

Valerie Walkerdinen työryhmä lauantaina klo 9-11, Is 17-18

Marjo Laukkanen, University of Lapland

Virtual foreplay?

The Production of Sexuality in Online Conversations of the Girls' Magazine

In my doctoral research I analyse how sexuality is produced in the online community aimed for young girls and supervised by adults. The research material consists of approximately four hundred text-based conversations taking place on the Web site of the most popular Finnish girls' magazine called Demi. In my research I understand gender and sexuality according to the theory of Judith Butler (1990, 1993). Gender is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results. This performativity is not a singular or deliberate act but a reiterative, normative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effect that it names. The analysis is carried out by using three-dimensional framework developed by Norman Fairclough (1995). The first dimension is the analysis of the conversations, the second is the analysis of the situational context of the conversations, and the third is the analysis of sociocultural practice.

In this paper I will concentrate on how the website of Demi is design to address young girls and how the site is supervised. According to statistics given by the magazine approximately 122 000 users visit demi.fi every month, and almost half of them visit the site at least three times a week. The most active users have registered online over a thousand times. There are no statistics available about the ages of the web users, but majority of the readers of the printed Demi are 12–19 years old girls. The purpose of the Web site is to address the same group and to create a place for the readers to interact with each other.

The site is girlish both visually and content-wise. The main colours for example are pink and light blue decorated with pictures of flowers. In online conversations users can discuss about topics that are supposed to interest especially young women: relationships, beauty, music, fashion, school, poetry. Users can also write

their own public diaries, read gossips of celebrities, make personality tests, or look for a pen pal.

The magazine supervises all the content produced by the users. The biggest concern of the magazine is that the site is used by adults for inappropriate sexual intentions. The rules of the site deny all kind of insulting use of language and contents that are considered dangerous for young women. It is for example forbidden to use pornographic language, to describe sexual contacts in detail, or to express homophobic thoughts. However, the principles and the practice seem to differ from each other according to my observations. The research material I have gathered so far contains a great deal of forbidden contents.

Tuula Gordon, University of Helsinki

Girls in Education: Citizenship, Agency and Emotions

Education has been expected to maintain status quo through regulation of citizens, but also to contribute to social change and regulation of citizens. In a collective ethnographic project we have suggested that these contradictions manifest themselves in everyday life at school through tensions between control and agency (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000a). Girls encounter practices whereby their use of space is curtailed, their embodiment is controlled and their voice is often considered inappropriate. Michelle Fine (1992) suggests that silence has its price, Valerie Walkerdine (1997) demonstrates that this price is often paid through anxiety and pain, and Deborah Cameron argues that 'verbal hygiene' is expected of women, and taught to them through interruptions of their talk. Girls enter educational spaces with the expectation of attaining rational individuality as learners. They often bestow great expectations on schooling, and long to attain the position of an abstract independent individual and a citizen. In this process they become, to use Victoria Foster's terms, they enter a 'transpositional' space that frequently reminds them of their gender. Girls encounter limitations when striving for independent individuality and citizenship. The analysis is based on ethnographic data and on transitions interviews.

Seija Keskitalo-Foley, University of Lapland

Tomboy, Mother, Token Other?

Constructing Space in Gendered Education and Labour Market

Gender segregation at work and education is still strong. Many equality programs emphasize crossing gender split in education. Especially girls are encouraged to choose subjects that have traditionally thought to belong to men: mathematics, technical subjects, and science. Subjects that are thought to be masculine are valued more than subjects that traditionally have been connected to women and femininity. How do girls and women construct their spaces in male-dominated programs and labour market? How femininity and masculinity are represented and performed? I will analyse the topic in post-structural context.

My data consists of a biography of Riitta, a middle aged woman who was born in 1950's in rural Finnish North. She went to study male dominated technical subjects and obtained qualification of mechanic. Finding a job was not easy for her; employers laughed at her when she went to ask for a job. Finally she got a job but was not happy with her situation. When she got married and had children she left her work and was a housewife for a long period. Later on, she started studying again in an artisan program where most of the students were young men. I interviewed her at 1995. At that time she was working as an artisan and had applied to a teacher-training program for becoming a teacher of those subjects she had been working as an artisan.

Päivi Naskali, University of Lapland

Personality and performativity in feminist pedagogies

With the theoretical development of feminist research, feminist theories of teaching and pedagogies have become more complicated and diverse. Still, they continue to embrace the idea of "doing things in a different way". Indeed, students expect that feminist teaching is something more than normal university teaching

and hope to experience the teaching “as a practice of freedom” (hooks, 1994). In feminist pedagogies, emotions, caring atmosphere, safety and intimacy are emphasised and hierarchy, power and authority are neglected. In this talk, I will examine the postulation of personality as an essential part of pedagogical relationship. I will make good use of the texts of Valerie Walkerdine (1992), Lauren Berlant (1997) and Susan Heald (1997). I will ask if the demand of personal relationship will strengthen the story of the Enlightenment and lead to “a sentimental mission of feminist teaching”. I will ask if these ideals reproduce the essential description of a female teacher and traditional gendered dichotomies. The idea of performativity offers a reasonable insight for opening up new perspectives on teaching. In this thinking, we no longer ask what a teacher is/should be like. Our interest will not focus on defining the characteristics of a good feminist teacher but on asking how a teacher is represented and through which utterances, gestures and ways to talk is teaching performed. This analysis is needed because technologies of the self in educational institutions encompass not only the identities of students but also the subjectivities of teachers.