of second-wave feminism, necessarily to sacrifice them for political ends.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the women’s liberation movement was predicated on a political platform that divided women from girls. In order to protest their designation as “children,” women refused the demeaning moniker “girl,” as in the “office girl,” the “shop girl,” the girl who fetches coffee, takes notes, cleans the house, and watches the children. Adult women were referred to as girls in a condescending tone that put them “in their place” as powerless figures who were easily ordered around. As a result, women were forced to distance themselves from this term in a battle over nomenclature that represented material and discursive oppressions. Dawn Currie, Deirdre Kelly, and I note that, until very recently, this distance made girlhood “‘the other’ of feminism’s



Initially, Freud linked  
girls' identity formation  
to penis envy . . . .  
Addressing Freud's  
pronouncement, Luce  
Irigaray points out that,  
"[e]nvy, jealousy, greed  
are all correlated to lack,  
default, absence". . . .



womanhood" (4), defining the "girl" negatively in relation to the adult stance that feminists took in the face of their infantilization. As Marion Leonard explains, the second-wave insistence on "the use of the term 'woman' to some extent reduced the value of the term 'girl,' where 'woman' was equated with an empowered feminist adult, [and] 'girls,' defined by immaturity, were depoliticised" (232). This unfortunate split between women and girls meant that the "girl" would not be seen as an appealing subject position until the early 1990s, when third-wave feminists reclaimed "girl" as a powerful and playful word.

Around the same time that second-wave feminists were fighting to be "women" and not "girls," the "girl" was again positioned as "Other" within the classic 1970s texts of British cultural studies. Girls were cast as sidekicks in spectacular male subcultures, such as punks and mods (Hebdige, *Subculture*). They were the butt of jokes in the lives of working-class "lads" (Willis). They were "accessories" and "replicas" (Hebdige, *Hiding*), hangers-on and ornaments, assumed simply to be following "the same cultural trajectory as boys, but with far less involvement, commitment or investment" (McRobbie 35). The researchers of classic British cultural studies were quick to tap into the romanticized energy of their male subjects, depicting subcultural youth as political agents and working-class heroes. But, as Angela McRobbie points out, when the "girl" does make an appearance in subculture, it is usually as a "follower," a "slag," a "whore," or a compliant "girlfriend." In short, it was believed that girls could add little or nothing to the advancement of youth cultural studies, and so they were treated as invisible and insignificant.

From classic cultural studies to developmental psychology, the "girl" continues to be defined as an object—this time, of worry and concern. Initially, Freud linked girls' identity formation to penis envy.

Girls, he wrote, “notice the penis of a brother or playmate, strikingly visible and of large proportions, at once recognize it as the superior counterpart of their own small and inconspicuous organ, and from that time forward fall a victim to envy for the penis” (335). Addressing Freud’s pronouncement, Luce Irigaray points out that, “[e]nvy, jealousy, greed are all correlated to lack, default, absence” (408). Girlhood came to be defined by this “lack” and was subsequently ignored by developmental theorists interested in children and youth, including Erik Erickson, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg.

The dearth of academic weight granted to female identity formation in developmental psychology propelled Carol Gilligan, Nona Lyons, and Trudy Hanmer to research a particular juncture, which they called the “crossroads,” in girls’ lives. The crossroads represents the edge of adolescence—the space between childhood and adulthood—where girls enter into a period of danger, low self-esteem, and loss of self. Other psychologists and journalists scrambled to meet girls at the crossroads, where they were fast being defined as “in trouble,” “drowning,” and “lost.” Using her own psychotherapy practice to collect evidence to this effect, Mary Pipher writes of the “Ophelia” complex. The Ophelia metaphor represents her belief that girls are split into fragmented selves when they enter puberty. The “authentic” and happy self of the prepubescent girl is tragically transformed into the

“inauthentic” self of the pubescent girl, who loses her own voice when she inevitably succumbs to media and peer pressure. While seen to be a form of “modern ‘girl advocacy’” (Brumberg B7), this popular strand of developmental psychology constructs girlhood as “a riddle, a silence, a form of irrationality and madness” (McCarthy 196).

### **The “Girl” as Subject**

On the opposite end of the spectrum, popular cultural narratives and marketers define the “girl” as a subject who “kicks ass,” “rocks,” and “rules” (while boys drool). The most wide-reaching discourse from this pole is “girl power” (Currie, Kelly, and Pomerantz). Since the Spice Girls exploded on the scene in the mid-1990s, their signature slogan has held enormous sway in popular culture (Taft). In 2001, the Oxford English Dictionary added *girl power* to its lexicon, defining it as “a self-reliant attitude among girls and young women manifested in ambition, assertiveness, and individualism.” This ethos underpins numerous constructions of girlhood, particularly in relation to the neo-liberal subject (Aapola, Gonick, and Harris). Neo-liberalism is a discourse that touts the personal characteristics of flexibility, hard work, adaptability, and self-reliance in order to foster a subject who will thrive in the economic, political, and social realities of the new global order (Walkerline, Lucey, and Melody). Anita Harris suggests in *Future Girl* that girl power



. . . the “child” is always  
caught within polar  
states of “being” and  
“becoming,” constructed  
as either “powerful” or  
“powerless,” “independent”  
or “vulnerable”. . . .



successfully constructs girls as ideal neo-liberal subjects because of its “can-do” and “DIY” (do-it-yourself) philosophy. From the classroom to the workplace to the social world, girls are not the drowning Ophelias of development psychology or the boring “hangers-on” of classic cultural studies. In the context of the constructions noted in this forum, they are not the corrupted “innocents” of transnational scimmages (see Emberley) or the incompetent and vulnerable children of adult historical constructions (see Gleason). And neither are they viewed as human “becomings” rather than “beings” (see Albanese). All of these perspectives presume that girls (and children more generally) are without agency, power, and the ability to resist. Like the “new sociology of childhood” (Albanese), the perspective of the “girl” as subject instead sees girls as agentic, as well as “grrr!” powerful. The “girl” as subject has been defined as an “alpha girl” (Kindlon) and an “amazing girl” (Rimer): a girl who is unimpeded by structural constraints and is successful at whatever she chooses to do. Framed by a narrative of individualism, post-feminism, and feistiness, the “girl” is defined as the independent heroine of her own life.

While the discourse of girl power constructs the “girl” as sassy, smart, and sexy, but without the need for feminism, third-wave feminists have re-signified girlhood as a powerful subject position, but one that is still very much engaged in politics. While second-wave feminists distanced themselves from the word “girl,” the “ascent of the ‘girl’ as a strong and distinct feminist identity is probably one of the best examples of what differentiates third wave feminists from second wave feminists” (Baumgardner and Richards 63). Third-wave feminism is a continuation of the second wave, but with an added emphasis on sex/sexuality, pleasure, technology, difference, popular culture, and performance. As a result, “girlie” or “youthful” adult women now

willingly choose to adopt “girlish identities” (Wald), welcoming a “new girl order” (Karp and Stoller) that includes *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the *Powerpuff Girls*, the *Gilmore Girls*, and the vast world of “pop.” From this perspective, “girlhood” is neither an age nor a stage, but is an ironic and iconic performance infused with youthful energy, style, fun, and capriciousness.

### **The “Girl” as Generative**

The two polar states described above encapsulate the dominant discourses on girls within the social sciences, which construct girls as either objects or subjects who are narrowly and simply drawn. These two polar states jibe with much of what has been written on the “child” more generally. As the other contributions to this forum demonstrate, the “child” is always caught within polar states of “being” and “becoming,” constructed as either “powerful” or “powerless,” “independent” or “vulnerable” (Albanese; Emberley; Gleason). Such binary oppositions make it impossible to view the “child” as a complex and contextual figure that is both powerful and powerless, both subject and object, both independent and vulnerable, all at once. These static views freeze the “child,” as either/or, limiting not just how adults/researchers conceptualize children, but also the subject positions made available to young people in the social world.

In response to the subject/object dualism that constructs the “girl,” a third option has emerged.

Framed by feminist post-structuralism, critical girls’ studies seeks to offer complex and contradictory stories about girls in order to disrupt linear and binary thinking. Gayle Wald describes girls’ studies as a “subgenre of recent academic feminist scholarship that constructs girlhood as a separate, exceptional, and/or pivotal phase in female identity formation” (587). What makes critical girls’ studies distinct is its anti-definitional stance. Rather than prescribing how the “girl” should act, girls’ studies focuses on troubling the category “girl” as a taken-for-granted social location. As a result, critical girls’ studies theorists aim to contextualize girlhood through social, cultural, and historical specificities, as well as intersecting identity categories such as gender, “race,” ethnicity, class, and sexuality.<sup>1</sup>

The key question that drives critical girls’ studies is “How and why are girls what they appear to be at a particular moment in a given society?” (de Ras and Lunenberg 1). This question immediately moves critical girls’ studies away from disciplinary definitions, and instead takes up Jacques Derrida’s challenge to wriggle beyond the closure of binary thinking, toward the “as yet unnamable which begins to proclaim itself” (293) when terms, such as “girl,” are left undecided. Asking how and why girls appear to be certain ways at certain times also creates a much-needed space for social, cultural, and historical contextualization. One of the main problems with disciplinary definitions is that they



paint all girls—and all children and youth—with the same brush, denying intersectionality and difference, while also ignoring the ways in which institutions, such as the family and the school, specifically shape girls' identities (Pomerantz). Given all of these permutations, "girls" cannot be slotted into a definitive definition; one size will never fit all. To paraphrase Valerie Walkerdine, critical girls' studies does not focus on creating a unified notion of girlhood, but on blowing apart the fictions through which girls have been defined ("Girlhood").

What makes critical girls' studies critical is its drive to generate new possibilities for girls, rather than shutting possibilities down by suggesting that there is a "right" or a "wrong" way to "do" girlhood (see

also Gleason on "childhood"). The goal of critical girls' studies is to increase the "circumference of the visible" (Haraway 199) for girls by conducting research that highlights girls as complex, contextual, and contradictory beings. In so doing, critical girls' studies researchers can become "part of the process of enlarging the possible discourses on/for girls and thus the range of feminine subject positions available to them in practice. Or, put another way, we can contribute to increasing the number of ways girls can 'be'" (Jones 162). Increasing the number of ways girls can "be" means eschewing singular definitions in favour of generativity by retaining all the chaos and ambivalence of everyday life in the telling of stories about and with girls.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Aapola, Gonick, and Harris; Bettie; Currie, Kelly, and Pomerantz; Driscoll; Gonick, *Femininities*; Gonick, "Girl

Power"; Kelly and Pomerantz; and Pomerantz.

## Works Cited

- Aapola, Sinikka, Marnina Gonick, and Anita Harris. *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change*. London: Palgrave, 2004. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *The Fashion System*. Trans. M. Ward and R. Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983. Print.
- Baumgardner, Jennifer, and Amy Richards. *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. Print.
- Bettie, Julie. *Women without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003. Print.
- Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. "When Girls Talk: What It Reveals about Them and Us." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 24 Nov. 2000: B7–B10. Print.
- Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972. Print.
- Currie, Dawn H., Deirdre M. Kelly, and Shauna Pomerantz. "Girl Power": *Girls Reinventing Girlhood*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. Print.
- de Ras, Marion, and Mieke Lunenberg, eds. *Girls, Girlhood and Girls' Studies in Transition*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1993. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Print.
- Driscoll, Catherine. *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*. New York: Columbia UP, 2002. Print.
- Fey, Tina. *Mean Girls*. Dir. Mark Waters. Paramount, 2004. Film.
- Fine, Michelle. "Working the Hyphens: Reinventing Self and Other in Qualitative Research." *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994. 70–82. Print.
- Fraser, Nancy. "The Uses and Abuses of French Discourse Theories for Feminist Politics." *Revaluing French Feminism: Critical Essays on Difference, Agency, and Culture*. Ed. Fraser and S. L. Bartky. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992. 177–94. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1977. Print.
- Gilligan, Carol, Nona Lyons, and Trudy J. Hanmer. *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990. Print.
- "Girl Power." *OED Online*. Oxford UP, 2009. Web. 17 Nov. 2009.
- Gonick, Marnina. *Between Femininities: Ambivalence, Identity, and the Education of Girls*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2003. Print.
- . "Between 'Girl Power' and 'Reviving Ophelia': Constituting the Neoliberal Girl Subject." *NWSA Journal* 18.2 (2006): 1–23. Print.
- Griffin, Christine. "Good Girls, Bad Girls: Anglocentrism and Diversity in the Constitution of Contemporary Girlhood." Harris, All 29–43.
- Haraway, Donna. *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium. FemaleMan„\_Meets\_OncoMouse%: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Hardwicke, Catherine, and Nikki Reed. *Thirteen*. Dir. Catherine Hardwicke. Fox Searchlight, 2003. Film.
- Harris, Anita, ed. *All about the Girl: Culture, Power, and Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- . *Future Girl: Young Women in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Hebdige, Dick. *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*. London: Routledge, 1988. Print.
- . *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Methuen, 1979. Print.
- Irigaray, Luce. "This Sex Which is Not One." *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. R. R. Warhol and

- D. P. Herndl. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1995. 350–56. Print.
- Jones, Alison. “Becoming a ‘Girl’: Post-Structuralist Suggestions for Educational Research.” *Gender and Education* 5.2 (1993): 157–66. Print.
- Karp, Marcelle, and Debbie Stoller, eds. *The Bust Guide to the New Girl Order*. New York: Penguin, 1999. Print.
- Kearney, Mary Celeste. “Producing Girls: Rethinking the Study of Female Youth Culture.” *Delinquents and Debutantes: Twentieth-Century American Girls’ Cultures*. Ed. S. A. Inness. New York: New York UP, 1998. 285–310. Print.
- Kelly, Deirdre M., and Shauna Pomerantz. “Mean, Wild, and Alienated: Girls and the State of Feminism in Popular Culture.” *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2.1 (2009): 1–17. Print.
- Kindlon, Daniel J. *Alpha Girls: Understanding the New American Girl and How She Is Changing the World*. New York: Rodale, 2006. Print.
- Leonard, Marion. “‘Rebel Girl, You Are the Queen of My World’: Feminism, ‘Subculture’ and Grrrl power.” *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*. Ed. S. Whiteley. London: Routledge, 1997. 230–55. Print.
- Levy, Ariel. *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*. New York: Free, 2005. Print.
- McCarthy, Margaret. “Transforming Visions: A French Toast to American Girlhood in Luc Besson’s ‘The Professional.’” *Millennium Girls: Today’s Girls around the World*. Ed. S. A. Inness. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. 193–211. Print.
- McRobbie, Angela. *Feminism and Youth Culture: From “Jackie” to “Just Seventeen.”* Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1991. Print.
- Pipher, Mary B. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York: Putnam, 1994. Print.
- Pomerantz, Shauna. *Girls, Style, and School Identities: Dressing the Part*. New York: Palgrave, 2008. Print.
- Rimer, Sara. “For Girls, It’s Be Yourself, and Be Perfect, Too.” *The New York Times*. New York Times, 1 Apr. 2007. Web. 28 June 2009.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978. Print.
- Simmons, Rachel. *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*. New York: Harcourt, 2002. Print.
- Taft, Jessica K. “Girl Power Politics: Pop-Culture Barriers and Organizational Resistance.” Harris, *All* 69–78.
- Tuwahi Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed; Dunedin: U of Otago P, 1999. Print.
- Wald, Gayle. “Just a Girl? Rock Music, Feminism, and the Cultural Construction of Female Youth.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 23.3 (1998): 585–610. Print.
- Walkerdine, Valerie. “Girlhood through the Looking Glass.” de Ras and Lunenberg 9–24.
- Walkerdine, Valerie, Helen Lucey, and June Melody. *Growing Up Girl: Psychosocial Explorations of Gender and Class*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001. Print.
- Willis, Paul E. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia UP, 1981. Print.

Shauna Pomerantz is Assistant Professor of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. Her research focuses on the construction of girls and girlhoods through the complimentary lenses of feminist sociology of education and youth cultural studies. She is the author of *Girls, Style, and School Identities: Dressing the Part* (Palgrave) and co-author (with Dawn Currie and Deirdre Kelly) of *“Girl Power”*: *Girls Reinventing Girlhoods* (Peter Lang). She has also published articles and book chapters on girl skateboarders, computer girls, school dress codes, and post-feminist representations of girlhood in film. Her new study (with Rebecca Raby) is entitled *Smart Girls: Negotiating Academic Success in a “Post-Feminist” Era*.