



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

Tjejers våld. Våldets tjejer.

En diskursanalytisk studie om våld, kön och femininitet.

Linda Arnell

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Fakultetsopponent: Docent, Linn Sandberg.

Institutionen för kultur och lärande, Södertörns högskola, Stockholm, Sverige.

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Author

Linda Arnell

Title

Violence of girls. Girls of violence: A discursive analytical study of violence, gender and femininity.

Abstract

How is girls' violence constructed and given meaning? In what ways are girls who use violence positioned? This thesis explores how girls' violence is given meaning within different contexts, with a specific focus on the significance given to notions of gender and femininity. It is based on two studies. The first is based on interviews and creative word-based methods with seven girls/young women aged between 18 and 23. These girls all have personal experiences of acting out and/or using violence. The second study is based on focus group interviews with eleven professionals, three men and eight women. These professionals have various experiences of meeting and working with girls and/or violence. The data from both studies is analysed from a discourse psychological perspective, that is based on interwoven ideas from discourse analysis and social psychology.

When the girls and the professionals are talking about girls' violence the results show that girls' violence concern more than the issue of violence as a problematic social action. It also concern notions of gender, femininity and girlhood. In most cases girls' violence is constructed as deviant and different, as an anomaly, which needs to be explained in ways that make it possible to include within understandings of femininity and girlhood. The results also show how notions of gender and femininity are interwoven with class, ethnicity, functionality and ideas about being human. Although a position as a violent girl sometimes appears to be useful or desirable, the girls' and the professionals' talk shows that there is a risk that girls who use violence are constructed not only as different and deviant but as so incomprehensible that they will be constructed as "crazy", or in other words less human, and therefore not possible to help or save. For this reason, it is important to reconsider and deconstruct the current discourses of violence. A wider perspective on girls' violence would make it possible to understand girls who use violence, those who are exposed to girls' violence and the help and support that is available from the welfare system in new ways.

Keywords

Anger, discursive psychology, emancipation, emotional expression, equality, functionality, gender, girls, humanity, psychiatric diagnoses, social work, subjectivity, victimization, vulnerability, Sweden, violence, young women

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