Editorial

Considering New Ways

For this special issue entitled *Rethinking Agency and Resistance: What Comes After Girl Power?* the guest editors, Marnina Gonick, Emma Renold, Jessica Ringrose and Lisa Weems, invited a number of authors to explore the relations between girlhood on the one hand, and power, agency and resistance on the other. As they point out in their introductory essay that sets the tone of critical interrogation about the many competing ‘truths’ that circulate about girls, it is critical to re-examine the social conditions that produce these ‘truths’ and the effects of these on the lives of young girls. In so doing, they contest the notion of post-feminism in relation to contemporary girlhood. Such an analysis is long overdue. It has been more than 15 years since the term ‘Girl Power’ was coined in the early 1990s, when a group of young American women involved in the punk ‘riot grrl’ movement sought to reclaim the word ‘girl’. As Marnina Gonick states, they used the word strategically “to distance themselves from the adult patriarchal worlds of propriety, class expectations, and hierarchy” using the term in an assertive way to try to change girl culture (2008: 311). The positive message of ‘Girl Power’ was, however, appropriated by the British all-girl band Spice Girls in 1996-97 when they turned the term into a commercial slogan with a “hyper-sexualized and stylish” message (Gonick 2008: 312). In academic writing, feminists such as Angela McRobbie, and Valerie Walkerdine have been studying girls’ popular culture in terms of agency and resistance since the late 1970s, and 1980s, respectively. However, the use of these terms has become commonplace (and perhaps over-used). As the articles in this issue suggest, a re-analysis of these terms and the uses to which they are put is critical to the advancement of girlhood studies.

Then, true to our practice of including in every issue a review by girls, an account of a project completed by girls or a commodity created by girls, we include a report of the launch of a new English language magazine—*Authentik: The Voice of Real Girls*—produced by girls for girls in Quebec, Canada. The first issue features a set of girl heroes. Here the notion of heroic behaviour is based on social responsibility. In

different forms, it is this notion of social responsibility that informs the academic discussions, the reviews, and the report on the girl-produced magazine, and which prompts the central questions of this special issue: “What comes after girl power?” and “How might we consider new ways of thinking about the key notions of agency and resistance in girlhood studies?”

Reference

- Gonick, M. 2008. “Girl Power.” Pp. 310–314 in *Girl culture: An Encyclopedia*, eds. C. Mitchell and J. Reid-Walsh, Westport CT: Greenwood Press.