International Girls' Studies Association

inaugural conference

university of east anglia

7th - 9th april 2016
International Girls' Studies Association Inaugural Conference
University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK
7th-9th April 2016

Conference Organisers:
Dr Victoria Cann
Dr Sarah Godfrey
Dr Su Holmes
Dr Jessalynn Keller
Professor Yvonne Tasker
Dr Helen Warner
### CONTENTS

Full conference programme...4

*Abstracts*

**SESSION A:**  
Creative Girlhoods...17  
Working with Girls: Leaders, Activists, Students...18  
Girl Cultures on You Tube...19  
Girls and Music Cultures...21

**SESSION B:**  
Girls and Media: Agency, Activism and Pleasure...23  
Girls Voices...24  
Queering Girlhood...26  
Girls at the end of the World:  
  Small screen portrayals of young femininity in apocalyptic sci-fi and horror...28  
Pedagogies of Girlhood: Schools, Feminism, and Media...30

**SESSION C:**  
Performing Girlhoods and Playing with Future Identities...33  
Adolescent Girls' Migration in the South: Gender, Agency and the Lifecycle...34  
Confessional, Identities, and Performing the Self...35  
Girlhood Franchises: Performances, Products, and Popularity...37

**SESSION D:**  
Wartime Girlhood...39  
Girls and Sexuality...40  
Girlhood in the Global North:  
  Towards Comparative Dialogues  
Roundtable...42  
The Girl in (Historical) Fiction and Folktales...43

**SESSION E:**  
Girls’ Bodies Across Mediums...46  
Girls and the Culture Industries: Exploring Issues of Structure and Construction...48  
Girls’ Leisure Subcultures Across the Twentieth Century...50  
Posthumanist Perspectives on the Girl...52

**SESSION F:**  
Cultural Production and Fandom...53  
Intergenerational Politics...55

**SESSION G:**  
Girlhood and the Postfeminist Sisterhood on Screen...58  
Inside Out? Sexual/Digital Revolution and the Teenager...59  
Archiving Girlhood: Practices and Possibilities...61  
Victorian Girls and Print Culture...63

**SESSION H:**  
What It Feels like for a girl: Filming, girlhood and emotion...65  
Screening Girlhood...66  
eGirls, eCitizens: A Dialogue on Theory and Practice...68

**SESSION I:**  
The Politics of Global Girlhood...70  
Gender Fluidity in Girlhood...72  
Violence and Justice in the Lives of Girls...73  
The Girl in (Contemporary) Fiction...74

Notes...78
DAY 1

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

9AM-9.50AM Registration and tea/coffee
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

9.50-10.00AM Welcome
Julian Study Centre Lecture Theatre (JSC 0.01)

10AM-11:15AM
OPENING KEYNOTE: Julian Study Centre Lecture Theatre (JSC 0.01)
“The Girl: Dynamics of Anxiety and Reassurance”
Catherine Driscoll, University of Sydney

SESSION A: 11:30AM – 1PM

Creative Girlhoods
Room: JSC 1.02

Chair: Su Holmes, University of East Anglia, UK

Eylem Atakav (University of East Anglia, UK): “Growing Up Married: Representing Child Brides on Screen,” film screening in addition to paper
Laura Lockhart (University of Western Ontario, Canada): “Light, Sound, Meaning: Rural young women share their lives,” discussion based on photography project

Working with Girls: Leaders, Activists, Students
Room: JSC 1.03

Chair: Natalie Coulter, York University, Canada

Michele Paule (Oxford Brookes University, UK): “‘Banning Bossy’ and ‘Leaning In’: Girls’ mediated perceptions and experiences of leadership”
Britney Brinkman (Chatham University, USA): “Flip the Script: Fostering girls’ media activism through feminist community-based research”
Amy Rutstein-Riley (Lesley University, USA): “The Work of Girlhood: A journey of relational pedagogy and scholarship”

Girl Cultures on You Tube
Room: JSC 2.02

Chair: Jessalynn Keller, University of East Anglia, UK

Lauren Weinzimmer (University of Minnesota, USA): “All Play and No Work?: The edited lives of YouTube Beauty Vloggers”
Anastasia Todd (Arizona State University, USA): “There Are More Important Things That Need To Be Talked About Than Taupe Eyeshadow: Virtual (dis)orientations and luminosity of disabled girlhood”
Catherine McDermott (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK): “Genres of the Self: Grace Helbig’s affective aesthetics”

**Girls and Music Cultures**  
Room: JSC 2.03

**Chair:** Tori Cann, University of East Anglia, UK

Bridget Coulter (University of Sheffield, UK): “Pop music and the construction of adolescent female identity”
Caroline Kaltesfeiter (State University of New York at Cortland, USA): “Start your own revolution: Anarchy and action of the riot grrrl movement”
Michelle Newman (Coventry University, UK): “You don’t have to be a Debbie Harry, you can be a Patti Smith: The performance of girls in rock”

**LUNCH 1PM-2PM**  
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

**SESSION B: 2PM – 3:30PM**

**Girls and Media: Agency, Activism and Pleasure**  
Room: JSC 1.02

**Chair:** Sarah Hill, University of East Anglia

Kirsten Pike (Northwestern University at Qatar, Qatar): “Complicating Second-Wave Feminist Media Histories: Girl writers and activists”
Jessalynn Keller (University of East Anglia, UK): “#CropTopDay: Girls’ media activism as a challenge to normative girlhoods”
Natalie Coulter (York University, Canada): “Do ‘tween’ girls really just wanna have fun?”

**Girls Voices**  
Room: JSC 1.03

**Chairs:** Heather Warren-Crow, Texas Tech University, USA

Heather Warren-Crow (Texas Tech University): “Creakers and Screamers”
Leisha Jones (Penn State University): “Done and done to. Doing. I'll do all of this: Girl voice mutiny in Eimear McBride’s Girl is a Half-Formed Thing”
Patricia Pender, University of Newcastle: “I wanna begat myself: Feminist self-construction in Caitlin Moran’s How to Build a Girl”

**Queering Girlhood**  
Room: JSC 2.02

**Chair:** Mary Celeste Kearney, University of Notre Dame, USA
Anais Duong-Pedica (University of York, UK): “Girlhood memories of sexual and romantic experiences with girls”
Barbara Brickman (University of Alabama, USA): “There are worse things I could do: The queer girl, bedroom culture and Grease’s sexual retrospection”
Moon Charania (Spelman College, USA) and Cory Albertson (Georgia State University, USA): “Single, white, female: Queer trauma and feminist melancholy in the new Disney”

Girls at the end of the World: Small screen portrayals of young femininity in apocalyptic sci-fi and horror
Room: JSC 2.03

Chair: Christine Cornea, University of East Anglia, UK

Rhys Owain Thomas (University of East Anglia, UK): “Girlhood, liminality and posthumanism in Caprica”
Heather Wintle (Independent Scholar, UK): “Are you just gonna keep letting this control your life? Interrogating the adolescent videogame heroine’s agency in The Last of Us: Left Behind”
Christine Cornea (University of East Anglia, UK): “Post-apocalyptic patriotism: The girls in Spooks: Code 9”
Athena Bellas (University of Melbourne, Australia): “I’m in charge here: Girls in power in The 100”

3:30PM-4PM: Coffee/tea
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

4PM-5:15PM
PLENARY SESSION: Julian Study Centre Lecture Theatre (JSC 0.01)
Pedagogies of Girlhood: Schools, Feminism, and Media

Chair: IGSA conference organizers

Hanna Retlack and Jessica Ringrose (UCL Institute of Education, UK): “‘Fuck your body image!: Fourth wave feminism, social media affect and teen girls’ embodied protest”
Marnina Gonick (Mount St. Vincent University, Canada): “Back to biology: Pseudo-science, nostalgia and girls’ schooling”
Ileana Jimenez, Feminist Teacher (feministteacher.com, @feministteacher, USA): “#SayHerName Loudly: Black Girls Blog #BlackLivesMatter”

5:30PM-7PM Drinks Reception,
 sponsored by Berghahn Books.
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

Girls Roar! DJ Night
for delegates!

After the drinks reception from 7.30 - 11.30
at the Underbelly at the
Rumsey Wells  (NR24AF)

Expect everything from
Bikini Kill to Beyoncé!
FOOD AVAILABLE
FRIDAY APRIL 8

SESSION C: 9AM – 10:30AM

Performing Girlhoods and Playing with Future Identities
Room: JSC 1.02

**Chair:** Heather Fitzsimmons Frey, University of Toronto, Canada

Heather Fitzsimmons Frey (University of Toronto, Canada): “Middle-class Victorian girls’ at home theatricals and the future: New girls, new women and girls playing boys in the drawing room”
Christine Hatton (University of Newcastle, Australia): “Re-framing the girl zone through drama: Creative acts and disruptive interventions in contemporary girls’ education”
Johanna Sixtensson (Malmö University, Sweden): Negotiating Space. Teenage Girls’ Narratives about Every Day Life in the Swedish town of Malmö”

Adolescent Girls’ Migration in the South: Gender, Agency and the Lifecycle
Room: JCS 1.03

**Chair:** Catherine Driscoll, University of Sydney, Australia

Marina de Regt (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands): Being Young and Female: Vital Conjunctures in the Lives of Migrant Girls in Addis Ababa
Nicoletta del Franco (AFF): Emerging youth culture among migrant girls in Dhaka

Confessionals, Identities, and Performing the Self
Room: JSC 2.02

**Chair:** Helen Warner, University of East Anglia, UK

Jodi McAlister (Macquarie University, Australia): “Here there be monsters: Girls navigating virginity loss in confessional narratives”
Karolina Dmitrov-Devold (Lillehammer University College, Norway): “Performing the self in the mainstream: Personal bloggers in Norway”
Michele Meek (University of Rhode Island): “A Dangerous Girl or a Girl in Danger?: Shifting Sexual Agency of the ‘Long Island Lolita’”

Girlhood Franchises: Performances, Products, and Popularity
Room: JSC 2.02

**Chair:** Sarah Projansky, University of Utah

Jessica Bay (York University/Ryerson University, Canada): “Consuming capital: The Hunger Games and licensed Products”
Sarah Ralph (Northumbria University, UK): “On Wednesdays we wear pink: Mean girls’ enduring reception, resonance and cultural reference”
Georgina Newton (Bournemouth University, UK): “An investigation into the media consumption of young working class girls”

**10:30AM-10:50AM: Coffee/tea**
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

**SESSION D: 10:50AM – 12:20PM**

**Wartime Girlhood**
Room: JSC 1.02

**Chair:** Miriam Forman-Brunell, University of Missouri-Kansas City, USA

Tammy Razi (Sapir Academic College, Israel): “Dangerous Liaisons: Oriental Spaces and Jewish Girls in Mandatory Palestine”
Kara Ritzheimer (Oregon State University, USA): “Nazi girlhood and the Nazi girl”
Kate Taylor-Jones (University of Sheffield, UK): “Girlhood interrupted: Gender, film propaganda and imperial Japan”

**Girls and Sexuality**
Room: JSC 1.03

**Chair:** Eylem Atakav, University of East Anglia, UK

Emily Lockhart (York University, Canada): “Representations of ‘sexting’ and sexual violence on legal dramas: Implications for adolescents’ sexual subjectivities”
Siri Lindholm (London College of Fashion, UK): “The Lolita effect and other contradictions on modern ‘sexualisation’ discourses”
Alexa Appel (University of Sydney, Australia): “Feminine adolescent development and the evangelical girl-rearing manual: A ‘postfeminisation’ of purity rhetoric?”

**Girlhood in the Global North: Towards Comparative Dialogues Roundtable**
Room: JSC 2.02

**Chair:** Claudia Mitchell, McGill University, Canada

Bodil Formark, Umea University, Sweden
Claudia Mitchell, McGill University, Canada
Heta Mulari, Finnish Youth Research Society, Finland
Ann Smith, McGill University, Canada
Olga Zdravomyslova, Executive Director of the International Foundation for Socio-economic and Political Studies (The Gorbachev-Foundation),
Annelie Branstrom Ohman, Umeå University, Sweden
Linda Arnell, Umeå University, Sweden
The Girl in (Historical) Fiction and Folktales
Room: JSC 2.03

Chair: Crystal Endsley, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

Catherine Paula Han (Cardiff University, UK): “Love and jealousy ‘warbled with the lisp of childhood’: The cultural afterlives of Jane Eyre’s (1847) Adele Varens”
Sharifah Osman (University of Malaya, Malaysia): “Folktales and Femininity: Girlhood and the transmission of cultural values in Malaysian children’s literature”
Tomoko Aoyama (The University of Queensland, Australia): “Girls in the late works of Nogami Yaeko and Ishii Momoko”

LUNCH 12:20PM-1:15PM
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

1:15PM-2:30PM
KEYNOTE: Julian Study Centre Lecture Theatre (JSC 0.01)
“The Slave Girls”
Rozena Maart, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

SESSION E: 2:30PM-4PM

Girls’ Bodies Across Mediums
Room: JSC 2.03

Chair: Su Holmes, University of East Anglia, UK

Emma Dunn (Ryerson University / York University, Canada): ‘(Un)natural Citizens: The Metaphor of ‘Anorexic as Alien’ in Canadian television’
Su Holmes (University of East Anglia, UK): “My anorexia story: Girls constructing narratives of identity on You Tube”
Janice Hladki (McMaster University, Canada): ‘The Willful Obstinance of the Chubby Girl: Fatness, Disability and Girlhood in Visual Art Practice’
Jennifer Dawn Whitney (University of Cardiff): “Precocious playthings: the role of the doll in the American child beauty pageant”

Girls and the Culture Industries: Exploring Issues of Structure and Construction
Room: JSC 1.02

Chair: Sharon Mazzarella, James Madison University, USA

Sarah Projansky (University of Utah, USA): “Finding gender in media franchising”
Angharad N. Valdivia (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA): “Girls holdup half the sky: Global narratives of gender equity meet neoliberal philanthropy”
Sharon Mazzarella (James Madison University, USA): “Reviving Ophelia, Annie, Nancy, and her sisters: Constructing girlhood in the trade press”
Debra Merskin (University of Oregon, USA): “Bark, hoot, pant, cry: Girls and the formation of identity in animal books”

**Girls’ Leisure Subcultures Across the Twentieth Century**  
Room: JSC 1.03

**Chair:** Tori Cann, University of East Anglia, UK

Tim Snelson (University of East Anglia, UK): “Swing Sister Swing: Thirties girlhood, the swing craze and the jitterbug film cycle”  
Katie Milestone (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK): “Time to go out: Girls and night clubbing from 1956-1976”  
Joan Ormrod (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK): “Teenage Dream Tonight: Fantasy, pop, and UK girls comics 1957-64”  
Sheryl Clark (Goldsmiths University, London): “Girlhood and girl’s participation in sports-based initiatives in the UK”

**Posthumanist Perspectives on the Girl**  
Room: JSC 2.03

**Chair:** Shauna Pomerantz, Brock University, Canada

Shauna Pomerantz and Rebecca Raby (Brock University, Canada): “Girls, Intra-Active: The SpaceTime Mattering of Smart Girlhood.”  
Anna Nygren (Independent Scholar, Sweden): “Girls and Horses”  
Ulla-Maija Salo (University of Helsinki, Finland): “Forest daughters, mother nature and green criticism”

**4PM-4:30PM Coffee/tea**  
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

**SESSION F: 4:30PM-6PM**

**Cultural Production and Fandom**  
Room: JSC 1.02

**Chair:** Sarah Godfrey, University of East Anglia, UK

Helena Dare-Edwards (University of East Anglia, UK): “Fangirling and ‘mimetic language.’ The power of ‘feels’, reclaiming emotion and ‘GIF-ing’ as practice on Tumblr”  
Aria Halliday (Purdue University, USA): “My anaconda feminism: Nicki Minaj, consumption and
Twitter/Instagram (re)production
Aino Tormulainen (University of Eastern Finland): “Finnish Girl Power: National versions on a cultural timeline”

Intergenerational Politics
Room: JSC 1.03

Chair: Alison Winch, University of East Anglia, UK

Emily Aguilo-Perez (Pennsylvania State University): “I hated her, she loved her! Barbie in intergenerational Puerto Rican girlhoods and familial relationships”
Einat Lachover (SAPIR Academic College, Israel) and Sigal Barack Brandes (University of Tel Aviv, Israel): “Branding relations: Mother daughter discourse on beauty and body in an Israeli campaign by Dove”
Annelie Branstrom-Ohman (Umeå University, Sweden) and Amanda Brohman: “The (Un-) Making of a feminist cool girl: A cross-generational dialogue”

Visual Encounters and the Politics of Place in Girlhood Studies: Transnational Perspectives
Room: JSC 2.02

Chair: April Mandrona, McGill University, Canada

Claudia Mitchell (McGill University, Canada), Naydene De Lange (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa), and Xuan Thuy Nguyen (Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada): “Being seen and heard: The participation of girls with disabilities in Vietnam in a photo voice project”
Ann Smith (McGill University, Canada): “Tambu’s girlhood: Working with images of rurality in Nervous Conditions as a realist novel”
Katja Gillandr-Gadin (Mid Sweden University, Sweden) and Eva Soderberg (Stockholm University, Sweden): “The place of girls? Portrayals of rural girlhood in Nordic Child and youth literature”
April Mandrona (McGill University, Canada): “Girls in stitches: Sewing as a site of oppression and resistance for rural South African girls”

CONFERENCE DINNER 6:30PM, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts
Must be pre-registered.
DAY 3

SATURDAY APRIL 9

SESSION G: 9AM – 10:30AM

Girlhood and the Postfeminist Sisterhood on Screen
Room: JSC 1.02

Chair: Sarah Godfrey, University of East Anglia

Melanie Kennedy (University of Leicester): “Bratz, BFFs, Mermaids and Mean Girls: Female friendship and ‘authentic’ neoliberal selfhood in tween popular culture”
Marie-Alix Thouaille (University of East Anglia): “Girling the second wave: Authorship, girlfriendship and collaborative text(iles) in the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants
Sarah Hill (University of East Anglia): “Searching for sisterly solidarity: Portrayals of girl friendship in contemporary British cinema”

Inside Out? Sexual/Digital Revolution and the Teenager
Room: JSC 1.03

Chair: Leslie Regan Shade, University of Toronto, Canada

Rachel Thomson (University of Sussex): “Making the can-do girl or desperately searching for the subject of feminist sex research”
Lucy Robinson (University of Sussex): “Citizen girls and sexual knowledge in Thatcher’s Britain”
Pamela Thurschwell (University of Sussex): “Surviving sex: From Molly Ringwald to Katniss and The Fault in Our Stars”

Archiving Girlhood: Practices and Possibilities
Room: JSC 2.02

Chair: Heather Warren-Crow, Texas Tech University

Nickianne Moody (Liverpool John Moores University): “Building the femorabilia special collection”
Joanne Knowles (Liverpool John Moores University): Future wives and mothers: The domestic sphere in teenage girls’ magazines of the 1970s and 80s”
Katie Weidmann and Sarah Jackson: Girl Museum
**Victorian Girls and Print Culture**  
Room: JSC 2.03

**Chair:** Rebecca Harrison, University of East Anglia, UK

Beth Rodgers (Aberystwyth University): “Girls of today? Debating and defining the girl in late Victorian girls’ magazines”  
Kristine Moruzi (Deakin University, Australia): “Charity in girls’ periodicals”  
Michelle Smith (Deakin University, Australia): “The bloom on a peach: Acceptable beauty in late-Victorian and Edwardian girls’ print cultures”  
Lois Burke (Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland): ‘The Parish Girl’s Progress: Girlhood and Bildungsromans in Victorian and Neo-Victorian Literature’

**10:30AM-10:50AM: Coffee/tea**  
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

**SESSION H: 10:50AM-12:20PM**

**What It Feels like for a girl: Filming, girlhood and emotion**  
Room: JSC 1.02

**Chair:** Linda Arnell, Umeå University, Sweden

Fiona Handyside (University of Exeter): “The persistence of binaries”  
Danielle Hipkins (University of Exeter): “Finding vocabularies of film-feeling”  
Alexandra Allan (University of Exeter): “Constructing girlhood in and on film”

**Screening Girlhood**  
Room: JSC 1.03

**Chair:** Hannah Hamad, University of East Anglia, UK

Desiree deJesús (Concordia University): “Between a rock and a hard place: Poverty subcultures and girlhood in contemporary American…”  
Julia Dobson (University of Sheffield): “Machines for changing identity: The negotiation of girlhoods in Celine Sciamma’s Cinema…”  
Elspeth Mitchell (University of Leeds): “Encountering girls: The figure of the girl in contemporary moving-image art practices”
eGirls, eCitizens: A Dialogue on Theory and Practice
Room: JSC 2.02

Chair: Jessalynn Keller, University of East Anglia, UK

Jacquelyn Burkell (University of Western Ontario, Canada): “Big cities, small towns, and virtual spaces: Social media experiences of rural and urban girls”
Valerie Steeves (University of Ottawa, Canada): “Pretty and just a little but sexy, I guess: Publicity, privacy and the pressure to perform ’appropriate’ femininity on social media”
Leslie Shade (University of Toronto, Canada): “I want my Internet! Young women on the politics of usage-based billing”
Jane Bailey (University of Ottawa): “What policymakers should know: Perspectives from the eGirls project”

LUNCH 12:20PM-1:30PM
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

SESSION I: 1:30PM-3PM

The Politics of Global Girlhood
Room: JSC 1.02

Chair: Karen Brown, University of Minnesota, USA

Emily Bent (Pace University, New York City) and Heather Switzer (Arizona State University): “Oppositional girlhoods and the challenge of relational politics”
Tracy Rogers (University of Otago, New Zealand): “Constraining and enabling discourses of girlhood and schooling in Cambodia”

Gender Fluidity in Girlhood
Room: JSC 1.03

Chair: Bodil Formark Umeå University, Sweden

Rachel Reinke (Arizona State University): “Toward a theory of transgender girlhoods…”
Melinda Luisa de Jesús (California College of the Arts): “Re/Constructing girlhood: Transgender girls in girls studies”

Violence and Justice in the Lives of Girls
Room: JSC 2.02

Chair: Helen Warner, University of East Anglia, UK

Rebecca Bromwich (Canadian Bar Association, Canada): “Looking for Ashley: Re-reading what the Smith case reveals about governance of girls”
Rosemary Carlton (Universite de Montreal, Canada): “Failing to self-protect: Responsibilisation for risk in child protection practice with sexually abused teenage girls”

The Girl in (Contemporary) Fiction
Room: JSC 2.03

Chair: Kirsten Pike, Northwestern University at Qatar, Qatar

Maša Grdešić, University of Zagreb: “The young woman as writer in HBO’s Girls”
Rachael McLennan (University of East Anglia): Late Girlhood in Jennifer Egan’s Invisible Circus, Look at Me, and A Visit from the Goon Squad
Claudia Nelson and Anne Morey (Texas A&M University): “The vanishing girl in youth literature: The case of Caroline Lawrence’s Roman mysteries”

3PM-3:30PM: Coffee/tea
Foyer, Julian Study Centre

3:30PM-5PM :
CLOSING KEYNOTE: Julian Study Centre Lecture Theatre (JSC 0.01)
“Girls Make Media: Then, Now, and So What?”
Mary Celeste Kearney, University of Notre Dame, USA
DAY 1: THURSDAY, APRIL 7

10AM-11:15AM OPENING KEYNOTE:
"The Girl: Dynamics of Anxiety and Reassurance"
Catherine Driscoll (University of Sydney)

This paper sets out three key parameters for considering the state of girls studies today, which are also three fields of contestation around the figure of “the girl”. This “girl” is equal parts fantasy and empirical fact and in both respects she names a field of arguments.

My three parameters are, first, the contemporary international historical context in which proliferating forms of attention to girls and girlhood – from commodity culture to international governmental agendas – draw heavily on feminist politics. This association is very well known to us now through debates about postfeminism, but its very familiarity doesn’t mean it’s done with. The second is the broad historical context in which even the most urgently present-tense crises surrounding girls continue much older problems. The importance of historicising discourse on girls in order to understand it repeatedly squares off against the importance of acknowledging the specificity of girls experiences and situations today. And my third parameter is equally pervasive even if it is less spectacularly visible as a girl problem. The “girl” names an opportunity for spectacular statements about vulnerability and power, about exclusion and inclusion, and about nature, norms, difference, and change.

In this paper I want to contend that seeking a way out of our exasperating repetitious contestations about the relation between girl culture and feminist politics, or the relation between historical continuities and dramatic contemporary change in girls’ lives, or seeking to resolve the simultaneous exclusion and centrality of the girl to the politicised experience of being in the modern world, might itself be not only a problem but a mistake. Leaving the figure of the girl open to anxious irresolution may be more productive than any of the also proliferating attempts to formulate reassuringly certain answers to the problem of what next for girls. Moreover, at least for the time being, accepting the importance and practical truth of the girl as a figure for cultural anxiety does not abandon political action in specific events affecting girls – instead it make those more possible by acknowledging the practical context in which they occur.
"Growing Up Married: Representing Child Brides on Screen"
Eylem Atakav (University of East Anglia, UK)

According to the UNICEF report entitled ‘Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects’ (2013), there are 700 million women who were married as children, and 280 million girls are at risk of becoming child brides. In Turkey, and according to the reports written by feminist organisations, 1 out of 3 brides is a child. These figures are alarming and signal the need for further and urgent research in the field. In this paper, I critically reflect upon and share the findings of my research into the representation of child brides in the media, with the aim of answering a key question: what kind of a visual language is used in the Turkish media in the depiction of girls as brides? I argue that on screen portrayals of married girls are presented as individualised stories of victims, and they reinforce a focus on tradition and religion rather than identify issues inherent in the law, politics and society. In linking theory and practice, it also presents an account of the methodological issues around representation in the production of my documentary on ‘child brides’ in Turkey. The film explores what happens after child marriage by focusing on the stories of four women and making their experiences visible, in an attempt to contribute to and advance debates around this significant, complex and emotionally charged human rights issue which has often been discursively silenced.

“Light, Sound, Meaning: Rural young women share their lives,” discussion based on photography project
Laura Lockhart (University of Western Ontario, Canada)

Rural girlhood in contemporary Canada remains remarkably under-studied. As one contributing corrective, this paper explores the lives of seven adolescent girls growing up in rural, near north Ontario as revealed through a photo-voice activity that was part of a larger research project. By sharing participant generated photographs of places the girls identified as important to them and digitally recorded conversations about the meaning of those locations, this presentation will set out the data and offer a preliminary analysis to show how young women appear to be making sense of their world and their place within it. Through the photographs and conversations about them, the girls offer an important window into how their consciousness of life’s possibilities and limitations develops, and how this “knowing" shapes their willingness to exercise agency and direct their own futures. It is also possible to discern the ambivalences young women experience as they recognize the nurturing power of nature and the rural but feel the pull of the alluring urban. Apparent, too, is their expanding knowledge of a hierarchy of place, which they both accept and resist.
“Banning Bossy’ and ‘Leaning In’: Girls’ mediated perceptions and experiences of leadership”
Michele Paule (Oxford Brookes University, UK)

The educational success of some girls in Western contexts is not yet carried through to equal representation of women in leadership roles in professional and political domains. The emergence of this as a concern into the wider public imaginary is evident in recent popular publications and campaigns focusing on girls, women and leadership.

The media are strongly implicated in the production of teen identities. There is a growing body of work which explores the complex ways in which young people draw on popular narratives, images and discourses in their identity work associated with imagined futures and with success. There has, however, been little exploration of the ways in which girls engage with popular discourses of leadership. This is an area ripe for investigation given the dominance of masculinised leadership models and those which reduce women’s leadership to subjugated, complementary forms.

Drawing on five pilot workshops run with a UK secondary school as part of their ‘Gender Day’, this paper offers insights into girls’ experiences and perceptions of leadership. It draws attention to some ways that these are mediated through family and educational identities as well as through popular narratives. I find that girls’ experiences align closely with structural inequalities of gender and class. Further, even where girls do have responsibility for activities and for others, they are unlikely to view these experiences as ‘leadership’ unless endorsed as such by a formal authority.

“Flip the Script: Fostering girls’ media activism through feminist community-based research”
Britney Brinkman (Chatham University, USA)

There is a growing interest in youth activism as seen in media coverage of youth activists as well as academic work (Gordon, 2008; Gordon & Taft, 2010; Kirshner, 2007). Technology provides girls with greater access for production and consumption of information (Kahn & Kellner, 2004), as well as greater connection to global issues and movements. Social media in particular has extended the scope of activism, and youth are able to utilize it as an accessible method for activist involvement (Delli Carpini, 2000; Hirzalla & van Zonnen, 2010). Unfortunately, media consumption can also be the source of problems for girls, including increased body dissatisfaction (Cusumano & Thompson, 2001) and negative beliefs about women’s leadership skills (Douglas, 2010). Training in media literacy (including media activism) may counteract some of these harmful impacts (APA, 2007).

In this talk, I will describe a series of collaborative research projects I conducted within a K-12 all-girls school. These projects were developed using principles of feminist community-based
research and critical media literacy, requiring participants to reflect on media as both a product and institution. The intention of the two projects was to increase the girls’ activism skills and provide them with media literacy and media activism skills. I will report on the results of both mixed methods studies regarding girls’ attitudes about activism and media literacy knowledge. I will also center the perspectives and voices of the girls by sharing analyses of the creative forms of data they developed for these projects, including blogs, collages, and images.

Amy Rutstein-Riley (Lesley University, USA)

The Girlhood Project is multidimensional exploration of how girls ranging from middle school to college negotiate their emerging and evolving identities in a culture where numerous social institutions bombard them with narratives about how they should be, act, look, and feel about themselves. In an upper level sociology course, Girlhood, Identity & Girl Culture, college students examine girls’ studies theory and scholarship, and plan and implement groups for middle school girls from Cambridge Massachusetts. Twenty-five diverse, urban youth come to Lesley University to participate in a seven-week girls’ group, Girls, Media, and You!, where middle school girls and high school peer leaders (ages 11-18) build relationships with college students that collaboratively examine the experiences and meanings of being a girl in contemporary US society. The Girlhood Project is grounded in principles of feminist pedagogy and feminist group process for exploration of self against a backdrop of critical media literacy, critical reflection, social critique, and the co-construction of counter narratives of girlhood. The authors present this program model highlighting the mutually fluid dynamic of relationship that grows between college students and the girls and how personal stories of emerging identity/ies are revealed and critically examined during girls’ group sessions. Strategies for exploring the social construction of intersectional girlhoods with implications for feminist pedagogy, feminist research, and social action will be presented.

Girl Cultures on YouTube

“All Play and No Work?: The edited lives of YouTube Beauty Vloggers”
Lauren Weinzheimer (University of Minnesota, USA)

While for some girls YouTube beauty vlogging is a hobby, others consider it a career. In this paper, I explore YouTube vlogging as a lifestyle – a mode of income, a way of life, a passion, a career, etc. – and critically engage this entrepreneurial practice. Correspondingly, I consider the following questions: how does YouTube beauty vlogging play into discourses of extended adolescence? How do the twenty-somethings who use YouTube as a full-time profession adhere to and/or diverge from previously theorized models of girlhood? YouTube audiences experience edited versions of YouTube beauty vloggers’ lives. The content vloggers produce for YouTube and disseminate across Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat, is carefully curated, balancing the ‘public’ and ‘private’ aspects of the represented self. The lifestyle(s) offered in such constructions – and in ‘follow me around’ videos - often privilege fun and leisure over hard work and responsibility, and this is juxtaposed with the more traditional beauty content produced for YouTube.
YouTube audiences, I maintain, gauge what to do, buy, say, and like, in order to attain or aspire to a lifestyle similar to that of the YouTube beauty vloggers they watch. Resolving the externally displayed and internally constituted components of YouTube beauty culture remains vital to this analysis, as such negotiation of public and private realms contributes to the logics of online content production.

“There Are More Important Things That Need To Be Talked About Than Taupe Eyeshadow: Virtual (dis)orientations and luminosity of disabled girlhood”  
Anastasia Todd (Arizona State University, USA)

On October 1, 2014, Deaf makeup vlogger Rikki Poynter uploaded a Q&A video on her YouTube channel. This was not a typical question and answer video for Poynter; it was a video in honor of Deaf awareness week. Poynter received an overwhelmingly positive response from Deaf and disabled girls on YouTube. The response was so positive that Poynter decided to change direction with her YouTube presence: she is now a Deaf vlogger.

After Poynter uploaded her Deaf Awareness week video, an article was posted on the Huffington Post: “This Beauty Vlogger is Hard of Hearing, and She’s Stepping Up Her Game on YouTube.” This account of Poynter’s disaggregation from YouTube makeup vloggers, affective capacities, and “becoming” a Deaf vlogger raises a series of questions that will animate this paper. Poynter’s story is an example of the emergent way in which various media are casting a “luminous spotlight” on certain figurations of “the disabled girl” (McRobbie 2009, 54). This paper attempts to untangle the asymmetrical process of Poynter’s incorporation, or reterritorialization, of disabled girl/hood. I argue that Poynter’s intelligibility hinges on her positionality as properly affective, which is produced through her capacity to orient ablebodied folks in the right way (Ahmed 2010). Ultimately, I argue that through interrogating Poynter’s subjectification, we are afforded the opportunity to explore the ways in which Poynter (dis)orients by virtue of her non-normative embodiment and offers a radical framework for interrogating girls’ resistance.

“Genres of the Self: Grace Helbig’s affective aesthetics”  
Catherine McDermott (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

Politically ambivalent and emotionally potent, the ‘intimate public’ theorised by Lauren Berlant (2008) is an affirmative space promising its members an inclusive affective experience characterised by commonality and social belonging. The everyday, or ordinary is essential to the construction and recognition of intimate publics, which thrive on the collective ideal that each individual can transcend their personal circumstance and become part of the shared community. Focusing on internet culture, Jodi Dean (2009) argues that where industrial capitalism exploited labour, our current era of ‘communicative capitalism’ exploits communication by relying on ‘affective networks’ that generate feelings of community. Affective networks enable mediated performances to emerge as contributions made by a willing mass public, rather than the under the strict purview of a tightly controlled mass media. Designating herself ‘the internet’s awkward older sister’, American comedian Grace Helbig’s performative genre of self-mediation merges a DIY aesthetic of authenticity with the perception of immediacy and spontaneity afforded by the YouTube platform in order to establish an ‘intimate public sphere of femininity’ (Berlant 2008). The space created is one of many emergent intimate publics for young women that reconfigure concepts of intimacy, community, the labour of femininity, self-cultivation and authenticity. This paper examines Helbig’s oeuvre as an exemplar case study in debates surrounding the much-vaunted democratisation of new media, while recognising that such participatory cultures are deeply rooted in an enduring contemporary cultural climate inflected by postfeminism and neoliberal capitalism.
“Pop music and the construction of adolescent female identity”
Bridget Coulter (University of Sheffield, UK):

The influence of pop music on young people, particularly girls, is a current and controversial issue. Young people are highly engaged with popular culture, and the often sexist imagery and lyrics of pop music are increasingly blamed for problems affecting girls. Scholars and psychologists characterize female adolescence as a period of identity crisis for girls, who typically experience a loss of agency. Studies support this, showing that adolescent girls have lower self-esteem than boys, and that they often suffer from body image anxiety and struggle to negotiate acceptable sexual identities.

Although female adolescence has been investigated from a psychological and sociological perspective, there is relatively little research connecting this with the study of popular music and culture. My research addresses this by investigating the role of pop music in the lives of adolescent girls, exploring how this relates to gender identity, body image, self-esteem and attitudes towards women and sexuality. In order to investigate this, approximately fifty girls were recruited from schools and Guide units in England. My research combined qualitative, ethnographic and ethnomusicological methods, such as interviews and focus group discussions, in order to empower the girls and offer them a voice.

This paper presents the results of this study, discussing the implications and potential impact of the data collected, and it sheds light on the relationship between everyday pop music consumption and female adolescent identity. It also provides insight into the ways in which girls value music and use it to express and explore gendered identities.

“Start your own revolution: Anarchy and action of the riot grrrrl movement”
Caroline Kaltefleiter (State University of New York at Cortland, USA)

The American Riot Grrrl Movement of the early 1990s continues to intrigue scholars and activists alike. But previous studies of Riot Grrrl often rely on interpretations of Riot Grrrl artifacts, taken out of context and distant from original modes and messages of anarchy. (Kearney, 1998; Schlit, 2003; Monem, 2007; & Marcus, 2010). Such work remains disconnected from an activist collective that rejected formal organizational hierarchies and focused on do-ityourself (DIY) activism. Missing from these (her)stories of Riot Grrrl is a discussion of a commitment to peace and social justice projects within an anarchist framework such as Food Not Bombs, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) and Green Avengers. This paper draws upon my early work on Riot Grrrl (1995; 2009) and incorporates authentic (her)stories including my own experiences as a member of the Riot Grrrl D.C chapter to discuss the evolution and revolution of
girl-centered activist culture. Utilizing Donna Hardaway’s (1989) seminal work, this paper situates Riot Grrrls as cultural workers and advances analyses of “being” a Riot Grrrl through street activism, zine writing, and mediums of performance. Focus is given to deconstructing anarcho-grrrl culture by dismantling formal boundaries and myths associated with revolution. Finally, this analysis charts influences of Riot Grrrl in recent girl-centered activism/anarchism such as Code Pink, Slut Walk and Pussy Riot and discusses grrrl/girl actions as means to (re)organize, and to (dis)rupt interpretations of protest so as to mobilize knowledge and to affect authentic social change.

“‘You don’t have to be a Debbie Harry, you can be a Patti Smith:’ The performance of girls in rock”
Michelle Newman (Coventry University, UK)

Rock music is seen as a predominantly masculine genre, with the majority of performers and members of audiences being men. When women do perform in rock bands they are all too frequently sexualised, symbolic or play instruments that are perceived as needing less musical skill (Clawson 1999). The research underpinning this paper was conducted in the summer of 2014 through interviews with ten young people active in the rock music scene of a medium sized town in the West Midlands of the UK, and two interviews with adult youth workers who work with the young rock musicians. Findings indicate that for some young women who are part of the music scene, being in a band is a way of resisting dominant discourses on feminine/masculine identity, which often purport that women in music adopt a ‘natural’ and by implication ‘unskilled’ musical position (Mayhew 2004). By occupying a place in perceived masculine culture girls - as suggested by Whiteley et al. (2004) – can devise their own means of empowerment and individualism. In addition, findings suggest that playing rock music should not simply be understood as an act of youth disaffection but may be seen as a deliberate performance where an adult identity is rehearsed that conforms to many conventional expectations and marks not rebellion but transition to responsibility and ‘work’.

LUNCH 1PM-2PM
“Complicating Second-Wave Feminist Media Histories: Girl writers and activists”
Kirsten Pike (Northwestern University at Qatar, Qatar)

Sixteen-year-old Mona Arena—in a 1969 letter to American Girl magazine—critiqued a man for trying to ban Romeo and Juliet from his daughter’s high school. Asserting that teens are “mature enough” to see the film, she called his actions “insult[ing]” and declared, “It was wrong for one man to try to force his Victorian ideas on other people.” In 1974, 13-year-old Trina Porte wrote in her diary: “Watched ’The Unquiet Death of Julias [sic] & Ethel Rosenberg’ tonight. Blah! The stuff this country does is sickening!!! Called Mr. Culhapp & Mr. Cramer [Porte’s teachers] beforehand & told them to watch it. I hope they did!”

Arena and Porte are clearly different than our image of the “typical,” Partridge Family-loving girl from the liberation era. As such, their writing suggests that our understanding of girl media consumers needs to be leavened with healthy doses of girls’ own voices. Arena and Porte challenge perceptions of girls’ cultural taste, both at the time and today, but they also provide an excellent example of girls’ media activism that attempted to shape and/or contest male authority: they were not simply consumers of media, but activists for media. Ultimately, through close analysis of Porte’s preteen and teen diaries written between 1968 and 1980 as well as girl writing published in American Girl during that period, my presentation aims to trouble media histories that overlook girls’ reception practices while also advocating for a broader historiography of girl media consumers and producers in second-wave feminism and beyond.

“#CropTopDay: Girls’ media activism as a challenge to normative girlhoods”
Jessalynn Keller (University of East Anglia, UK)

“#CropTopDay: Girls’ media activism as a challenge to normative girlhoods” In May 2015 the hashtag #CropTopDay trended on Twitter, generating substantial North American commercial media attention for its symbolic use of the trendy fashion garment to mobilize a youthful feminist politics. Created by 18-year-old Alexi Halket after she was reprimanded for wearing the belly-baring top to her Toronto high school, Halket used the hashtag to publicize what she articulated as the sexist nature of school dress codes. Through #CropTopDay Halket encouraged students to “stand in solidarity” with her by donning their own midriff revealing shirts, a call that hundreds of girls in Canada, the U.S. and the UK acted upon on May 27, 2015.

This paper uses #CropTopDay as a case study to consider how teenage girls use digital selfrepresentations to “produce” (White 2015) themselves as agential feminist activists and challenge normative mediated representations of girlhood. The first part of my analysis
identifies dominant discursive themes in commercial media commentary about the protest, which I argue primarily reinforces hegemonic portrayals of girls as politically naïve, self-absorbed, and lacking in feminist consciousness. I then draw on discursive textual analysis of girl-authored #CropTopDay tweets and accompanying “selfies,” as well as personal interviews with girl participants, to consider how these digital media texts disrupt the hegemonic narratives I identified by advancing an alternative girl-centered discourse problematizing the relationship between school dress codes and “rape culture.” I ultimately argue for the need to understand girls’ digital self-representation as both culturally disruptive and politically meaningful.

“Do ‘tween’ girls really just wanna have fun?”
Natalie Coulter (York University, Canada)

“Girls just wanna have fun”, Cindy Lauper told us this in the 1980s. Fun is gendered, and it is specifically a prerogative of tween girls. Today, the aesthetic of ‘fun’ is woven through much of girl culture. The tween girl that we often see in photographs in catalogues, magazines, stock photos and corporate online spaces is repeatedly shown in a state of fun. In these contexts, we see ubiquitous images of girls laughing and smiling as they tell secrets to each other and feign surprise. As this suggests, fun is a political practice that advertisers use to legitimate their right to market to the young consumer (Cook 2011). But in the current neoliberal marketplace these laughing girls also play an important role in anchoring the activity of consumption as a space of fun and happiness that operates as a distraction from the structured violence of consumer capitalism (Ahmed, 2010).

But how do girls actually engage with this positioning of girlhood as fun? In digital self-representations, girls push back on these pressures of fun. The purpose of this paper is to explore how girls negotiate these constructions of girlhood as spaces of fun. By focusing on the tween in terms of a ‘fun’ identity, I will explore what girls do with the tween culture that is produced for them, but rarely by them, and ask how girls weave “tweenness” as a potential resource of subjectivity in to and out of their experiences of their everyday lives.

Girls voices

“Creakers and Screammers”
Heather Warren-Crow (Texas Tech University)

“The latest linguistic curiosity to emerge from the petri dish of girl culture,” writes Douglas Quenqua for the New York Times, is vocal fry. Otherwise known as creak, vocal fry is the result of lowering the pitch of the voice beyond one’s normal register, producing a loose, vibratory sound which is often deployed at the end of sentences. Strongly associated with girls, vocal fry has been the subject of much hand-wringing over the past few years. Young women who adopt this supposed affectation are, according to their critics, unduly influenced by their peers, the Kardashians, and pop stars like Ke$ha, irritating potential employers and the aesthetic sensibilities of articulate adults of both genders. At best, vocal fryers are accused of sounding bored and unnatural; at worst, vacuous and incompetent.

In my presentation, I will argue that the hubbub around vocal fry, an attempt to regulate the speech of girls through public mockery, indexes early 21st century anxieties concerning gender, consumption, mediation, and affect. I will place this discourse alongside mid-20th century
debates about another girly vocalization: the high-pitched scream of Beatlemaniacs, Sinatra lovers, and other so-called hysterical fans. A comparison of these two kinds of vocal performance—one high energy, the other low, one believed to be incontinent, the other contrived—will reveal key differences between 20th and 21st century consumption and expose the function of girls’ affective labor in economies of energy.

“Done and done to. Doing. I’ll do all of this: Girl voice mutiny in Eimear McBride’s Girl is a Half-Formed Thing”
Leisha Jones (Penn State University)

Girl is a Half-Formed Thing (2014) is a game changing literary experiment, exploring the status of girl as liminal, neither child nor adult, while situating her as a masochistic figure of abjection. She arrives as a singular voice, a declaration and reinvention of language that strips away the comfort and familiarity of reading/meaning-making to jolt readers into an encounter with the new. Girl, it seems, has something to teach us about language, affect, and reading. In the voice of the girl, McBride dares to enact a form that follows her jagged contours, “I love the. Something of it all. Feeling ruined. Fucking. Off. I’m ready. Ready ready. To be this other one. To fill out the corners of this person who doesn’t sit in photos on the mantel next to you” (98). Through the nameless protagonist, girl, we encounter a raw slice of girl life, rife with misogyny and the traumas of rape, incest, and habitual degradation. While this narrative may be sadly familiar, it becomes properly horrifyingly unreadable in this eviscerating parlance. McBride attempts to construct a voice of the girl that readers feel rather than recognize, a kind of semiotics of the girl from the gut rather than an intellectual process of referral and assimilation. This presentation explores the grammar, tone, form, and function of the girl voice in Girl is a Half-formed Thing, and concludes with speculation about its literary and cultural interventions.

“I wanna begat myself: Feminist self-construction in Caitlin Moran’s How to Build a Girl”
Patricia Pender (University of Newcastle)

Published a short three years after her widely acclaimed feminist memoir/ manifesto, How to Be a Woman (2011), Caitlin Moran’s novel of an overweight Wolverhampton teen emerging as a precocious music journalist and embarking on a graphic quest for satisfying sex captures the 90s Britpop zeitgeist. While the girlhood bildungsroman of celebrity comedians has become that most desirable of paradoxes – a bestselling niche market in contemporary publishing (think Lena Dunham’s Not That Kind of Girl and Tina Fey’s Bossypants), Moran’s coming-of-age narrative stands out for its sheer exuberance and indomitable brio. Its protagonist, Johanna (like the novel’s author) grows up in a large family on a council estate and dreams of the glamour of “becoming” a different person in London. She adopts a conscious project of self-reinvention: “I wanna begat myself!” and decides, “I will build this new girl out of library books, pop music, eyeliner and feedback!” For some critics, despite Moran’s explicit denial (“I am not Johanna….This is a novel and it is all fictitious”), the story sits uncomfortably close to real life, resulting in a derogatory devaluation of the literary product (“Sorry, Caitlin, but this isn’t how to be a novelist” – Evening Standard). This paper will consider the process of assemblage that Johanna undertakes in fashioning, and ultimately refining, her new self, alongside what emerges as a disturbing gender double standard in the critical reception of the text.
“Girlhood memories of sexual and romantic experiences with girls”
Anais Duong-Pedica (University of York, UK)

The field of child sexuality is under-researched and references to the topic are extensively linked to sexual abuse. On the one hand, this lack of research could be explained by the sensitivity of the topic and the type of methods used to collect sensitive data related to children. On the other hand, the focus on abuse rather than consensual sex could be linked to a still popular view of children as asexual in Western culture. In a recent project, I managed to overcome the limits traditionally set by methodology by asking adults to recall childhood memories rather than directly asking children about their experiences. I asked individuals who had sexual and/or romantic experiences with girls in their girlhood (prior to being thirteen years of age) to send me a narrative of their memories. Throughout this paper, I present the results of at least 60 narratives of girlhood memories of sexual and/or romantic experiences with girls. I focus on the practices the girls engaged in, from dreaming to oral sex through kissing on the mouth, with an emphasis on the role of child’s play. I explore the connections between the girls, whether familial or friendly, as well as the places in which such practices occurred, highlighting the recurrence of secretive, private and semi-private spaces such as ‘the end of the garden’, the bedroom, the wardrobe or playgrounds. The research raises significant questions around children’s (queer) sexual activity, as well as their ability to consent.

“There are worse things I could do: The queer girl, bedroom culture and Grease’s sexual retrospection”
Barbara Brickman (University of Alabama, USA)

While critics have dismissed the musical blockbuster Grease (1978) as a nostalgic, ideologically conservative, and regressive attempt to return to a time before the advances in civil rights (particularly those advocated by feminists) that marked the intervening years between the film’s setting and release, this paper proposes that its construction of gender and female sexuality should be reconsidered. Representing the 1950s after the rise of Second Wave Feminism has the effect, I argue, of revealing the tensions and contradictions in the era’s sexual double standards and other attempts to contain female sexuality that ultimately led to protests for women’s rights—even as the film’s ending might seek to resolve them neatly through traditional means (i.e. heterosexual marriage). Moreover, Grease’s flirtation with its source materials’ homoerotic subtexts—present both in the earlier teen films it is parodying and even more deliberately in the stage play from which it was adapted—combines with its over-the-top musical numbers to create a camp effect that subverts any facile conservative solutions to the complications of female gender expression and sexuality presented in the film. Specifically, the two counterposed tours-de-force by Stockard Channing’s Rizzo suggest a queer female
sexuality at the center of both girls’ “bedroom culture,” to borrow Frith’s phrase, and adolescent courtship, which has been present at least since her target Gidget’s 1959 bedroom antics with her bosom friends, and this queer potential, both in the tween and teenage girl herself, as well as in her consumption practices, deserves more consideration in Girls’ Studies.

“Single, white, female: Queer trauma and feminist melancholy in the new Disney”
Moon Charania (Spelman College, USA)

In this paper, our primary aim is to look closely at what we are terming, “The New Disney” – a series of new Disney films (2010 - 2015) that re-tell classic patriarchal Anglo-American stories through contemporary tropes of girl power, female friendships and the agentic sexed body. Faithfully following the public mood, these “New Disney” films flirt with feminism, codifies a unique form of social rebellion, and signs into legitimacy youth-oriented sexual and gender alterity. We situate the new Disney in the “sensual” turn of the public towards both gay cosmopolitism and girls’ (liberal) empowerment, by calling forth the idea, indeed, drawing on the vocabulary of liberal feminism. We use the term ‘sensual’ to point to the libidinal attachments and economy that centralizes feminized pleasure and national “feel-goodness” around progress and equality (read: campaigns such as “legalize love” and “love wins” as well as ads such as “Throw like a Girl”). From Frozen’s celebrated queer anthem “Let It Go” to Brave’s Merida declaring her disdain for men, to the erotic undertone’s of Maleficent’s love for young Aurora, it appears that Disney is dismantling the gendered, metaphoric hierarchy implicit in its historical films. Truly, it seems, that Disney’s new heroines are “leaning in.” Conversely, Disney’s latest penchant for feminist empowerment is visually narrativized through a sexualized and youthful white feminism that, we argue, surfaces through gendered and sexual grief. Drawing from Anne Cheng’s (2001) work on racial melancholy, we see gender/sexual melancholia not as a descriptor of a feeling that these female protagonists may or may not have, but as a theoretical model of identity that provides a critical framework for analyzing the constitutive role that grief plays in the New Disney’s empowered feminist and or queer subjecthood. In the New Disney, gender and sexual melancholia is both a technology and a nightmare of young feminist/queer subjectivity. The fact that Disney narrates the story of an empowered alternative youth through the affective mechanisms of melancholy and trauma speaks volumes to Disney’s simultaneous repulsion and investment in the young feminist and queer subject.
“Girlhood, liminality and posthumanism in Caprica”
Rhys Owain Thomas (University of East Anglia, UK):

Caprica (2010-2011) was a short-lived prequel to Battlestar Galactica (2003; 2004-2009). Whereas Battlestar Galactica foregrounds the masculine, militaristic aspects of its narrative, featuring spectacular space battles and gritty combat scenes, Caprica centres upon the domestic lives of its characters, focusing primarily on the emotional fall-out from the death of two teenage girls in a terrorist attack. One of these girls, Zoe (Alessandra Torresani) is the central figure of the show as her cyberspatial avatar, ‘Zoe-A’ (an almost exact copy in body, mind and, arguably, ‘soul’), becomes the locus of a variety of discourses regarding both positive and negative potentialities of Posthumanism. The various possibilities afforded by her liminal positioning between life and death are mapped onto Zoe-A’s virtual teenage body, permanently suspended in the rite of passage from child to woman.

This paper examines the complex representation of ‘Zoe-A’ as, simultaneously, the herald of a brave new world of technological advances that may bring an end to grief, and as the harbinger of disaster (as the progenitor of the Cylon race that will bring humanity to the edge of extinction in Battlestar Galactica). Drawing upon established research on Posthumanism (such as that by N. Katherine Hayles) and contemporary debates around girls’ use of technology (such as Zadie Smith’s concept of ‘Generation Facebook’), this paper attempts to decipher the often contradictory signs and signals embodied by the contested (and, occasionally, troublingly exhibited) figure of a teenage girl at the forefront of an impending Armageddon.

“Are you just gonna keep letting this control your life? Interrogating the adolescent videogame heroine’s agency in The Last of Us: Left Behind”
Heather Wintle (Independent Scholar, UK)

The post-apocalyptic videogame The Last of Us (2013) originally focuses on ruthless survivor Joel’s quest to protect Ellie, a teenager whose immunity to a zombie pandemic may hold the secret to a cure. However, whereas most apocalyptic games that cast players as virile defenders of young women typically assign girls passive roles, The Last of Us foregrounds
Ellie’s struggle for agency. The game repeatedly confronts Ellie with the gulf between past aspirational constructions of female autonomy and maturation and both her harsh survivalist experiences and the adult agendas imposed upon her as someone who may only rescue humanity by sacrificing herself. This conflict is especially pronounced in the spin-off The Last of Us: Left Behind (2014). Left Behind promotes Ellie from Joel's computer-controlled protégée to the main playable character and explores her earlier relationship with Riley, a girl who shares Ellie’s search for alternatives to the disempowering futures prescribed by adults.

This paper examines Left Behind’s engagement with the fraught nature of girls’ agency in post-apocalyptic horror through its interactive portrayal of female friendship within a setting synonymous with playful negotiations of adolescent identity: the shopping mall. Drawing on theories of agency surrounding girls’ creative uses of consumer imagery and changing definitions of girlhood from a state of ‘becoming’ to one of ‘being’, the paper discusses how Left Behind’s combination of exploratory gameplay and the regular withdrawal of player control variously lends liberatory, fatalistic and conservative qualities to Ellie and Riley’s efforts to reclaim autonomy by reappropriating pre-apocalyptic cultural artefacts.

“Post-apocalyptic patriotism: The girls in Spooks: Code 9”
Christine Cornea (University of East Anglia, UK)

The 2008 television series Spooks: Code 9 was commissioned by BBC Three as a youth-oriented spin-off from BBC One’s more ‘adult’ spy series, Spooks (2002- ). While the seasoned spies in Spooks repeatedly defend a present-day Britain from terrorist attack, our new team of young spies in S:C9 find themselves in a near-future, post-apocalyptic Britain, following a nuclear explosion at the 2012 London Olympic Games. Viewed in the context of the 7/7 London bombings, the onset of the Great Recession and fast-growing rates of youth unemployment, S:C9 speaks to contemporary anxieties about the future for its target 16-24-year-old demographic. However, by focusing on the representation and narrative function of the girl spies in S:C9, this paper aims to expose gendered divisions in this series’ address of youthful concerns.

Before it came to air, a BBC press release assured audiences that the young spies in S:C9 would ‘follow a different rule book’. Yet, similarly violent methods are used to gather intelligence and the fate of the two girls on the team is strikingly comparable to Spooks, which has been repeatedly criticised for its gruesome dispatching of female spies. This paper will argue that the generic mix of post-apocalyptic/spy thriller in S:C9 works to validate the masculinist ideals of its parent series. While the boys thrive in the harsh environs of S:C9, it seems the girls are literally required to sacrifice their future to assure the survival of the nation in this time of crisis.

“’I’m in charge here: Girls in power in The 100”
Athena Bellas (University of Melbourne, Australia)

This paper explores the representation of girls in positions of power in the teen science fiction television series The 100 (Rothenberg 2014- ). I read The 100 as a text with feminist potential, particularly in the way it imagines girls’ agency. This series depicts a diverse group of teenage girls – including queer and disabled girls – in positions of authority and power as they begin to navigate a dangerous post-apocalyptic world. As mechanics, warriors and commanders, the heroines disrupt gender stereotypes and become authority figures within their social worlds as they draw up battle plans, construct elaborate fortresses and weapons, dictate the rules of the group, and engage in combat. I argue that the liminal, uncharted terrain of the post-apocalyptic world provides a flexible space in which the heroines begin to defy and disrupt the adult male
power that has regulated their lives thus far. Theorising liminal time and space as an unsettled zone of resistance, I explore the ways in which the adolescent heroines experiment with alternative and empowered ways of doing girlhood, contesting their conventional position within culture. In the unsettled zone, adult male dominance is disrupted, allowing for a reconfiguration of conventional hierarchies of power and therefore giving the heroines access to a greater measure of agency. Furthermore, I argue that providing these oppositional images and narratives disrupts conventional constructions of girlhood, and therefore expands the representational terrain of feminine adolescence towards more diverse, empowered and challenging iterations on the contemporary teen screen.

3:30PM-4PM: Coffee/Tea

Pedagogies of Girlhood: Schools, Feminism, and media

4PM-5:15PM: PLENARY SESSION

“Fuck your body image: Fourth wave feminism, social media and teen girls’ embodied protest”
Hanna Retallack, Jessica Ringrose and Emilie Lawrence (UCL Institute of Education, UK)

In this presentation we interrogate some of the core ideas of postfeminism as theorized by feminist media scholars (see McRobbie, 2004 and Gill, 2006) that feminism is in its ‘aftermath’, and largely refuted and disidentified with by girls and young women (Scharff, 2012).

Considering the current rise of fourth wave social media feminisms as pedagogical platforms for challenging everyday sexism, we explore the complex dynamics through which girls are taking up, negotiating and performing on and offline feminism in and around school. We draw on research within schools and from Twitter feminist communities exploring girls’ participation in the ‘Protein World: Are you beach body ready’ protest in London in spring of 2015. We argue that social media feminisms present a platform for challenging what Angela McRobbie identifies as dominant trends of postfeminist pathologies of femininity including psychological disaffection and bodily malaise. Drawing on theories of networked affect, we document how teen feminists use social media to protest bodily regulation and shaming to create new virtual and actual bodily becomings.

“Back to biology: Pseudo-science, nostalgia and girls’ schooling”
Marnina Gonick (Mount St. Vincent University, Canada)

For a short time in the 1970s and 1980s, notions of male and female equality and the basic similarity of girls and boys entered educational discourse and while we may question to what extent it took hold, we can agree that its erosion has been underway since the 1990s. In this presentation, I trace the re-emergence of sociobiology within education discourse and its implications for girls’ schooling. I show how a key feature of the postfeminist sensibility has been the resurgence of ideas of natural sexual difference. While it may be easy to dismiss this
as fringe science, it does seem like there is currently a public fascination and taste for this theory, with recent best-selling books, media stories, girls’ magazines and curricular materials drawing on brain imaging, genetics and new technologies to support biological explanations for gender difference. In invoking a conservative nostalgia for an era of gender role fixity, I show how sociobiology has become a common sense subtext within education discourse. Critics of sociobiology argue that it is particularly insidious in its legitimation of patriarchy and capitalism under the guise of objective science. It provides a scientific rationalization for gender, race and class stratification by constructing a fixed human nature that transcends environment and context. I argue that the dangers of discourses of natural gender difference is in how they can be used to maintain existing inequalities by representing them as natural and inevitable. They may also be used to undermine feminist interventions for girls in education, endangering programmes and resources that have been hard won.

“Undressing dress codes: How teaching high school feminisms changes school climates and policy”

Ileana Jimenez (Little Red School House/Elisabeth Irwin High School, USA)

The first half of this paper will focus on a participatory action research project led by tenth grade girls, in a New York high school. A feminism elective at a progressive high school has brought about significant school climate change. Although the course is only open to juniors and seniors, the high visibility of the class through initiatives such as student-driven assemblies and viral videos have inspired younger girls in ninth and tenth grade to take action as well, especially on issues such as slut-shaming. In addition, older girls feel they can make further impact by making feminist revisions to school policy such as dress codes. In this sense, the course has had a trickle-down as well as a trickle-out effect on addressing school-based violence with an intersectional lens (Crenshaw). Their questions resonated with current public discourse and emerging research on slut-shaming and the use of the moniker of “slut” to control and punish girls’ sexual activity. They created a video to report findings, providing data to fuel a growing constellation of actions to address slut-shaming. The second half of this paper will focus on how two senior girls created another, more successful video about slut-shaming that deepened the school’s conversation on the topic. Inspired by the feminism class, these girls founded a feminism club, attracting girls in ninth grade. These seniors revised the dress code and presented their new policy to the faculty, interrupting outdated notions of dress codes and providing a feminist vision for safe and inclusive schools for all.

5:30PM-7PM: Drinks Reception, sponsored by Berghahn Books
“Middle-class Victorian girls’ at home theatricals and the future: New girls, new women and girls playing boys in the drawing room”
Heather Fitzsimmons Frey (University of Toronto, Canada)

The At-Home stage is a remarkably potent space for thinking and re-thinking identity and the performance of girlhood. In England’s late Victorian era, even as they continued to be surrounded by a sea of rather conservative discourses about girlhood and womanhood, middle-class girls were increasingly offered more choices about ways they might want to behave as girls, and the type of women they might want to become. One way girls could experiment with possible futures and identities was performing theatricals in their own homes, for an audience of family and friends. Not only did these dramatic experiences offer girls opportunities to see what it felt like to defy a father (while he was in the room!), solve mysteries, choose education over marriage, dance like a sensual “Oriental” heroine, or even stride around like a powerful King, girls performed in front of friends and family – and the girls’ performances might change what they imagined could be possible, or even desirable futures, as well. Using nineteenth-century scripts and girlhood diaries and letters, this paper argues that even though there were no drama education specialists in nineteenth-century England, girls in Victorian drawing rooms could have used dramatic activities to help them to rethink their lives through embodiment, and the lives of their sisters and cousins through spectatorship experiences.

“Re-framing the girl zone through drama: Creative acts and disruptive interventions in contemporary girls’ education”
Christine Hatton (University of Newcastle, Australia)

This paper examines the disruptive potential of girl-focussed drama learning projects in secondary schools. In Australia girls outnumber boys in elective drama classrooms, whilst conversely, many do not go on to work in the theatre industry as artists or designers (see the Australia Council ‘Women in Theatre Report’, 2012). Perhaps what draws them in their numbers to drama are the powerful learning processes drama offers, where voice and everyday courage can be imagined, practiced and performed. Drama curriculum offers girls dynamic ways to interrogate their lived experiences, craft and perform their own stories and potentially, to rehearse agency through critical and embodied dramatic processes. Drama pedagogy
positions the learner as an active player in the experience of learning, inviting them to manipulate the aesthetic and theatrical form for a range of purposes and audiences. This requires learners to be present in the acts of meaning making, collaboration and performance. In this way, the live experience of co-creation, role-based enactment and performance offer girls important spaces to communicate and re-examine their relationship to and positioning within the content and context of the drama (both real and imagined). Importantly, girl-focussed dramatic inquiry offers girls spaces for critical and embodied dialogue, where the creative imagined experience both dynamises and troubles the porous boundaries of self, other and context. For today's girls and their complex girl worlds, this can be important learning for the present and the future.

"Negotiating Space. Teenage Girls' Narratives about Every Day Life in the Swedish town of Malmö"

Johanna Sixtennson (Malmö University)

I am investigating the everyday life of 23 teenage girls living in the segregated town of Malmö, Sweden. The girl have different backgrounds when it comes to social class and race/ethnicity. They also live in different parts of Malmö where some areas are discursively described as poor and others as wealthy. I am interested in the young women's social and spatial positions (and the relation between the social and the spatial) and how these different positions influence circumstances of (everyday) life. The empirical consists of focus group and semi-structured interviews as well as an element of visual methods.

Intersections of gender/sexuality, race, class, place and age are central, focusing on how the different categories of experience influence the girls' agency and place making. To be able to locate different mechanisms of power and social conditions of life, as well as to be able to pinpoint demarcations, the study is focused on four enclosed spaces, (McDowell 1999) which I call spaces of the everyday life. These are: 1) The School as an Institutional Room, 2) Public Places in the City, 3) Home and 4) The more abstract: Future. The theoretical points of departure are the work of Beverley Skeggs (1997/2000, 2004) as well as drawing on theories of feminist and postcolonial phenomenology of the body and especially Sara Ahmed's work on orientations, bodies, lived experience and emotions (2004, 2006, 2011)

"Being Young and Female: Vital Conjunctures in the Lives of Migrant Girls in Addis Ababa"

Marina de Regt (University of Amsterdam)

In the past decade an increasing number of adolescent girls have moved from villages and rural towns to Addis Ababa to improve their own lives and those of their families. In the literature the migration of adolescent girls is mainly described in the context of trafficking and exploitation. Little is known about the experiences, life choices and aspirations of migrant girls. This paper
focuses on the life course and in particular on the way in which the decision to migrate intersects with other important choices, such as those related to education, sexual relationships/marriage and having children. I will link lifecycle mobility to spatial mobility by studying the “vital conjunctures” in the lives of migrant girls (Johnson-Hanks 2002). Vital conjunctures are “the moments when seemingly established futures are called into question and when actors are called on to manage durations of radical uncertainty” (ibid. 878). I argue that migration affects the life course of girls in different ways, altering and sometimes even disrupting the transition from childhood to adulthood completely. The analysis of these vital conjunctures will be linked to a discussion on the importance of gender and age in Ethiopia and the particular situation of girls. The stories of the migrant girls show their agency and resilience in a context of structural inequalities, in which they are faced with different forms of violence and abuse. The paper is based on qualitative interviews with two groups of migrant girls in Addis Ababa, namely domestic workers and sex workers.

"Emerging youth culture among migrant girls in Dhaka"
Nicoletta del Franco (AFF)

This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork in two slums of Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh among adolescent girls who had migrated independently from rural areas in search of work opportunities in the garment industry. I argue that as a result of increased adolescent girls' migration into work in cities, there is a change in their life cycle. This often leads to prolonged transition to adulthood, with for example marriages being postponed. Consequently, space for developing new social relations and potentially youth culture opens up. How do adolescent migrant girls experience these new opportunities that the city offers in the particular context of the strong social control and power dynamics that characterise relationships in the slums? How do girls challenge and resist them? The paper discusses how the process of prolonged stage of adolescence and youth is influenced by globalization and changing morals but also how it is strongly gendered and classed.

Confessionals, Identities, and Performing the Self

“Here there be monsters: Girls navigating virginity loss in confessional narratives”
Jodi McAlister (Macquarie University, Australia)

Virginity and virginity loss has long been a contested space in constructions of femininity. In recent decades, as the figure of the virgin has become entangled with the figure of the girl instead of the unmarried woman, it has also become a fraught space in constructions of girlhood. As Hsu-Ming Teo has noted, the virgin “encode[s] a paradox of cultural desires and fears.” The virgin girl is positioned between discourses of sexual immorality and wasted fertility. There are few sexual scripts available to her that allow her to navigate virginity loss without transgressing one of the many contradictory discourses of femininity – and still fewer which position her as an agentic, desiring subject.

This paper will examine the discourse of virginity loss and its representations by girl storytellers in what I have called the “virginity loss confessional genre:” that is, autobiographical stories of virginity loss, which are regularly collected, collated and curated. It will take a historical view and
examine the ways in which girls have sought to navigate virginity loss, and will examine the
types of sexual narratives that are emerging. Overall, it will seek to do three things: firstly, to
elucidate the ways in which girls have and are currently telling stories about virginity loss;
secondly, to examine the cultural narratives available to girls; and thirdly, to explore how
virginity loss scripts for girls might develop in the future, particularly in ways which embrace the
girl’s sexual agency.

“Performing the self in the mainstream: Personal bloggers in Norway”
Karolina Dmitrov-Devold (Lillehammer University College, Norway)

My qualitative study investigates how Norwegian girls aged 15-17 perform identity in personal
blogs and how they reflect upon these performances. I focus on the mainstream blog
community where celebrity culture, competitiveness, and polished expressions of glamorous
femininity converge. In some respects, this blog community can be viewed as representative of
the postfeminist media context focused on “lifestyle, celebrity and body work” (Attwood
2011:207). On the basis of my findings from the interviews with teenage girl bloggers and
content analyses of their blogs, I identified three strategies in performing the blogging self:
‘adjustment’, ‘fit in and be myself’, and ‘contestation’. These strategies follow an inverse relation
between the blogger’s fitting in with the mainstream blog community and her identifying with her
blogging self. My findings indicate that, first, my informants do not perceive their blogs as safe
online spaces where they can share their intimate feelings and experiences as has been
documented earlier. Secondly, some of my informants are willing to adjust their performances of
self in blogs to the premises of the mainstream blog community in the pursuit of benefits this
community can offer, such as high status resulting from popularity or material benefits. While
previous research documents high consistency between online and offline selves, my findings
indicate that the selves performed in blogs can be quite incoherent with girl bloggers’ complex
offline selves and that these performances of self can change over time according to shifting
goals.

“A Dangerous Girl or a Girl in Danger?: Shifting Sexual Agency of the “Long Island
Lolita”
Michele Meek (University of Rhode Island)

Girls’ sexuality continues to be a site of intense parental, pedagogical and public concern, and
the question of how (or even if) a girl can become sexual without being passively ‘sexualized’
continues to resonate, as evidenced by the American Psychological Association’s 2007 Report
of the Task Force on The Sexualization of Girls.

In this paper, I investigate girls’ sexual agency (and lack thereof) by examining a particularly
potent moment of negotiation over the public perception of girls as either dangerous sexual
agents or imperiled sexual victims—the conflicting narratives of Amy Fisher, the ‘Long Island
Lolita.’

A Italian/Jewish teen from an affluent Long Island suburb, Fisher shot and permanently injured
suburban housewife Mary Jo Buttafuoco, the wife of her then-lover Joey Buttafuoco in May
1992. The subsequent “Long Island Lolita” story aroused an unprecedented public interest in
the details of Fisher’s life, affair and crime, resulting in multiple Hard Copy and A Current Affair
exposés, three television movies (The Amy Fisher Story, Casualties of Love, and Lethal Lolita),
three true crime novels, and months of nationwide media coverage.

As disturbing details emerged—Amy’s work as an escort/prostitute, her sexual abuse as a child,
her rape as a twelve-year-old by a workman at the house—it became an effective rhetorical strategy of Amy’s defense, echoed in her memoirs and television movie, to frame her as a victim. But what is lost when Fisher or ‘Lolita’ is narratively interpreted primarily as a victim—not just for Fisher, but for all girls.

Girlhood Franchises: performances, products and popularity

“Consuming capital: The Hunger Games and licensed Products”
Jessica Bay (York University/Ryerson University, Canada)

The marketing for licensed products associated with The Hunger Games (2012-2015) series of films, such as Cover Girl’s Capitol Collection line of makeup, is intended to reach female teenagers. The combination of the marketing with the content of the films themselves creates an unusual situation where the act of consuming capital is encouraged completely in opposition to the message of the films themselves.

The presentation in Cover Girl advertising of the districts (with whom the reader and viewer identify), mirrors the display of contestants in the games. The cultural cachet afforded even casual fans of this series of films through the purchase of such products runs counter to the message of the films themselves. Teenage girls are encouraged by such licensed product marketing to consume and to align themselves with the Capitol in reality even as they are encouraged by the content of the films to identify and support Katniss’ anti-capitalist/anti-government message.

While there is a long history of media products selling the image of beauty to teenage girls (Record, 2002; Wolf, 1991), the use of the beauty myth in this case is interesting due to the juxtaposition of the content of the films and the act of consuming promoted by the marketing. As such, this presentation considers the representation of women and class in the films and novels in contrast to their presentation in the marketing of beauty products by Cover Girl.

“On Wednesdays we wear pink: Mean Girls’ enduring reception, resonance and cultural reference”
Sarah Ralph (Northumbria University, UK)

The cult teen classic Mean Girls (2004) is now more than ten years old, but the film remains a relevant pop-culture reference point through its portrayal of teen girls as socially aggressive and hierarchically-focussed, bringing this to the forefront of popular discussions about female adolescence in the mid-2000s. Popular and academic writings have tended to focus on the potential ‘harm’ of teenage female social aggression (Simmons 2002, Underwood 2003), yet Mean Girls’ ‘manipulative and mean’ discourse clearly still resonates due to its frequent mentions in popular media and by audiences on social media outlets.

This paper will look at the way Mean Girls is now solidified into popular culture through an exploration of web reception materials and online female fan cultures (shared content and social media conversations) at the time of and since the film’s 10th anniversary, and will consider how
the representation of negative features of female friendships in the film are negotiated in the practices and productivity of popular writers and female fans.

“An investigation into the media consumption of young working class girls”
Georgina Newton (Bournemouth University, UK)

This paper explores how young working class girls are consuming the media and consequently negotiating their own identities in response to the messages and readings constructed. This discusses media consumption patterns of young working class girls and examines their responses and perspectives of the media texts they are engaged with.

Informed by participatory qualitative research methods, with data from media diaries, interviews and focus groups, a picture of the media consumption patterns of 11 and 12 year old girls will be discussed. It will: a) explore what media platforms and texts are consumed; b) influenced by Duits & van Zoonen (2011) the research will engage participants as active audiences; c) challenge the perception of young girls as ‘at risk’ from media; d) demonstrate young girls are media ‘savvy’, and literate when decoding and critiquing the images and messages within the media.

This draws on feminist approaches to research to give participants a voice and platform to discuss their media consumption and reception. The research identifies the, how, what and when of young girl’s media use, their motivations, and responses to ‘celebrity’ and ‘role models’ within texts. This is motivated by the need to understand what young girls are engaging with, their reception of media texts, and how the media is used by the girls to negotiate their own understandings of their identity and femininity. This offers an understanding of the engagement of young working-class girls with the media, and contribution to debates about young girls, media messages and audiences.

10:30AM-10:50AM: Coffee/Tea
"Dangerous liaisons: Oriental spaces and Jewish girls in mandatory Palestine"
Tammy Razi (Sapir Academic College, Israel)

During the years of the British mandate in Palestine (1918-1948), especially during the 1930s and 1940s with the waves of immigration from Europe, the Jewish national community in Palestine expanded, while the national conflict between Arabs and Jews escalated. During these years the nature of the new Jewish collective as "modern" and "westernized" was constructed mainly in opposition to the "native" Arabs as well as the Jews of oriental origins. In mixed cities and neighborhoods, where Jews and Arabs lived side by side, such as in Haifa and in the southern neighborhoods of Tel-Aviv and Jaffa, different kinds of relations developed between these two communities, among them romantic relations between Jewish girls, mainly of oriental origins, and Arab men.

This paper will discuss these romantic ties and the threat they posed to both national communities in the context of the oriental space - the actual physical space of streets and coffee houses where oriental Jews and Arabs met, as well as the symbolic space of oriental identity and culture. I will argue that this space enabled the development of an autonomous adolescent feminine identity – where young women could explore their autonomy and sexuality, to a certain extent at least, and enjoy a partial sense of freedom, away from the close supervision of their traditional homes. The physical and symbolic space where these ties were created was perceived both as a national and cultural threat to the new "westernized" Jewish community as well as a threat to the traditional gender order.

"Nazi girlhood and the Nazi girl"
Kara Ritzheimer (Oregon State University, USA)

In 1942, the Bund deutscher Mädel (BDM), or League of German Girls, the female branch of the Hitler Youth, publicized the story of Ursel and Sabine, two young women sent to the Reichsgau Wartheland. This was a region that Nazi leaders had carved out of recently defeated Poland, attached to the expanding Third Reich, and determined should be made more 'German' through population transfers that deported Poles and settled ethnic Germans in their place. Ursel and Sabine traveled to this new territory during a school holiday to teach settler children to read and write German. Their expropriation of a Polish school, expulsion of the school's caretaker, industriousness, discipline, affability, and uniformed bodies indicated that Ursel and Sabine were Nazi girls personifying the concept of Nazi girlhood.
This paper explores several questions based upon ongoing research that aims to expand our historical knowledge of Nazi girlhood: What did it mean to be a Nazi girl, and what were the defining characteristics of Nazi girlhood? While prior histories have studied girls' experiences in organizations like the BDM, missing is a comprehensive study of Nazi girlhood, one that addresses numerous questions. For example, what legal markers existed in Nazi Germany to demarcate girlhood from womanhood? How did movies, books, magazines, and movies created for female youth help to construct girlhood? How were the gender and sexual norms surrounding girlhood different from those of womanhood? How did Nazi girlhood align with the government’s political goals and potentially deepen the regime’s appeal?

“Girlhood interrupted: Gender, film propaganda and imperial Japan”
Kate Taylor-Jones (University of Sheffield, UK)

For many, the linkage of girlhood and Japan raises image of vicariously wide-eyed manga-warriors, salacious schoolgirls and peppy pop idols, however, complex images of girlhood were present long before the current media age. This paper examines how articulations of women and girlhood were core to the Empire’s rhetoric and will begin by illustrating how the Empire hoped to (re)construct its female citizens. Whilst men would march to sacrificial glory on the battlefield, the focus on women as ‘good wives and wise mothers’ (ryōsai kenbo) would ensure that they would serve the Empire in a different way. However, this simple narrative was far more complex than initial visions present, since, like any wide-spread and promoted narrative of gender construction, tensions would emerge. For the articulation of gender that was being offered, there were clear areas where the official narrative would prove lacking, and this paper focuses on how the gendered narrative promoted in the propaganda would prove problematic in the visual field. Imperial engagement with the notion of ‘girlhood’ would be an area of specific challenge. The ‘girl’ was a difficult figure to process and represent since she could not conform to ryōsai kenbo owing to her age (and the lack of male partners as the war went on), nor could she ever aspire to the military life. In these ways the girls became a ‘blank spot’ in the Imperial structure and, as a result, she was a site of potential disturbance that would need to be controlled and maintained. Focusing on cinema from the period, this paper will illustrate how a contradictory gendering was taking place and how the Imperial girl on film was a potential site of tremendous tension and disruption.

“Representations of ‘sexting’ and sexual violence on legal dramas: Implications for adolescents’ sexual subjectivities”
Emily Lockhart (York University, Canada):

This paper explores the intersection of law and popular culture, exploring the representation of teenage sexual subjects before and after prominent ‘sexting’ cases such as the Steubenville rape case and Rehtaeh Parsons’ suicide. By tracing the academic discourse on teenage sexting from 2009-2015 this paper suggests that while there has been a shift towards a discourse of sex-positivity, normalcy of teenage sexting, sexual exploration, resistance to adult
surveillance, and the importance of consent, the legal system continues to demonstrate confusion in cases where teenagers, digital technology and sexuality intertwine. The paper suggests that over the past seven years the legal system has been paying too much attention to punishing consensual sexting and censoring teens’ freedoms and less to instances of teenage sexual violence. This paper aims to discover whether the changing academic and social discourse since 2009 around teens, sex and digital technology has impacted popular culture representations of teenage sexual subjects. Using six examples of television dramas that turn topical legal and political issues into nighttime entertainment, this paper questions whether or not the changing discourse around teens, sexuality, digital technology and the law impacts the way these issues are presented on television and how this representation may impact the ways teenagers understand their sexual rights. Using a sexual citizenship framework the paper explores the ways in which teenage sexual subjects are constructed in and through these representations, as well as how they are scripted to exercise sexual agency and resistance.

“The Lolita effect and other contradictions on modern ‘sexualisation’ discourses”
Siri Lindholm (London College of Fashion, UK)

Since Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov was published in 1955, the name itself has come to connote a child seductress. Now, populist books like The Lolita Effect (Durham, 2009) continue to reference her in arguing that girls are seen as ‘growing up too fast’. In the past ten years a body of writing – print media, populist manuals and Government Reports - have emerged and propose a direct causal link between specific dress and the sexual and social fate of a girl-child. Fashion is defined as ontologically dangerous; as emblematic of girls' commercial and sexual victimisation, potentially damaging them physically, emotionally and intellectually, and putting their future as healthy adults in danger.

This paper is concerned with investigating the differences and similarities in the above texts and their role in the formation of discourses on ‘sexualisation’, where dress is suggested to strip the girl of agency and 'sexualise' her. In a contradictory way, the concept of a 'Lolita effect', however, implies a sense of agency from the girl-child in actively seducing her viewer and therefore being, at least in part, responsible for the response her dress triggers. This paper will argue that almost any type of dress can be situated as a 'sexualising' medium, that girls face a 'double pressure' to simultaneously appear seductive and trendy, but also modest and that in the end by placing partial blame on girls' attire, society is able to keep girls in check with the power of their own control.

“Feminine adolescent development and the evangelical girl-rearing manual: A ‘postfeminisation’ of purity rhetoric?”
Alexa Appel (University of Sydney, Australia)

This paper is primarily interested in contemporary evangelical therapeutic discourse on girls’ development – a way of speaking about feminine adolescent development that centres on ‘spiritual development’. In this paper I importantly consider how an evangelical rhetorical approach that advocates for ‘purity of lifestyle’ and, furthermore, conceptualises chastity as merely a matter of ‘personal choice’, works to enforce new ways of governing the sexual lives and bodies of girls and, crucially, define the parameters of ‘proper’ feminine adolescence. Constituted as a ‘voluntary action’ through which a ‘my body, my choice’ mantra is enacted and, additionally, ‘correct’ femininity adolescent identity can be secured, such texts affirm that sexual abstinence promises transition towards feminine adult subject who is self-determining, ‘in control’ and concomitantly marriageable. As the majority of Christian-girl manuals urge, sexual
abstinence constitutes as the therapeutic practice through which maturation, eternal salvation and feminine desirability can be achieved.

Taking into account the theoretical perspectives of religious studies scholars, I propose here that as well as mainstreaming purity culture (that is, by reframing it as a not-necessarily-religious therapeutic practice) evangelical discourse on girl-rearing invokes postfeminist rhetoric so as to reinvigorate and repopularise essentially anti-feminist Christian guidelines centred on ‘sexual modesty’. In this paper I will further acknowledge (and accordingly expand on) an increasingly recognisable interaction between evangelical therapeutic girl-rearing narratives and the ‘comprehensive discursive system’ of postfeminism. Fundamentally, I contend that ‘spiritual’ and ‘moral’ development rhetoric is reflective of an enmeshing of neoliberal and evangelical discourses on girlhood. I will thus argue that this entanglement indicates a convergence between secular and evangelical fantasies of girlhood.

Girlhood in the Global North:
Towards Comparative Dialogues Roundtable

Bodil Formark, Umea University, Sweden
Claudia Mitchell, McGill University, Canada
Heta Mulari, Finnish Youth Research Society, Finland
Ann Smith, McGill University, Canada
Olga Zdравомыслова, International Foundation for Socio-economic and Political Studies, Russia
Annelie Branstrom Ohman, Umea University, Sweden
Linda Arnell, Umea University, Sweden

The only journal exclusively devoted to our research field, Girlhood Studies. An Interdisciplinary Journal, has so far published two themed issues focusing on girlhood in different geographic and political contexts: “Nordic Girls’ Studies: Current Themes and Theoretical Approaches” (Winter 2013) and “Girlhood Studies in Post-Socialist Times” (Spring 2015). Parallel to, and very much thanks to the contents of the themed issues a dialogue has grown between and among girlhood researchers working in Finland, Sweden, and Russia. These societies, experiencing - although to different degrees - an evident cultural and political conflict between traditionalists and modernists, are increasingly concerned about the ways in which girls move into womanhood. In the proposed session we would like to further this exchange and to reflect on and discuss our shared experience of trying to translate and explain the historical, geopolitical, cultural and academic specificities of these three countries/regions to an international audience. What becomes lost in translation and what are the implications for Girlhood Studies as a research field that is global in its scope and ambition? What are the potential pathways available for the development of a more systematic and comparative study of young femininity in the northern regions of the Northern hemisphere? How might we extend this to various other northern contexts?

The session will be convened by the Editor of Girlhood Studies. The session will begin with introductory reflections from the Guest Editors of the two theme issues mentioned above.
regarding the insights gained from the work-process, as well as the academic implications of trying to make the “Nordic Girl” and “The Russian Girl” intelligible. A panel discussion departing from a set of questions that will be distributed ahead of time will then follow. Ann Smith as the Managing Editor of Girlhood Studies will serve as the discussant. The Finnish network Tyttötutkimusverkosto will be represented by Heta Mulari.

The session is organised by Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal in collaboration with the Gorbachev Foundation, FlickForsk! Nordic Network for Girlhood Studies and Tyttötutkimusverkosto.

THE GIRL in (Historical) Fiction and Folktales

“Love and jealousy ‘warbled with the lisp of childhood’: The cultural afterlives of Jane Eyre’s (1847) Adele Varens”
Catherine Paula Han (Cardiff University, UK)

In her first appearance in Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre (1847), the seven or eight-year-old Adèle demonstrates her accomplishments to her new governess by singing a tale of coquetry and sexual betrayal. According to Jane, “the point of the exhibition lay in hearing the notes of love and jealousy warbled with the lisp of childhood; and in very bad taste that point was”. The daughter of a French opera dancer, Adèle connotes a licentious foreign femininity whilst serving as a reminder of Rochester’s past sexual experiences and his Bluebeardesque habit of disregarding women. At the end of the novel, the girl remains an awkward step-child whose inconvenient existence continues to destabilise the main courtship plot.

Brontë Transformations is a well-established field of study and representations of girls and children in Jane Eyre and Jane Eyre adaptations have already received scholarly attention (Dole 2007, Kapurch 2012). Yet the cultural afterlives of Adèle have thus far been overlooked.

Addressing this lacuna, my paper will develop ideas from my recently completed doctoral thesis. I will examine recent screen versions and fictional reworkings of Brontë’s novel, including Jane Eyre (BBC, 2006), Jane Eyre (dir. Cary Fukunaga, 2011), Claire Moïse’s Adele Grace and Celine: The Other Women of Jane Eyre (2009), Emma Tennant’s Adele: Jane Eyre’s Hidden Story (2002) and Patricia Park’s Jane Re (2015). In particular, I am interested in how characterisations of Adèle reflect contemporary anxieties concerning the figure of the step-daughter and the sexualisation of girls.

“Folktales and Femininity: Girlhood and the transmission of cultural values in Malaysian children’s literature”
Sharifah Osman (University of Malaya, Malaysia)

Based on the representations of female identity in selected Malaysian folktales, this paper argues that the definition of "feminine" qualities in such stories is influenced by an inherently patriarchal ideology, one that emphasizes the secondary role of young women -- often depicted either as a means of redemption for the hero, or as "damsels in distress" awaiting rescue. Such tales thus serve as sites for "the construction of appropriate gendered behaviour" in affirming and perpetuating patriarchal values (Parsons 2004) through their emphasis on "feminine" docility, filial piety and sacrifice. Through close readings of three Malay folktales, namely Puteri
Bunga Tanjong, Pilihan Seri Nara and Puteri Pucuk Kelumpang, this paper illustrates how these stories, while subscribing to stereotypically gendered roles in their portrayal of young women, also offer a revisionary reading of female characters within the context of Malaysian children’s literature through the focus on these women's wisdom, resourcefulness and intelligence. As significant repositories of cultural identity and national heritage, such folktales should indeed be preserved and widely circulated. Yet more also needs to be done for such stories to appeal to contemporary young female readers, many of whom would find it difficult to relate to passive depictions of womanhood, given the increasing awareness of women’s rights universally. Thus, as my discussion will show, to remain historically and culturally relevant as a genre, contemporary anthologies of Malaysian children's literature need to evolve by offering girls more empowering narratives from which they can imagine themselves and their roles in society.

“Girls in the late works of Nogami Yaeko and Ishii Momoko”
Tomoko Aoyama (The University of Queensland, Australia)

In an advanced ageing society such as Japan, centenarian writers are no longer rare. Even then the cases of Nogami Yaeko (1885-1985) and Ishii Momoko (1907-2008) are extraordinary. Nogami wrote fiction from the mid-1910s until her death, winning numerous literary prizes. Ishii Momoko, too, continued working in a range of fields including children's literature, translation, fiction, essays and memoirs. This paper examines the multiple significance of girlhood in their late novels: Nogami’s Mori (The forest, 1972-85) and Ishii's Maboroshi no akai mi (The dream of vermilion fruits, 1994). What motivated these writers to write about girls and young women? Each novel has historical and autobiographical elements. Mori begins in April 1900, when the protagonist as a fifteen-year-old girl comes to Tokyo to attend a girls' school, which parallels Nogami's entrance to Meiji Women's School. In Ishii's novel, which begins in the early 1930s, a number of events and characters are recognisable from the author's own life. The humorous English story that the young woman protagonist Akiko translates for her friend Fukiko, for example, can easily be identified as Winnie-the-Pooh, which Ishii came across in 1933, publishing her translation in 1940. It would be an injustice, however, to read Mori and Maboroshi no... merely as autobiographical texts. I will propose alternative readings of these novels by focusing on "girl" motifs such as girls' intertextuality (girls and women sharing texts), humour through word play and parody, musings on physical appearance and corporeality, details of fashion and domestic work, and girls' homosocial intimacy.

LUNCH: 12:20PM-1:15PM
1:15PM-2:30PM  
KEYNOTE: “The Slave Girls”  
Rozena Maart (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

An examination of the lives of five slave girls, post the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck to the Cape. Born of an enslaved mother, Maria One, Maria Two, Maria Three, Maria Four and Maria Five are born from one mother, and their fathers are brothers. Their lives are constructed around the newly acquired farms of the land-owners and their mother is moved from farm to farm in an attempt to prevent her from giving birth to more children from this well to do Dutch family for whom her presence is an eye sore. This paper examines the literary and the psychoanalytic, the philosophical and the feminist, interpretations of the enslavement of the slave girls and the quest for a freedom that never comes in their lifetime.

This paper will also address questions such as: will Girls Studies, like its predecessors, Women’s Studies and Gender Studies, overlook the role of coloniality and empire building by the colonial powers in a quest to produce scholarship that omits histories of enslavement in ways that erases the beneficiary status of the very White women scholars who benefited from a history they care little to reflect on but care much to claim ownership of?
Girls' Bodies Across Media

SESSION E: 2:30PM-4PM

"(Un)natural Citizens: The Metaphor of ‘Anorexic as Alien’ in Canadian television"
Emma Dunn (Ryerson University, Canada)

Following T.S. Marshall's conception of citizenship, this paper examines how and why Canadian girls suffering from eating disorders cease to be treated as full Canadian citizens, lacking access to the same basic respect, health care, and social supports provided to non-sufferers, and sufferers of other (less) common diseases and disorders. Indeed, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness, yet continue to be discriminated against nationwide. In their 2014 report, Canada's Standing Committee on the Status of Women argues that widespread apathy towards eating disorders stems from a perception of these disorders as pseudo-illnesses. This paper explores the media's role in perpetuating this damaging stigma. Since television is arguably the most influential medium for framing public consciousness in Canada, an analysis of Canadian television is vital to begin to understand how the stigma surrounding eating disorders manifests, and to work towards achieving full-citizenship for young female sufferers. Through an analysis of four televised interviews with female sufferers of anorexia, I will argue that by hyper-visualizing and sensationalizing the anorexic body, these popular programs perpetuate the metaphor of “anorexic as alien.” The term “alien” in this context denotes, not only strangeness, but also foreignness, as I argue that the rhetoric surrounding anorexia on these television shows not only ostracizes and dehumanizes sufferers, but perpetuates their status as non-citizens as well – a phenomenon with dire consequences for young girls nationwide.

“My anorexia story: Girls constructing narratives of identity on You Tube”
Su Holmes (University of East Anglia, UK)

This paper explores a set of videos frequently posted on YouTube under the title of ‘My anorexia story’, or some variant on that phrase. Primarily produced and discussed by white, Western, teenage girls, these videos are effectively slide shows made up of written text and photographs, and they present narratives of recovery, or efforts to recover, from anorexia. In situating my analysis at the intersection of feminist work on eating disorders, feminist work on the body, and girls' media studies, I explore how the videos tell stories of self-starvation through recurring digital and bodily practices. In considering the ways in which the narratives reflect, complicate or extend existing cultural mediations of anorexia, I examine how selfies sit at the core of these videos - drawing upon a growing area of work which examines the selfie in relation to discourses of surveillance, visibility and selfhood (Brager, 2015: 1662, Burns, 2015, Frosh, 2015). In doing so, the article explores questions about critical and methodological complexities of approaching the relationship between the material body and the digital body, and their often inextricable relationship in contemporary negotiations of embodiment.
Janice Hladki (McMaster University, Canada)

This paper examines the intersection of fatness and girlhood, drawing on the artwork of Allyson Mitchell, a Canadian based, feminist, multidisciplinary artist, and her acclaim of the “chubby girl” to explore the interrogation of social anxieties about fat subjectivity. Mitchell’s art undermines constructions of shame and humiliation associated with the chubby girl and re-frames fatness as generative rather than diminished embodiment. Disability theorists underline disability as an epistemological approach, a thinking-with practice that considers fatness on these terms. The fear of fatness signals anxiety about the uncivilized/uncivilizing and uncontrolled/uncontrollable girl: an obstinate figure who is dangerous to the social order. In her counter-civilizing practice, the chubby girl raises questions about what constitutes proper citizenship within the neoliberal demand for able-bodied bodily capacity. Her intractable politics indexes her willfulness to exceed normative social boundaries.

As girl studies’ theorists have noted, “in traditional Western thinking, women are their bodies, and yet they are expected to use their minds to control their bodies’ excesses, inadequacies, and unruliness” (Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 137). In Mitchell’s works, girls persist in confronting the boundaries of “feminized disgust, overconsumption, unruliness, and moral failure” (Bell 55), as these are attached to gender, girlhood, and body size and weight, suggesting that girls might, through a range of forms of appetite and excess, undermine, if not undo, the regulatory mechanisms associated with normative embodied subjectivity. Appetite and excess function as practices of subject formation, conditions of humanness, and sites of knowledge-making about fatness and girlhood. These practices yield an emphasis on what Jacques Rancière describes as “ontological texture” (67), suggesting that the interstices of aesthetic work call attention to becoming, or, in Margrit Shildrick’s words, the “multiple becomings” of “differential embodiment” (176).

“Precocious playthings: the role of the doll in the American child beauty pageant”
Jennifer Dawn Whitney (University of Cardiff)

Over the last 100 years, many American girls have smiled, spun, and sparkled on beauty pageant stages. In that time, they have been compared to ‘living dolls’ on innumerable occasions. Depending upon who wields it, the description can serve either as a criticism or as a compliment. But on the contemporary pageantry circuit, to be doll-like is decidedly an asset. Costumes and routines play up the relationship, while event names—from the Darling Dolls of America Pageant to the Princess Doll Baby Pageant—embrace the equation between the girl child and the doll.

While taking a close look at the word ‘doll’, this paper explores the cultural significance of the object as metonymy in contemporary representations of girlhood within the American child beauty pageant. The frequent thematic privileging of the doll in this context might be read as an attempt to both reproduce and toy with traditional markers of beauty, innocence, and eroticization all at work in the world of child pageantry. The regularity with which the girl child and the doll assembly of the pageantry stage is illustrated through several examples from the American reality television programme, Toddlers & Tiaras, with particular focus on the episode ‘Precious Moments Pageant 2011’.
Girls and the Culture Industries: Exploring Issues of Structure and Construction

“Finding gender in media franchising”
Sarah Projansky (University of Utah, USA)

My title gestures in two directions. First, I trace how scholars have (and have not) considered gender when theorizing media franchises. While some scholarship does address gender within specific franchises (e.g., in Star Trek or Sex and the City), less scholarship explicitly theorizes gender in relation to media franchising as an industry practice. In response, I draw on the feminist media franchise scholarship that does exist to consider how the lens of gender can strengthen all theories of media franchising. For example, Mary Celeste Kearney (2004) shows that 1950s "meta-properties" (arguably, proto-franchises) centering girls (e.g., Meet Corliss Archer) helped shape the very structure of increasingly synergistic media industries.

Following Kearney, second, this paper asks what roles gender is playing in the structure of contemporary film franchises anchored by girls, including Twilight, the Disney Princess films, Hunger Games, and Divergent. I ask: What is the relationship between girls and franchising in the binaries of love/hate that operate in public discussions of these franchises, as well as in the gendered and racialized versions of girlhood that emerge in these media franchises? And, does this recent surge of massively successful girl franchises signal a shift in industry structure, akin to the one Kearney identifies in the 1950s? Finally, if it does, what difference does it make that girls in particular are again agents for that industrial change?

“Girls hold up half the sky: Global narratives of gender equity meet neoliberal philanthropy”
Angharad N. Valdivia (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)

In Diana and Beyond, Raka Shome (2014) explores the ways that Western white women, especially celebrities, are positioned as global mothers in popular culture, “saving, rescuing, or adopting international children from underprivileged parts of the world, and rearticulating them through familial frameworks that recenter white Western (and especially North Atlantic) heterosexual kinship logics”. Similarly Bulut, Mejia, and McCarthy (2014) examine the process whereby practices of “philitainment” allow “neoliberal politics through which the disinvestment of the state from social problems is … legitimized and reproduced through a … reconfiguration of citizenship in terms of techno-consumerism” (p. 1). The confluence of philanthropy, entertainment/celebrity culture, and celebration of individualized agency through the marketplace come together throughout commodified popular culture.

This essay takes up where both above studies leave off. Using the “Half the Sky” [HTS] phenomenon and the many forms it takes as a case study, this project investigates the foundations, donors, and diverse groups that provide capital, goods, and services to “save” girls in the global south. The matrix of funding and influence that creates and articulates girls from the south as subjects in crisis, also introduces and reproduces networks of consumption in relation to celebrity intervention as the face of the Western savior syndrome. This study further explores multicultural subjectivity of the U.S. celebrities in relation to their gendered and racialized roles as white mothers/saviors in the Global South. When examining global
communications and social change, a contemporary analysis has to include not only gender and media but also the deployment of ‘multicultural subjects’ and an interrogation of the uses and abused of this particular inclusivity.

“Reviving Ophelia, Annie, Nancy, and her sisters: Constructing girlhood in the trade press”
Sharon Mazzarella (James Madison University, USA)

The public concern and media fascination with youth so evident in the United States today is a century-old phenomenon. From the flappers of the 1920s to the bobby-soxers and juvenile delinquents of the 1950s, from the hippies of the 1960s to the school shooters of the 1990s and on to the ubiquitous pregnant teens, this fascination has played out in the media and has increasingly centered on girls. Looking back to representations of girls in the early to mid-20th century, for example, Ilana Nash (2006, p. 4) argues that media content (including news) exhibits a “deep and persistent fear” of adolescents—a fear that is particularly pronounced in the case of teen girls. Recent academic scholarship analyzing news coverage of girls both at present and earlier in the 20th century has exposed the underlying moral panic and crisis mentality informing such coverage (see for example, Thiel-Stern, 2014).

Spurred on by the success of Mary Pipher’s Reviving Ophelia in 1994, a plethora of books have been published by the trade press purporting to offer the general adult public advice on and insight into the lives of adolescent girls. The authors of these books have ranged from practitioners (e.g., psychologist Pipher) to journalists (e.g., Orenstein, 1995, 2011) to academics (e.g., Brumberg, 1998; Durham, 2009; Hains, 2014). While these books often provide fodder for journalistic coverage of girls, there has been little to no academic analysis of such books. This paper examines how a range of trade books published from 1994-2014 have worked to construct U.S. girls and girlhoods in order to gain insight into their contribution to an ongoing public dialogue about girls and girlhoods in the U.S.

“Bark, hoot, pant, cry: Girls and the formation of identity in animal books”
Debra Merskin (University of Oregon, USA)

Childhood is replete with special friendships. Developmentally, those formed with animals are on par with those formed with other children and is a key site for the development of individual differences related to “language; nonverbal communication; theory of mind; biological concepts; categories; social understanding’ and, above all, the self” (Myers, 2007, p. xv). Children learn about animals in one of three ways: directly (experiences with real animals), indirectly (zoos, aquaria, circuses, pet stores), and symbolically (via mediated representations) (Corbett, 2007). The further children are from real experiences impacts how empathetic they are likely to become. For girls in particular, animals figure prominently in their socialization and “being ‘animal-like’ in terms of rough playing, is “more at odds with young girls’ developing gender identities” (p. 176).

This paper examines children’s symbolic relationships with animals (real and imagined) in general and focuses on girls in particular. The School Library Journal’s Top 100 Picture Books for the 21st century (2012) list for Pre-Kindergarten to age two is examined in order to ascertain how many are about animals, and how many of those include girls. Those books that include a girl as primary figure (whether in human or animal form) are examined. Using the theory of intersectionality as a lens a textual analysis examines these works in terms of what they say about gender and species. Research questions include: which animals are featured in books that target girls? What gender roles do these books present to girls?
Girls' Leisure Subcultures Across the Twentieth Century

“Swing Sister Swing: Thirties girlhood, the swing craze and the jitterbug film cycle”
Tim Snelson (University of East Anglia, UK)

During the mid-1930s, critics condemned the ‘worrying’ trend of major first-run cinemas relegating the latest ‘A’ pictures to the status of mere support acts to live performances by swing stars such as Benny Goodman. This cultural shift was blamed not on exploitative exhibitors, but on a generational shift in audiences – particularly young female audiences – who were demanding more visceral and interactive media consumption. The swing fans’ initially unwelcomed activities of dancing in the aisles and invading the stage during films were subsequently fostered by the major studios and their affiliated exhibition chains. Opportunities for tactical consumption were strategised in a cycle of ‘jitterbug films’ and their promotional tie-ins, which offered opportunities for audiences to sing or dance along to swing and jitterbug sequences. These intersecting cycles of youth-oriented all-star musical revues and college comedies – including Swing, Sister, Swing (1938), Dancing Co-Ed (1939), Rhythm Romance (1939) and Sweet Heart of the Campus (1940) – foregrounded young female protagonists, swing musicians appearing as themselves, and extended dance sequences. This paper will analyse the promotion and pressbooks for these films, explaining how the subcultural proclivities and creativities of the young ‘jitterbugs’ and ‘ickies’ were channeled into the disciplined and uniformed consumption of contracted stars, tied-in fashion brands and propriety dances created for the films. This paper will challenge dominant histories of the ‘teen film’ and offer new insights into the youth market and girlhood in the pre-teenager era.

“Time to go out: Girls and night clubbing from 1956-1976”
Katie Milestone (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

This paper draws on data from 20 interviews with British women who were teenagers in the late 1950s to the mid 1970s. The time frame focused on is approximately from when rock and roll hits Britain to the dawn of punk. The interviews focus on girls’ experiences of ‘going out’ to dance halls, night clubs and other spaces during this period. The paper aims to document female experiences from the underexplored area of the ‘pre history’ of what, by the late 1980s, began to be commonly referred to as ‘club culture’. The interviews focus on dancing, music, travel to and from dancing spaces, fashion and style (both that which was manufactured and that which was home-made) in the context of a period which young women experienced, to a lesser or greater degree, new freedoms in terms of access to the public sphere, sex, sexuality and identity. The time-frame under scrutiny for this paper is a period which saw a move from dance styles which typically involved dancing with a partner (which often for a woman meant waiting to be ‘chosen’ to dance by a man), to an age in which individual, non contact dancing became the norm. The paper explores the extent to which this change for women in terms of their access the dance floor can be seen as a metaphor for the changing role of women in Western society. The paper will link the key themes emerging from the interviews to existing research by feminist scholars of girls’ culture.
“Teenage dream tonight: Fantasy, pop, and UK girls comics 1957-64”
Joan Ormrod (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

This paper examines the ways that pop music in UK teenage girls’ comics of the 1950s and 1960s promoted British pop music in a time when it was attempting to forge its own identity against competition from its more glamorous American cousins. Rather than take the better known Jackie which has had much attention from McRobbie and Barker, amongst others, I examine comics produced from the late fifties. Jackie was produced in 1964, a time when the teen market was better established and Beatlemania was at its height. Consequently, studies of Jackie miss some interesting issues in the development of teen audiences and the promotion of British pop music. Using random sampling, I examine how pop stars and pop music hailed girl teen audiences in Mirabelle, Valentine, Roxy and Marilyn. This was a period of experiment when British pop music attempted to emulate the more glamorous American music. Girls’ comics incorporated pop music in their picture stories, articles and advice pages. Publicity of pop music in this era, I argue, lays the foundations for later fan and media practices that promote day dream and fantasy.

“Girlhood and girl’s participation in sports-based initiatives in the UK”
Sheryl Clark (Goldsmiths University, London)

This presentation will focus on girls’ participation in recent sport-based initiatives in the UK. Girls’ underrepresentation in sport and physical activity in the UK is a longstanding issue that continues to trouble policymakers, activists and more recently, schools (Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation 2012). In line with participation discrepancies, girls’ participation in sport and physical activity has been premised in a range of recent girl-focused initiatives aimed at “getting girls active.” These include the Youth Sport Trust’s “Girls in Sport” initiative, a programme aimed at increasing girls’ participation in sport by developing peer mentorships within schools. Within the presentation, I will discuss girls’ participation in sport-based initiatives in relation to what has been termed the “girl effect” - as a particularly palatable development strategy which targets girls and young women within a rhetoric of ‘girl power.’ Important questions have been raised about both the sustainability of such programmes as well as the particular constructions of girlhood that take place within their development and enactment. In the UK, girls’ participation in sport and physical activity is increasingly framed within the construction of an impending ‘obesity epidemic’ alongside discourses of achievement and self-improvement. My research is particularly concerned with some of the contradictory ways in which sport continues to be framed for young women with varying backgrounds and at the ways in which sports participation as a model of ‘responsible citizenship’ aligns with ideas around ‘successful girlhood.’
"Girls, Intra-Active: A Post-Humanist Theory of Dynamic Agency"
Shauna Pomerantz and Rebecca Raby (Brock University, Canada)

Our paper proposes a post-humanist theory of dynamic agency, specifically as it can be applied to negotiations of/in girlhoods. Focusing on the new materialism in feminist theory, we chronicle a shift in our thinking about agency from feminist post-structural conceptualizations to a new approach that draws on Karen Barad’s (2007) theory of intra-activity. Using our current research on girls’ negotiations of academic success in Canadian schools (Pomerantz and Raby, forthcoming), we explore the enmeshed processes that open up conditions of possibility for girls: subjectivity (how girls think about themselves), discourse (how subjectivities are enabled and constrained through socio-cultural forces, including post-feminism), history (a rendering of events as discursively and materially produced), and materiality (bodies, schools, neighbourhoods, grades). Taking these four threads in turn, we offer examples from our study to show how each contributes to a theory of dynamic agency, but lacks vital intra-acting components on their own. A robust theory of girls’ agency emerges only through their intra-activity.

Our optimism for agency has been renewed through this contextual consideration as it helps to shed light on how girls engage not only with but also “in the world” (Adkins and Skeggs, 2004: 10). Agency remains not only at the heart of feminist theory, but also at the heart of girls’ everyday talk about themselves, each other, and the world around them (Gonick et al., 2009). Conceptualizing agency through a post-humanist lens thus enables deeper consideration of how girls – and all of us – intra-act with, and find meaning through, the world’s ongoing dynamism.

“Girls and Horses”
Anna Nygren (Independent Scholar, Sweden)

My work in the field of Girlhood Studies is focused on the girl-horse relationship as a category of human-animal relationship, and as a girl collective in both academic and artistic ways. Stallgänget på Tuva was published in the magazine Min Häst – a girl’s magazine about horses – and is part of a specific genre of horse books for younger girls, which is very popular in Sweden. It is also part of a broader horse-girl culture. In my paper I analyze power relations and different aspects of affection and resistance.

From an artistic point of view my work is in the fields of text, theatre and film. I have examined the girl-horse relation and the girl culture in the stable in short films (Utan Rum, 2014, and Hästkött, work-in-progress) and collaborative and individual text works. In this paper, I work with a combination of memories, interviews and collaborations with younger and older horse-girls.

“Forest daughters, mother nature and green criticism”
Ulla-Maija Salo (University of Helsinki, Finland)

The paper explores children’s discourse about nature, forests and environmental issues. The analysed material consisted of excerpts from letters written by children, mostly girls, to the President of Finland. The material comprised thousands of letters which can be viewed as articulating the lived concerns about how to act as well as participate in and control events in the
children’s everyday worlds: just around the corner, nationally and globally. By writing, asking and challenging, the letter writers believed they could influence public affairs. Firstly, the paper explores the children’s relationship with and experience of nature, a sort of secret relationship between the ‘I’ and the world; and secondly, how material-discursive practices can produce different material configurations of the world, nature and green criticism. The paper theorises using posthumanist performative accounts of the material-discursive practices of mattering (Barad 2007) and the ideas of ‘becoming-animal’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2011). It has been argued (Gilligan 1990; Behar 1996) that feminists have forgotten their daughters, but Finland’s female president seemed to be an important power to turn to when something mattered. In the Finnish context, forests are particularly mysterious and enchanting places, and the writers feel that they demand both care and protection. The writers know this, as they themselves are ‘of nature’. The whole array of topics that the children posed in their letters can be viewed within the frameworks of green ethics, green criticism and environmental awareness. In the letter collection, Mother Nature seems to speak particularly to daughter-citizens – Forest Daughters, as I call them here.

4PM-4:30PM: Coffee/Tea

Cultural Production and Fandom

“Fangirling and ‘mimetic language’: The power of ‘feels’, reclaiming emotion and ‘GIF-ing’ as practice on Tumblr”

Helena Dare-Edwards (University of East Anglia, UK)

Young female fans, or fangirls, are routinely pathologised for their display of intense emotionality (Baker 2003; Bode 2010; Ehrenreich et al. 1992), characterised as powerless over their desires and emotions (Bury 2005), and fangirl ‘squee’ systematically dismissed as an affectation devoid of ‘authenticity’ (Minkle 2015). While fangirl shame remains evident on Tumblr, this paper explores the ways in which it appears largely displaced by hyperbolic language, communal articulations of affect, and the collective enactment of a performative, gendered fannish identity.

Online, girls can choose the manner through which they express themselves; they have control over their self-presentation (Boyd 2008; Stern 2002). Rather than distancing themselves from characteristics associated with the fangirl stereotype, I argue that the embodied performance of fangirl fandom commonly represented in media images, is instead made visible on Tumblr, reaffied linguistically through a form of “performative writing” (Pollock 1998). In examining fangirl identities as linguistically performative, I introduce and develop the concept of ‘mimetic language’; a visual, emotional coding of language that aims to convey an impression of, or directly represents, a physical action, gesture, bodily feeling, emotion or psychological state. Extensively produced and circulated by fangirls, I consider GIFs as a form of mimetic expression, and examine GIF-making, fan meta, and Tumblr tags in my analysis.

In exploring the ways mimetic language functions to express belonging in the community and emotional investment in the fan object, I consider that fans are finding power in emotional expression and resisting ‘fangirl as pathology’ by recuperating fangirl as a positive, even feminist act.
“My anaconda feminism: Nicki Minaj, consumption and Twitter/Instagram (re)production”
Aria Halliday (Purdue University, USA)

This paper is a response to social media’s ability to reproduce through retweets the miseries inflicted upon Black girls and women (i.e. #bringbackourgirls, #freeMarissaAlexander). Focusing on memes appropriating Nicki Minaj’s “Anaconda” cover and sexual interactions with her Madame Toussad’s wax figure, this paper engages popular culture at the intersections of discourses on black women’s bodies, feminism, sexuality, control, and resistance. Utilizing Ruth Nicole Brown’s feminist vision of Black girlhood in Black Girlhood Celebration (2013) and Pierre Bourdieu’s “symbolic violence”, this paper explores how social media acts as a site of (re)production and consumption, pleasure and misery for Black girls and Black women in the U.S.

“Finnish Girl Power: National versions on a cultural timeline”
Aino Tormulainen (University of Eastern Finland)

In Finland the girl power culture can be found in girl bands, singers and literature as well the female president Tarja Halonen, who became girls’ idol when leading the country (2000-2012). Using a visual timeline I have created of Finnish girl power, I will present images and ideas of national girl power. I will focus how this phenomenon looked like in Finland and what teenage girls thought about it.

During the 1990’s mainstream girl power existed in numerous mediated forms, including in new magazines, TV serials, movies, books, artists, and bands. This media included different representations, from well behaved little girls to tough career women, many of which can be understood as feminist characters. While girl power was an international phenomenon, marketers were able to adapt the idea about strong, active girl heroines and empowered friendship oriented girl groups to ‘real girls’ themselves across varying national contexts. One entire generation has now grown up with these kinds of culture images with slogans like “girls can!” and partial gender equality has already been achieved.

This paper looks at girl power as a social and cultural phenomenon in the Finnish society. Using audiovisual examples, I will present the timeline of girl power through characters and cultural products. Using oral history data collected in memory work group interviews among Finnish women born in the 1980’s, I will give an overview of national cultural representations and experiences about girl power.
Intergenerational Politics

“I hated her, she loved her! Barbie in intergenerational Puerto Rican girlhoods and familial relationships”
Emily Agüilo-Pérez (Pennsylvania State University)

While Barbie doll’s creation emerged from a mother’s desire to provide more options for her daughter, the relationship between mothers and Barbie has often been tumultuous and complicated – with some mothers rejecting the doll (Rakow and Rakow, 1999; Quindlen, 1999) and others embracing it (McDonough, 1999).

Parents’ perceptions of Barbie and their involvement in their children’s play is a recurring theme in the vast literature about Barbie (McDonough, 1999; Rand, 1995; Reid-Walsh & Mitchell, 2000). In many ways Barbie contributes to women’s identities and how they continue to view the doll, either in relation to their own childhood experiences and/or as adults who may not want to promote Barbie play among their own offspring. Yet, there is a void in the scholarship about the experiences among Latina females, specifically in a U.S. colonial territory such as Puerto Rico.

Drawing from interviews with females between the ages of six and 65, this paper examines familial female relationships in the context of Puerto Rican girlhoods. The paper presents an analysis of conversations between mothers and daughters about their decisions to play with Barbie or not. It pays particular attention to the influence of Barbie’s race and her status as an American icon (a symbol of the colonizer) in the participants’ decision-making process. The analysis is informed by data collected as part of an ongoing research project in which the author explores the interactions and experiences with Barbie of a group of multigenerational Puerto Rican females and how those interactions with Barbie, or lack of them, contribute to their identities.

“Branding relations: Mother daughter discourse on beauty and body in an Israeli campaign by Dove”
Sigal Barack Brandes (University of Tel Aviv, Israel) and Einat Lachover (SAPIR Academic College, Israel)

In March 2013 Unilever Israel, owner of the Dove brand, launched a new campaign calling for a dialogue between mothers and their adolescent daughters around the issue of self-esteem and body image. The Israeli campaign was part of the global “Campaign for Real Beauty” launched by Unilever in 2004. The Israeli campaign was run primarily on two Internet platforms that appeal to women, and was based mainly on the talk of “ordinary” mothers and daughters on online videos and blogs – ostensibly personal yet produced by advertisers. Interestingly, the campaign is not centered on the individual female consumer but rather the reciprocal mother-daughter relationship, which is viewed as a useful context in which to build up daughters’ self-esteem and positive body image. The very fact that the campaign sought out mothers rather than any other adults in girls’ lives, and particularly not their fathers, reflects the cultural view that the mother-daughter relationship in our gendered society is close and complex and is a basis of power.
Based on discourse analysis and critical examination of the consumerist and postfeminist context in which the campaign was produced, this paper explores how the mother-daughter relationship suggests a new sphere for processes of branding. The paper proposes that the Dove campaign demonstrates how human relations can be mobilized in order to provide brands with meaning.

“The (Un-) Making of a feminist cool girl: A cross-generational dialogue”
Annalie Branstrom-Ohman (Umeå University, Sweden) and Amanda Brohman

In the so called “Cool Girl Monologue” in Gillian Flynn’s novel Gone Girl, the embedded ambivalence in girlhood and young womanhood is addressed in numerous ways. The tension between becoming who you really are and fitting into society's patriarchal expectations and ideals for what a girl should and should not be – and behave. In our presentation we will perform a cross-generational dialogue between a mother and her daughter. The dialogue will range from the status of the “cool girl” and other girls in feminism, to gender research and contemporary culture – with examples, foremost, from our own lived experiences as well as from fashion and literature.

Our perspectives both differ and overlap in various aspects. How is the perspective of the daughter affected by a transition from girlhood to womanhood whilst being in the fashion industry? How is the perspective of the mother affected by the fact that she is also a professor in gender studies?

Relevant questions might be: Who is “the girl” in girlhood studies, and how does she relate to the actual life of the actual girl? How do theories of the gendered body and embodiment of gender relate to recent debates of slim culture, body shaming etc.? Is there such a thing as a feminist “style” of eating, dressing and/or ideal for body and behaviour? How do you fit into your own skin without losing your mind?

CONFERENCE DINNER: 6:30PM
“Bratz, BFFs, Mermaids and Mean Girls: Female friendship and ‘authentic’ neoliberal selfhood in tween popular culture”
Melanie Kennedy (University of Leicester)

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw a dramatic expansion of media texts aimed at tweens, following a heightened visibility of girls more broadly within popular culture since the mid-1990s, and continuing anxieties about girlhood in this intensely mediated environment. The discursively constructed tween is defined by her transitional status – her ‘becoming’ – and the narratives and representations of tween popular culture (many of which centre on same-sex friendship) can be seen to provide a pedagogic function for the tween subject in her development of an ‘appropriately’ feminine identity. This paper explores the large space made available for the emphasis on same-sex friendships across tween popular culture, to critique the scripts of femininity within a range of texts including bratz (2007), Aquamarine (2006), The Clique (2008) and Wild Child (2008). In doing so, the paper reveals that for tweenhood, ‘appropriate’ becoming is predicated on revealing and maintaining an ‘authentic’ self, and the girl’s role as a friend is central to the development and maintenance of an authentic, feminine self. This paper argues that according to tween narratives of same-sex friendship, authenticity is located in the girl’s role as ‘true’ friend, in the care and value placed upon her emotional ties with other girl friends; as such it argues that these texts of tween popular culture work ideologically and pedagogically, requiring the tween to be the ideal self-surveilling, transforming subject of neoliberalism in the development of an ‘appropriately’ feminine identity and role as friend whilst remaining ‘authentic’ in each.

“Girling the second wave: Authorship, girlfriendship and collaborative text(iles) in the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants”
Marie-Alix Thouaille (University of East Anglia)

This paper examines the ways in which the girl-centred film The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants (2005) invokes, ‘girls’, and finally ‘posts’, the interconnected feminist tropes of collaborative crafts, Consciousness Raising, and sisterhood. In the film, the collaborative textile text, a pair of jeans which fits each of the four girl protagonists perfectly, and is eventually decorated with mementoes of their individual adventures, acts as the signifier of girly sociality while the girls are geographically apart. Travelling Pants initially seems to offer productive, local moments of resistance to postfeminist girlhood, notably depicting Tibby (Amber Tamblyn) developing a queer-coded friendship, or celebrating Carmen’s (America Ferrera) mixed race heritage.
However, as the jeans are mailed to each of the ‘sisters’ in turn during their hour of need, they repeatedly intervene as a deus ex machina, magically resolving conflicts—but only for the benefit of the heteronormative ‘can do’ girl (Harris, 2004). In the end, Travelling Pants evacuates the oppositional potential of collaborative sisterly crafts, privileging the regulatory ‘girlfriend gaze’, and resulting in compliant, neoliberal selves. Instead of offering an inclusive and culturally diverse space of resistance to heteropatriarchy, sisterhood here becomes its dedicated enforcer, teaching its members to be good daughters, good girlfriends, and good sisters. In a striking postmodern irony, the very vehicle that was supposed to bring about the feminist revolution, sisterhood, dismantles itself and its founding politics, leaving a resolutely postfeminist empty signifier: the girly sisterhood.

“Searching for sisterly solidarity: Portrayals of girl friendship in contemporary British cinema”
Sarah Hill (University of East Anglia)

This paper examines depictions of teenage girls’ friendships in contemporary British cinema, using Lindy Heymann’s 2008 film Kicks as a case study. Kicks’ study of the friendship between two teenage girls is set in contemporary Liverpool against the backdrop of UK celebrity culture, specifically ‘WAG’ culture. The film depicts being a wife or girlfriend (WAG) of a famous footballer as a popular aspiration for young girls. Anita Harris deems the celebrity lifestyle as ‘exemplar of the can-do [girl] experience’ (2004: 130), and WAG culture in particular showcases how the ‘ordinary’ girl is able to work on herself as a celebrity project and gain some kind of public profile in the process (ibid: 127). Kicks’ portrayal of girlhood presents a celebrity-obsessed, individualistic, every-girl-for-herself world, where girls strive for exclusive ‘hypervisibility’ (Winch, 2013: 2). Therefore, in its exploration of the film’s representation of teenage girl friendship, this paper questions the extent to which the friendship depicted is presented as strategic with the aim of providing the characters with ‘hypervisibility’ (ibid.). In addition, through examining notions of power between the characters, this paper will explore how Kicks presents girl friendship as contributing to the formation of the characters’ self-identity. It will argue that, ultimately, this intense friendship fails to provide the characters with the much sought-after hypervisibility. This is largely due to the film’s critique of postfeminist culture, and the way in which the film perpetuates many of the anxieties and ‘postfeminist panics’ (Ringrose, 2013) that surround contemporary girlhood.

Inside Out?
Sexual/Digital Revolution and the Teenager

“Making the can-do girl or desperately searching for the subject of feminist sex research”
Rachel Thomson (University of Sussex)

As part of a revisiting study of a landmark feminist study of youthful sexualities (the Women Risk and Aids project 1988-1990) I consider the ways in which feminist theories and activism of the 1980’s shaped a privileged sexual subject characterised by intergenerational rupture, voice and mobile forms of agency. I show how this subject was found/ produced in empirical research and taken up in health education narratives – contrasting her with more challenging figures of
passivity and compromise that haunted data and theory. The paper seeks to historicise the practice of social research, revealing how sociological enquiries (however radical/critical) are necessarily implicated in wider cultural formations, making sense of the paradoxical ways in which the teenage girl is (re)made as an agent of both change and continuity, an argument with relevance for contemporary debates about the sexualisation of girls.

“Citizen girls and sexual knowledge in Thatcher’s Britain”
Lucy Robinson (University of Sussex)

The 1980s saw well documented debates over the role and suitability of girls’ magazines as a source of sexual knowledge. From DIY interventions like Shocking Pink to mass market success stories Just Seventeen, girls’ exchange of sexual knowledge was played out in public. This paper explores the intersections between anxieties around girls’ sexual knowledge and their role as citizens. Magazines were just one media space where these debates took place. Pragmatism and prurience combined as there were numerous moves to incorporate young women as the producers of sexual expertise; youth work projects, community media projects and child-centred formal education all provided spaces for girls to seemingly set the agenda.

This paper will focus on three child-centred media projects: Grange Hill (BBC1, 1978-2008), Why Don’t You (BBC1, 1973-1995) and Channel 4’s election coverage for 1987 (Face The Kids, Oitmoor Productions). In each young people were represented as the key to wider social issues and given positions in the production process. They were there at every point in the construction of historical meaning: production, form and content, and reception, constructing a model youth citizen in the process. This paper will evaluate the possibilities of girls’ role as citizen reporters of their own experiences in these media spaces.

“Surviving sex: From Molly Ringwald to Katniss and The Fault in Our Stars”
Pamela Thurschwell (University of Sussex)

In John Hughes’s iconic 1985 hit, The Breakfast Club there is a painful scene in which the popular girl, Claire, played by Molly Ringwald, is put on the spot about whether or not she is still a virgin. The scene makes for uncomfortable viewing and reveals the sexual double standards in place for the adolescent girl: “Well, if you say you haven’t...you’re a prude. If you say you have...you’re a slut!” In this paper I contrast this scene with two contemporary popular representations of teenage girls’ sexual choices: Suzanne Collins’s Hunger Games series and the book and film of John Green’s story of two teenage lovers with terminal cancer, The Fault in Our Stars. My argument contrasts historical moments in which representations of adolescence centre on sexual choice, and coercion (in the popular imagination) and what it might mean about our contemporary situation that so many representations of adolescent girls portray their sexual choices as taking place in the shadow of death or extinction. If sex, for Molly Ringwald in The Breakfast Club, is a traumatic question disturbing the heart of her identity (is she a good girl or a cool girl? Is there any “right” answer to the question “are you a virgin?”), then for Katniss and Hazel in The Fault in Our Stars sexual choice holds a complex relation to questions of individual and species survival, but not, I will argue, to who these heroines feel they are.
“Building the femorabilia special collection”

Nickianne Moody (Liverpool John Moores University)

Comics are a definite indicator of twentieth century British childhood. They are transitional in nature, contested and the response to their narratives can be intensely memorable. In her recent book *Remembered Reading: Memory, Comics and Post-war Constructions of British Girlhood* (2015), Mel Gibson focuses on lived experience. She argues that her methodological approach identifies “the range of texts and reading patterns unaccounted for by academic writing” (2015:135). Her work uses oral history to recover a forgotten form of popular culture particularly relevant to understanding the changing meaning of girlhood to a range of stakeholders during the last century.

The collection of girl’s and women’s magazines and comics held by Liverpool John Moores University has been established to provide texts that will enable scholars to work on the neglected girl reader, re-engage with feminist debate from the 1970s and 80s, reconsider the desire to control young people’s reading in the twentieth century, identify shifts in the narrative representation of girlhood and the complexity of reading, identity and British culture.

The paper will focus on the significance of the collection to the study of girlhood, issues of methodology and the tension between girlhood and adventure. Gibson’s oral history concluded that he relation to the text was just (if not more) important than the content. An oral history project is therefore being designed so that testimony will be accessible alongside the texts. It aims to explore the pivotal role comics held between child and adult life (Gibson, 2015:93) regulating female subjectivity an offering opportunities for resistance to its ideals.

“Archiving Girlhood: Constructing identities and communities through the practice of collecting, cutting and pasting in scrapbooks”

Marlene Mendonca (University of York)

Pinterest, Tumblr, and blogs are sites used by girls to construct identities, and share desires. Although pinning and blogging are usually done in the privacy of one’s own home, the action and intention is to create a public space that allows for larger communities and networks of women and girls to come together and share, exchange and create. Arguably, the participation of these online platforms can be traced to that of early-twentieth-century scrapbooking: the collecting, pasting and sharing of articles from newspapers and magazines, postcards, and photographs that girls and young women identified with. Both blogging and scrapbooking are conceptualized as spaces where the private and public overlap or converge; they disrupt notions of public and private spaces. Digital media platforms and scrapbooks are movements that seek to create archives. Ellen Gruber Garvey suggests that a scrapbook can be defined as a “repertoire: the embodied practices or gestures of cutting, arranging, and pasting materials, and displaying the resulting books to others” (20). Both early twentieth-century scrapbookers, and present day bloggers engage in “performing archivalness,” which Garvey defines as “acts and gestures of preservation to save, organize, and transmit knowledge through a homemade archive” (20).
This paper examines the matinee girl—one of the first visible female fans in American history and a new generation of adolescent girls who purchased cheaper afternoon tickets to Broadway, in New York City, with money they had earned (1880-1910)—and the practice of scrapbooking, a popular platform used by matinee girls to create a sub-culture and a new identity of girlhood. Today, scrapbooks are the only tangible evidence that exists of matinee girls during this period and are windows into their lives, thoughts and desires. These handmade artifacts reveal the multifarious passion and habits of adolescent girls and provides crucial information, not only about the voices of these girls but about gender, friendships, and the construction of female identity.

**Future wives and mothers: The domestic sphere in teenage girls’ magazines of the 1970s and 80s**

Joanne Knowles (Liverpool John Moores University)

Angela McRobbie’s seminal work on the girls’ magazine *Jackie* (1978) finds that the defining habitat for girls in the 1970s is the family home, and that the domestic environment is one girls must learn to master for the future that *Jackie* predicates for them as wives and mothers; ‘Beauty know how seeps into the larger body of domestic knowledge to be amassed alongside tips in childcare, cookery and ‘love’. (1978: 42) Much more attention has been paid, since the dissemination of McRobbie’s original research, to the beauty and romance aspects of girls’ magazines like *Jackie* than to this apparent cornerstone of knowledge for young women, domestic knowledge and skills. This paper would use a selection of 1970s and 1980s magazines from the Femorabilia archives of twentieth-century girls’ and women’s magazines, held at Liverpool John Moores University, to explore some of the propositions about of the early work by McRobbie and others about the significance of domesticity in the period’s popular cultural texts for girls. The paper will examine the presence of domestic tasks, advice and representations of girls in the domestic environment to explore the extent to which McRobbie’s argument – itself based initially on textual analysis – is borne out by larger-scale textual investigation, and what ideologies of the domestic and its role in the lives of girls growing up in the late 1970s and early 1980s can be discerned. Magazines analysed will include 19, *Honey*, and, of course, *Jackie*.

**Girl Museum**

Katie Weidmann (Social Media Manager, Girl Museum) and Sarah Jackson (Communications Manager, Girl Museum)

Girl Museum is a unique and positive platform for girls on the Internet and beyond. We are an online, collaborative museum—the first in the world dedicated to celebrating girlhood across time and space. Over the past six years Girl museum has been pushing boundaries; both in concept and content. We have challenged the foundations of museumhood with our virtual, non-collecting mission to create our own girl-centered art and social history museological practice.

Our exhibitions all investigate and represent girls, girl culture and girlhood making us a distinct and vibrant institution. We have produced 17 original and interdisciplinary exhibitions on a wide range of subjects, a podcast series with over 36 episodes, five community engagement projects and trained dozens of interns, many of whom have going on to dream jobs in their fields. This is how we measure success—having an impact on the lives of girls we work for and with.

For our presentation, we would like to give a short overview of what we do, including the goals
set by our founding mission and the challenges of being girl-positive and girl-focused on the Internet. We will showcase the special nature of our work through several exhibitions representing our four series: Girlhood in Art (art history), the Art of Girlhood (anthropology), Girls in the World (social issues) and GirlSpeak (contributed content). And to round off the talk, we will introduce our upcoming projects with the hopes of getting delegates and the wider community involved.

Victorian Girls and Print Culture

“Girls of today? Debating and defining the girl in late Victorian girls’ magazines”
Beth Rodgers (Aberystwyth University)

This paper will consider the ways in which girlhood was considered as a new category of existence in the late nineteenth century. These “daughters of today”, “juvenile spinsters” and “modern girls”, as the Victorian press variously termed them, occupying a borderland between childhood and womanhood, were seen to be inextricably connected to late-nineteenth-century modernity. These figures were not just a talking point: adolescent girls as a marketable readership were increasingly targeted by new books and magazines in the 1880s and 1890s.

But what are we talking about when we talk about “the girl” in the Victorian period? Scholars of girlhood frequently refer to the contested nature of “the girl” as a term. Using a range of nineteenth-century girls’ magazines, including the Girl’s Own Paper, Girl’s Realm and Atalanta, this paper will examine how girlhood was defined by the Victorians. It will investigate the extent to which age, marital status, educational status and puberty are used to define, characterise and sometimes police who was considered to be and not to be a girl at this period. Can girlhood really be considered a “new category” at this time, as many Victorian commentators claimed, and, if so, to what extent does print culture of the period help us to locate, quantify and account for this newness? Is there evidence of girl readers’ responses to these depictions? In answering these questions, this paper will demonstrate the usefulness of Victorian girls’ magazines as resources for understanding the history of girlhood.

“Charity in girls’ periodicals”
Kristine Moruzi (Deakin University, Australia)

Underpinning discussions of girlhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a Christian ethos that was often used to bolster a feminine ideal of charity. This paper will explore how ideas about girls’ charitable responsibilities shifted in the second half of the nineteenth century. Girls’ magazines in this period reflect an ideal based on a belief that girls and women were inherently better suited to help those in need. Although girls might lack the monetary means by which to make a direct financial contribution, their charitable efforts were directed towards activities that were presumed to help those in need (such as district visiting) or domestic activities (such as sewing) that would either produce goods to help the poor or which could be sold at fundraising bazaars. Using examples a variety of girls’ magazines, including The Monthly Packet (1851-99), The Girl’s Own Paper (1880-1908), and Atalanta
(1887-98), this paper will argue that girls’ charity became less explicitly important as girls were increasingly preoccupied with education and employment, yet it remained an important part of girlhood in this period.

“The bloom on a peach: Acceptable beauty in late-Victorian and Edwardian girls’ print cultures”
Michelle Smith (Deakin University, Australia)

As Sally Mitchell has established, there was a flowering of girls’ culture in late-nineteenth century Britain. In girls’ books and magazines, girlhood came to be understood as a “free space” between childhood and adulthood. Yet, from an adult perspective, this freedom necessitated a high degree of regulation of girls’ interests, behaviours, reading, bodies, and dress. In this paper I consider how affective responses to girls’ appearance in the period influenced beauty advice to girl readers and depictions of the physical appearance of idealised girl protagonists. Magazines and beauty advice manuals aimed at girl readerships provide numerous examples of the ways in which inappropriate attempts to cultivate beauty through artifice, such as cosmetics, could provoke feelings of disgust and anxiety in spectators. These emotional responses, which are intricately connected with expectations of chaste girlhood, drive the promotion of “natural”, unthreatening forms of beauty equated with health. Girls who transgressed expectations of naturalness risked losing the unique charms associated with youth, or “the bloom on a peach”, as the author of The Art of Being Beautiful (1902) put it. This paper examines how the healthful girl’s body is accommodated within a rapidly transforming consumer culture with respect to female beauty. Moreover, it shows how novels such as Juliana Horatia Ewing’s Six to Sixteen (1875), Frances Hodgson Burnett’s The Secret Garden (1912), and magazines including the Girl’s Own Paper and The Young Englishwoman privilege a safe model of girlhood beauty in order to stave off the negative affective potential of female sexuality.

‘The Parish Girl’s Progress: Girlhood and Bildungsromam in Victorian and Neo-Victorian Literature’
Louis Burke (Napier University, Edinburgh)

This paper seeks to uncover to what extent the Victorian literary girl navigated Freud’s stages of infantile sexuality. It asks how neo-Victorianism, in its self-reflexiveness, articulates this process. Puberty is a pivotal moment for the Freudian girl as it determines their gendered identity in readiness for heteronormativity, and the discourses of the Victorians and Freud frame and define childhood as it understood now. But to what extent is this critiqued in literature? In other words: what have neo-Victorian children gleaned from their Victorian predecessors? Does their representation in contemporary literature show development or stasis? This paper will answer these questions by addressing the relationship between psychoanalysis, neo-Victorianism and gender with particular focus on the mimesis of Victorian girlhood in British literature. It will examine how the representations of girls and their bildung amount to a re-imagining of the nineteenth century’s invention of girlhood by interrogating the egalitarian underpinnings of neo-Victorianism. Fitting with neo-Victorianism’s fascination with time, progression and growth as metaphorical and metatextual ideas, this paper will challenge the politics of these ideas, and enquire how this loaded focus on ‘development’ implicates the neo-Victorian novel and pubescent female characters within the genre. It will consider the queerness of Victorian girls (see R. D. S. Jack) with regards to Dickens’s girls, Lewis Carroll and Henry James, fin-de-siècle girls, and girls of Neo-Victorian fiction which has been published in the past twenty years.

10:30AM-10:50AM: Coffee/Tea
SESSION H: 10:45AM-12:20PM

“The persistence of binaries”
Fiona Handyside (University of Exeter)

In this paper, I will discuss the film ‘What Does Girlhood mean to me?’ produced by a group of 10 year 9 girls based at an 11-16 comprehensive school in Exeter. In particular, I will focus on how the film produces a contradictory narrative that both acknowledges girlhood vulnerability and offers a celebratory positive account of girlhood as a time of freedom and possibility. I will discuss the extent to which the film uses formal techniques to perform a self-conscious and knowing narrative of girlhood, perhaps/ probably aimed at an adult audience, which suggests an implicit knowledge of the field of possibility that exists for girls. I will argue that the film thus unconsciously reproduces the pervasive binary model of at-risk and can-do girlhood identified by Anita Harris. I will ask how we might revisit working with girls to try and complicate this persistent account of girlhood feeling, enabling them to tarry with more difficult and contradictory emotions, and how this may also be a desirable intervention in the anxiety narratives generated in policy and popular discourse.

“Finding vocabularies of film-feeling”
Danielle Hipkins (University of Exeter)

This paper will discuss a pilot study carried out with a group of 14-17 year-old girls at a High School in LA. We tested how a dialogic approach to film viewing can form the foundation for a film-making practice to facilitate participants in exploring narratives and images of girlhood they find missing or inadequately available in cinema. In preliminary discussions of clips chosen by both the girls and the researchers, the girls noted a lack of interest in the cinema they were familiar with in what was going on ‘inside the heads’ of girls. They also suggested that often times cinema does not reflect girl friendships or sense of bonding in any positive terms. Though the girls were exposed to ideas of sensory and social aesthetics, during filming the girls were more resistant to exploring how interior states of mind could be visualised as they did not know how to concretely visualise them. Their films explored narratives pertaining to inclusion and friendship — narratives they found more immediate and meaningful against conflict-driven dramas. What vocabularies can be devised for expressing those perspectives and how can we shift the emphasis of the film-making component of the project towards creative, exploratory and experimental modes of storytelling rather than the devising of film forms girls may already be conversant with? Further, how can we develop narratives that work with girls’ everyday lives and experiences that may not necessarily involve dramatic conflicts? What methodologies can be used for this while training girls in filmmaking?

“Constructing girlhood in and on film”
Alexandra Allan (University of Exeter)

‘Kids with cameras’, as Mitchell (2011:30) puts it, have come to occupy a central place in
collaborative research focusing on young people’s cultural worlds. A similar statement could also be made about the number of young women coming to use video cameras in collaborative research which focuses on gendered subjectivity and constitutions of girlhood. Yet, there is a paucity of methodological literature on these practices. In some instances this may just be due to a fragmentation in the presentation of research – the fact that findings and methodology are not always published in the same outputs. But in other cases there is a lack of transparency; researchers are sparse with details about their visual methods and how these have been put to work (Allan and Tinkler 2015). This paper seeks to explore the use of film methods in two research projects: one which was undertaken with young woman attending an elite educational institution, and the other, the pilot study which is the main focus of this panel of presentations. The paper will outline and examine the processes that were undertaken in these research projects – the ways in which the films were produced; how this was examined in relation to the young women’s consumption of (wider) film; and how audiences were utilised as part of the research process. The paper will also explore how the ‘visual’ was utilised in these projects. For this is as an element which is assumed to be central to film research, but which has sometimes been sidelined in practice.

“Between a rock and a hard place: Poverty subcultures and girlhood in contemporary American...”
Desiree deJesus (Concordia University)

This paper focuses on a spate of coming-of-age films featuring female protagonists from regional poverty subcultures that has emerged recently within American independent cinema. At first glance, the critically-acclaimed films Precious: Based on the Novel “Push” by Sapphire (2009), Winter’s Bone (2010), and Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012) appear to collectively reflect anxieties about the demise of American exceptionalism. However, upon closer inspection, the representations of marginalized girlhood in these prized national objects can be seen to expand and problematize understandings of American identity. By drawing on Toni Morrison’s (1992) study of the significant role the Africanist persona played in the formation of the American cultural imaginary and national project, this paper will demonstrate how the films’ representational strategies complicate interconnected ideas about home and identity. This paper will therefore argue that the films construct these girls as simultaneously foreign and familiar, and that the specificity of the female protagonists’ ethnoracial positions prompt reflection on the racialization and gendered nature of poverty within the U.S. context.
“Machines for changing identity: The negotiation of girlhoods in Celine Sciamma’s Cinema...”
Julia Dobson (University of Sheffield)

Celine Sciamma is a key figure in contemporary French cinema – Waterlilies (Naissance des pieuvres), 2007, Tomboy 2011, Girlhood (Bande de filles) 2014) constitute one of the most important explorations of constructions of girlhood in contemporary visual culture. Sciamma’s films present engaging and accessible narratives which reveal and contest the complex constellations and social discourses of gender performance - yet these strong universal stories are accompanied by reconfiguring of the building blocks of film language – position of the gaze, camera movement, use of sound and texture – to construct new representations of the place and spaces of girlhood. One of the constitutive features of constructions of girlhood is inherently paradoxical – it is presented as a homogenous, over-determined cultural site yet also a space of transition (preparation for an equally homogenized womanhood), increased vulnerability and malleability. This paper will focus on the construction of agency in Sciamma’s cinema, focusing mainly on her latest film Girlhood and its complex interventions in constructions of agency, identity and the universal across contemporary discourses of gender and race. The French title ‘Bande de filles’ suggests the collective identity of a ‘girl gang’ thus, ‘Girlhood’ also suggests the ‘hood of the Parisian outer-city in which the film is set. Girlhood signals the classical narratives of the coming of age film such as friendship breakdown, first love and loss of virginity but recasts these as challenges to develop solidarity and agility.

Sciamma describes her films as ‘machines for changing identity’ and this paper will explore and identify the main features of these machines.

“Encountering girls: The figure of the girl in contemporary moving-image art practices”
Elspeth Mitchell (University of Leeds)

Over the past twenty years there has been a shift in the practices of artists working in audio-visual mediums that has seen the figure of the girl, or representations of girlhood, emerge as a central concern. This paper explores the figure of the girl in moving-image art practices, framed by encounters with the girl in literature, psychoanalysis and philosophy, as a way to expand and refine our understanding of the critical questions of screening sexuality and subjectivity. The work of Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Chantal Akerman, Sadie Benning and Tracey Moffatt for example can provide instances where the girl, or the relationship between girls, provides a site for the feminist interrogation of sexuality, subjectivity and the audio-visual. This paper addresses the way contemporary moving-image art practices concerned with girlhood put pressure on the codes of representation and modes of encounter in film, video and audio-visual installation. It examines the way in which they might engender us to be receptive to other modes of looking, knowing or desiring; which speak to the specificities of girlhood. These questions will be opened out to distinguish some of the debates at stake in this intersection of feminist theory, sexual difference, contemporary moving image practices and the undecidable figure of the girl.
“Big cities, small towns, and virtual spaces: Social media experiences of rural and urban girls”
Jacquelyn Burkell (University of Western Ontario, Canada)

This paper explores intersecting differences between girls who live in cities and girls who live in rural areas. Using the eGirls data, this paper compares and contrast urban and rural girls’ experiences on social media. The commonalities were striking. Although rural girls were very aware of their “rural-ness” (unlike urban girls who never defined themselves as city girls) and felt that city girls were much more successful at “amping up” their virtual appearance through the use of makeup and Photoshop, the experiences of both groups of girls were very similar. Both used social media to reinforce their real world connections to people who lived in their communities, and to keep in touch with family and friends who lived far away; and both reported a similar level of pressure to conform to the expectations of peers. However, rural girls were more likely to take online conflict offline, and attempt to resolve issues face-to-face. This paper suggests that this may be linked to the fact that their real-world social circle was more limited in size and space, and also more inter-connected (“Everyone knows everyone”); this amplifies the potentially destructive impact of ongoing conflict and increases the need to intervene face-to-face to repair breaches in relationships. Again, this illustrates the complexities of online life and the importance of accounting for the diverse constraints that girls experience because they are situated differently.

“Pretty and just a little but sexy, I guess: Publicity, privacy and the pressure to perform ‘appropriate’ femininity on social media”
Valerie Steeves (University of Ottawa, Canada)

This paper addresses the presence and impact of the gendered gaze online, using the data from The eGirls Project to test the claim that access to communications technology would blur the line between the privacy of the bedroom (a space where it had been thought that girls could privately test the boundaries of media representations of femininity) and public spaces by affording publicity to transgressive performances of gender. This analysis reveals a complex and contradictory set of affordances and constraints. Although the publicity enjoyed on social media made it easier for eGirls participants to cultivate professional relationships with potential clients and employers, the easy slide between private experimentation and public performance opened them up to harsh judgment, especially from peers, if they stepped outside the narrow confines of a highly stylized and stereotypical performance of femininity. The paper concludes that resistive and potentially emancipatory identity experimentation is more likely to occur if the privacy of the virtual bedroom is protected from commercial interests that seek to replicate the kinds of stereotypes that constrain girls’ enjoyment of the public sphere, and if girls are given more control over the virtual traces they leave in the public sphere.
“I want my Internet! Young women on the politics of usage-based billing”
Leslie Shade (University of Toronto, Canada)

This paper considers young women’s digital policy activism through a case study of advocacy against usage-based billing (UBB). It examines how young women engaged with OpenMedia.ca’s Stop the Meter campaign through the creation of YouTube videos. In their accounts of their internet use, their knowledge of UBB, and the potential impact of UBB on their continued internet use, young women’s vlogs addressed several concerns: the personal economic impact of not being able to use the internet to its full potential; the social ramifications of not being online; and the consequences for Canadian identity and citizenship in having haphazard, non-robust and expensive internet connections. The campaign illustrates the vibrancy of citizen-generated activism to effectuate the public interest in telecom policy, and as well, the surprising viral nature of the campaign that catalyzed many young women to take to YouTube and speak out about the importance of the internet in their everyday lives. This example of youth digital activism is situated within a model of digital policy literacy, which emphasizes how the effective use of digital media involves learning and negotiating the policy processes, political economic parameters, and infrastructural affordances that shape information and communication technologies.

“What policymakers should know: Perspectives from the eGirls project”
Jane Bailey (University of Ottawa)

Bailey’s paper addresses the complexities of online/offline life, articulating an empathetic description of eGirls’s experiences and a rich vision of their needs as eCitizens. Drawing on the eGirls data, she highlights the gap between the problems that policymakers focus on and the problems that girls would like to see addressed. She then gives voice to the messages that our participants expressly wished to pass on to policymakers. First and foremost, our participants wanted policymakers to know that the online environment can be particularly hard for girls because the publicity it enables — which is a large part of the benefit — also creates a “powder keg” where one mis-step can permanently damage their reputations. They accordingly called upon policymakers to address the ways that online architectures open them up to judgment and shaming if they fail to perform a narrow, highly stereotypical type of “girl”. To get the policy response right, policymakers must stop focusing solely on criminal responses that typically make girls responsible for their own safety. Instead, they should limit the ways in which corporations invade girls’ online privacy for profit, and regulate media representations that reinforce stereotypes and set girls up for conflict.

LUNCH: 12:20PM-1:30PM
SESSION I: 1:30PM-3PM

“Oppositional girlhoods and the challenge of relational politics”
Emily Bent (Pace University, New York City) and Heather Switzer (Arizona State University)

This paper attends to the transnational as a defining axis of 21st century girlhoods; we discuss contemporary girlhood as a globalized phenomenon constituted within neoliberal postfeminist politics and consider the political implications of girls’ increasing visibility as the ‘saviors of humanity.’ Over the last five years, scholars from a wide variety of disciplines have problematized the discourse of “adolescent female exceptionalism” (Switzer 2013) popularized by Nike Foundation’s Girl Effect. Arriving at similar conclusions, these scholars, to varying degrees, all point to the artificial neocolonial divisions between “the West” and “the rest” of the world animated by the ‘invest in girls’ logic. Our synthetic review of this disparate girl effects scholarship, foregrounds the concept of “oppositional girlhoods” (Bent 2013) as the primary framework for imagining girlhood in a global context to which scholars call critical attention. We go further to suggest that this oppositional framework assumes reductive, apolitical, and ahistorical claims of divergence between girlhoods in the global north and global south “with highly unequal effects” (Gonick et al. 2009, 3). Drawing from our research with girls in Sub-Saharan Africa and North America, we aim conversely to theorize the possibilities of building global girlhood solidarity in accordance with girls’ relational (rather than oppositional) positioning. Our project relies on elements of transnational feminist theory with girls’ testimonials to demonstrate how relational politics might offer a way out of the oppositional girlhoods bind, authorizing new understandings of global girlhoods and furthering broad appreciation for “how girls’ lives matter” (Lipkin 2009,199).

‘Writing Myself Alive: Cultural Production and Representation for the Global Girl in Trenton, New Jersey and East Africa’
Crystal Leigh Endsley (John Jay College of Criminal Justice)

What happens when girls from an urban US city and girls from rural East Africa connect through poetry and photography? In this presentation I consider concepts of social mobility and arts as activism in the lives of girls from Zanzibar and New Jersey who participated in similar arts workshops hosted in their home communities. These girls exchanged their artwork at the conclusion of the workshops and I suggest that developing skills in these arts practices enrich girls’ ability to access local policy, thus enacting social change. The local contexts of both workshops, each with rich feminist arts traditions of their own, also position these girls to address specific social issues that seem to parallel those of their global counterparts. This project debuted last year and aims to directly engage girls across the globe with governmental gender policies through interactive, imaginative writing and visual art workshops. Essential dialogues between girls and about girls, focused on the parallels between the lives of girls across the world, rural and urban, bring personal stories into focus. In this presentation, I explore the possibilities and the limits of this project, and call into question concepts of “girl power” and the hierarchies that structure the consumption of art and media produced through and represented by the bodies and words of global girls.
“Constraining and enabling discourses of girlhood and schooling in Cambodia”
Tracy Rogers (University of Otago, New Zealand)

Cambodia has made substantial gains in the education sector over the last two decades, but there are still significant gaps in gender equality at the secondary and tertiary levels. The global call for girls’ education has begun to produce changes on the ground in Cambodia, but deficit discourses regarding girls’ educational worth still prevail in many rural and remote areas. These gendered discourses are often further exacerbated by the effects of poverty and the high opportunity costs associated with sending girls to school. There are however, also competing discourses of girlhood that reflect the importance of educating girls. This presentation draws on interviews and individual creative projects conducted with 42 high school girls and 23 female tertiary students in Cambodia as part of an ongoing doctoral study. I begin by considering how the girls’ and young women’s talk revealed multiple discourses of girlhood, and the connections between these and their lived experiences. Specifically, I highlight how the interviews and creative projects revealed the participants’ negotiation of both constraining and enabling discourses of girlhood and schooling. The girls and young women positioned themselves as resistant and subjected to powerful gendered discourses. I conclude by highlighting the factors that the girls and young women identified as supporting them to remain in school.
“Toward a theory of transgender girlhoods…”
Rachel Reinke (Arizona State University)

The real me is happy and proud to be who I am, and I’m just having fun being one of the girls.” Such a statement would not be considered noteworthy in an advertisement for a popular line of skin care products geared toward girls, were it not coming from Jazz Jennings. Arguably the most recognizable young transgender person in the U.S. today, Jazz has appeared in countless media outlets, most recently as the star of her own TLC reality series. Subsequently, she has become the face of Clean & Clear’s #SeeTheRealMe advertising campaign. Throughout these and many other representations, Jazz identifies as a transgender girl, a subjectivity that girlhood studies that has heretofore left unexamined.

Drawing on analyses of the limited subject positions on offer for girls in late modernity, who, as Anita Harris argues, are positioned as “ideal consumer citizens,” a close reading of the mediated representations of Jazz in the #SeeTheRealMe campaign reveals how “girlhood” continues to be a complex category of analysis. Specifically, what does it mean when transgender subjectivities are enveloped into such neoliberal representations of (consumer) girlhood? Further analyzing these representations through a critical transgender studies lens, we can begin to see the transgender girl subjectivity as a way to envision girlhood(s) that both draw on and resist, normatively gendered subject positions. These close readings open important spaces wherein to question what theories of transgender girlhood might look like—as well as how this subjectivity is becoming a commodified identity category.

“Re/Constructing girlhood: Transgender girls in girls studies”
Melinda Luisa de Jesús (California College of the Arts)

Since 2008 I’ve taught GIRL CULTURE at California College of the Arts, a private 4-year art/design college in the San Francisco Bay Area. In this time I've witnessed my students' identification as, interest in, and knowledge about transgender develop exponentially. This generation expects to see trans issues explored in all areas of the curriculum, and are dismayed that girls' studies materials (for example, Eline Lipkin's Girls' Studies) do not explicitly address the lives of transgender girls.

Simultaneously, as an instructor, I've had to confront my own cisgenderism in my own construction of girls' studies syllabi, but have also been hampered in my teaching by the glaring lack of available materials to use in teaching about trans girls (example #2: my spring 2015 email to the IGSA list asking for transgender girls' resources and materials garnered just one response!). Students frustrated with girls' studies ignoring transgender girls have developed final projects that explore this omission and how it impedes girls' studies growth as a truly liberatory space.
This presentation asks: - how are we addressing cisgenderism in girls' studies? - why the resistance to including transgender girls in girls' studies? - how will including transgender girls' lives transform our conceptions of the field? - how can we make girls' studies more responsible to transgender girls and to diversity in general?
I will also share examples of recent student work on transgender in girls' studies

Violence and Justice in the Lives of Girls

“Looking for Ashley: Re-reading what the Smith case reveals about governance of girls”
Rebecca Bromwich (Canadian Bar Association, Canada):

Ashley Smith was a Canadian girl who died in prison at age 19 in 2007. She was first incarcerated at age 14, convicted for hundreds of disciplinary infractions while in custody, and held in solitary confinement for years on end. An inquest jury took an unprecedented measure in determining her death to be a homicide. The first recommendation of the 104 recommendations made by the jury in the December 2013 inquest into her death was that her death be used as a “case study.” But of what is her death a case? I propose to present a discussion of representative figures of Ashley Smith as “girl” revealed by my critical discourse analysis of texts that together constitute the Smith case as a matter of legality and public-sense making. This presentation is based on my PhD dissertation, which looks at a range of figures of the girl that emerge in the Smith case. My argument is that Ashley Smith’s death is not an anomalous event but rather a “case” of routine processes at work in the government of adolescent girls.

“Failing to self-protect: Responsibilisation for risk in child protection practice with sexually abused teenage girls”
Rosemary Carlton (Universite de Montreal, Canada)

The body of Tina Fontaine, an Aboriginal teenager who had been residing in the care of child protection, was found in Winnipeg’s Red River on August 17th, 2014. Sgt. O’Donovan, speaking with reporters following the tragic discovery, painted a touching portrait of her vulnerability. Underlying his words, however, was a contradictory message of individual responsibility that cast Tina as having failed to protect herself from danger. Such coinciding yet conflicting views of girls’ vulnerability and responsibilisation around risk are the focus of my presentation.

This presentation draws from a qualitative study on sexually abused teenage girls’ involvement with child protection – Canada’s state apparatus mandated to protect children from abuse or neglect. Professional practice in this area centres on identifying and managing risk. I will suggest that practice with sexually abused teenage girls is shaped by neoliberal, post-feminist attitudes wherein girls are understood as at-risk while simultaneously made responsible for self-protection. They are encouraged and expected to act as rational, autonomous beings capable of recognizing and avoiding those potential perils along their trajectory towards independent womanhood. Notably, further experiences of risk are wont to be attributed to individual failures irrespective of girls’ often complex and disadvantaged circumstances.
“The young woman as writer in HBO’s Girls”
Maša Grdešić (University of Zagreb)

HBO’s series Girls has been rightly criticized for its lack of diversity, but also praised as quality TV that portrays young women as complex characters, thus participating in contemporary debates on feminism and popular culture (Fuller and Driscoll). In this paper I would like to analyze the ways in which this participation is formally realized through frequent use of metatextual commentary in the show, focusing specifically on the image of Hannah as a writer. The series utilizes Hannah’s profession to anticipate and respond to some of the criticism aimed at the show, but also to address crucial questions concerning Hannah’s art and, more generally, art made by young women: the relation between reality and fiction, autobiography and authenticity, triviality and literary merit. Hannah’s writing is regularly judged as “whiny”, self-obsessed, self-indulgent, too emotional and TMI – complaints heard significantly more often about fiction by women, especially young women and girls. Even Hannah’s fellow students are unable to view her work as fiction, judging it as trivial because her stories focus on intimacy and sex, at the same time ascribing literary merit to "some stories about blowjobs", mostly those written by modernist male authors. In this way Girls represent some of the central preoccupations of feminist literary criticism: when male authors write about intimacy, as Kate Zambreno convincingly argues in Heroines, their work is read as fiction and taken seriously, while similar stories written by girls and women are regularly perceived as autobiographical and discarded as trivial and lacking artistic merit.

Late Girlhood in Jennifer Egan’s Invisible Circus, Look at Me, and A Visit from the Goon Squad
Rachael McLennan (University of East Anglia)

It is a critical commonplace to observe that time and identity are central concerns in Jennifer Egan’s fiction. However, the ways in which these themes are explored via Egan’s depictions of age and ageing have received less attention. This paper argues that Egan’s fictions display a preoccupation with girls and girlhood which can be read productively alongside Leerom Medovoi’s suggestion that ‘In representing our temporality, […] categories of age reference how we appear to move through time.’ This paper focuses on Egan’s depictions of female adolescence in Invisible Circus (1995), Look at Me (2001), and A Visit from the Goon Squad (2010). It will suggest that Egan’s depictions of girls both registers and resists a sense of contemporary (late twentieth and early twenty-first century) American and Western cultures as marked by ‘lateness’. This notion of ‘lateness’ is indebted to Peter Boxall’s notion of the contemporary moment as marked by ‘cultural agedness’, a formulation in turn influenced by Edward Said’s notion of ‘late style.’ This paper will argue that Egan's depictions of girlhood function to register, critique and counter that sense of ‘cultural agedness’ in two important ways; via a focus on female adolescents and on the relationship between their older and younger selves. The focus on girls and girlhood is central to the ways in which Egan’s work sits
uncomfortably in relation to the models of ageing and male authorship considered by Boxall and Said, while the focus on the relationship between older and younger selves enables consideration of Medovoi’s claim, above. In their focus on forms of modernity ‘after postmodernism’, Egan’s literary representations of female adolescence constitute an important contribution to understandings of girlhood in twenty-first century American culture.

“The vanishing girl in youth literature: The case of Caroline Lawrence’s Roman mysteries”

**Claudia Nelson and Anne Morey** (Texas A&M University)

“Girls’ studies” presumes that studying “girls” is different from studying “boys” or “children.” As recent critics of adolescent literature have observed, however, contemporary dystopian fantasies in particular often take a contrary tack by featuring heroines who, like Suzanne Collins’s Katniss Everdeen or Veronica Roth’s Tris Prior, seem designed to illustrate that the chief gender difference between the girl protagonist and her male romantic interest is that she is more masculine than he.

Less attention has been paid to representations of girlhood in non-dystopian texts for tween readers. Our paper seeks to address that gap by examining girlhood in Caroline Lawrence's popular Roman Mysteries series (21 vols., 2001-10). Lawrence employs a corporate protagonist, two girls and two boys who solve mysteries under the leadership of one of the girls, Flavia Gemina. We argue that the series imagines Flavia’s (fluctuating) agency as dependent upon her ability to escape the vision of girlhood embraced by her society, a vision more consistently imposed upon her male foils, the mute Lupus and the disempowered Jewish-Christian Jonathan.

Catherine Driscoll notes that contemporary girls’ studies “begins with a set of publications focused on the problem of locating or understanding girls’ agency” (“Girls Today” 21); in their introduction to a special issue of *Girlhood Studies* on “What Comes After Girl Power?”, Marjina Gonick and her coeditors add that societal definitions of “girls’ gendered agency” are inherently prescriptive, so that “in the 2000s [girls] are now expected/demanded to be fully self-actualized neo-liberal subjects” (6, 2). Using Lawrence’s series as a case study, we suggest that for fictional girls, “gendered agency” may be a contradiction in terms: for girls, agency is often presented as requiring a decoupling from gender.

**3:30PM-4:30PM: Coffee/Tea**
Girls Make Media, Professor Mary Celeste Kearney’s first book, was published in 2006. The first in-depth study of girls’ media production, Girls Make Media traces the rise of girls’ engagement in media-making in the United States since the early 1990s, and analyzes girls’ creative expression and identity exploration through the zines, films, and websites they make. In this keynote address, Professor Kearney looks back on her development of Girls Make Media as well as its contributions to the fields of girls’ media studies and girls’ studies more broadly over the past decade. Her talk will explore how scholarship on girls’ media production and girl media producers has grown, with special consideration of how changes in technology have impacted girls’ practices of creating, distributing, and publicizing their own media. Professor Kearney will also discuss the connections and disconnections between girl media makers and young women pursuing formal training and careers in media production.
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Cover girl: Kesiena Boom is a writer and Sociology student with a focus on lesbian sexuality and Black womanhood. She has written for Autostraddle, Everyday Feminism and DIVA amongst others and was previously a contributing writer at For Harriet. You can follow her on Twitter @KesienaBoom or read her work at kesiernaboom.com