

# **YOUTH RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

**April 2, 2008, 9:00am-6:00pm  
St. John's College, Social Lounge  
University of British Columbia**



**Organized by the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education  
and co-sponsored by the University of Cambridge, UK**

# Youth Research Symposium

WORKING AT THE INTERDISCIPLINARY AND CULTURAL INTERFACE OF  
YOUTH STUDIES: HISTORY, SPACE AND DIFFERENCE

## SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

This one-day interdisciplinary symposium brings together youth researchers from the UK and Canada and is focused upon an examination of research which can be seen to meet at the interdisciplinary interface of youth culture, identity and education. In seeking to best understand this interdisciplinary work and its contribution to the broad field of youth studies in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, each presenter draws upon a range of fields and utilizes diverse theoretical orientations to confront the concepts of youth, identity and youth culture(s) which include, for example: anti-racist, critical multicultural and post-colonial theories; cultural geography and theories of urban space; historical analyses; cultural sociology and surveillance studies; comparative and international cultural studies; sexuality and queer studies; a history of ideas tradition established through European Continental thought and its links to Orientalism (Foucault, Said) and the sociology of youth culture; and wider social and cultural theory.

Specifically, our aims are to showcase the role of interdisciplinary research in rethinking conceptualizations of 'marginalized' youth identity', debates on youth subcultures versus post-subcultures, issues of gender, sexuality and social exclusion, and the history of policing and surveillance of young bodies over time and across national spaces. Our objectives in employing these diverse approaches are to understand more fully how ideas about childhood and new youth identities have been generated and framed in different temporal, cultural and spatial contexts. We also seek to show how the formation of new youth cultures may function, and in what degree, both as a response to, and a complex connection between, macro and micro cultural forces of social and temporal change in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In bridging areas in the social sciences and humanities, we seek to focus upon a range of topics and ideas drawing upon, for example, the broad and contested concepts of youth, multi-racial and hybridized identities, youth subcultural/post-subcultural identities, historical conceptions of youth and childhood, geographies of youth, youth consumption practices, sexuality and the nation. However, a theme cutting, either directly or indirectly, across each panel is the link between the re-emerging problems associated with rising moral anxieties about young people and the ways in which such anxieties are projected into public consciousness. The expansive and still timely power of the notion of 'moral panic', with all its intimations of generalized decay, moral uncertainty and impending crisis, affords an important strategy for engaging the novel problems posed for excluded youth by, amongst other contemporary trends, globalization, cyber-space, and large-scale migratory population flows. Here, the threat of those constructed as youthful 'folk devils' provides the symbolic focus for the concentration of a general social perception of uncertainty, loss and anxiety.

In the 'new times' of the twenty-first century, the basis for heightened moral anxieties no longer consist in the localised and sometimes over-determined class threats associated with young people now well documented in the fields of history, cultural studies and sociology. Rather, such forms of moral regulation and surveillance are linked to cultural practices and strategies – now global as well as local and national - seen to be available to excluded urban youth. These are strategies, which through the lens of relentless media, aggressive military occupations of major cities (e.g., Middle East), and growing social and political intensification on the urban fringes of new global cities (e.g., Aulney Sur-Bois, France), take on a particularly concentrated resonance for the bearers, sufferers, observers and agents of moral panic and associated anxieties. These are groups for which the “familiar and established notions of ‘folk devil’ and ‘moral panic’ demand new levels of conceptual and practical refinement for the twenty-first century panic”<sup>1</sup>.

## KEY QUESTIONS

The key questions we ask are:

- ❖ how have the concepts of ‘youth identity’ and ‘youth culture’ been represented within educational and social science and humanities research concerned with marginalized youth across time and in relation to broad transnational issues such as citizenship, race, belonging, migration and globalization?;
- ❖ how do the social markers of class, space, geography, and nation shift conceptualizations and representations of youth identity, new youth communities, youth subjectivities and youth subcultures/post subcultures across contexts such as the school, the street, the ‘youth activist community’, the urban neighbourhood, in public housing, and in the context of post 9-11 forms of moral panic, and the ‘war on terror’, for example?
- ❖ how might an interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of youth, culture and identity transform the ways we cast our theoretical and empirical work in relation to young people living on the margins of apparent ‘legitimacy’, ‘security and belonging in the nation-state or in the globalizing diasporas of the world, and what do we need to know about the historical, cultural and geographical dimensions of youth studies cross-nationally in order to engage in such a recasting?;
- ❖ how might we describe the historical and contemporary modes of surveillance and policing currently shaping young people’s lives and how have such forms changed the ways we think about both the state and its young people?
- ❖ how might cities or particular geographical regions represent new sites of surveillance over young people and what role do these sites play in the formation of new youth identifications.
- ❖ how might interdisciplinary research on youth marginalization, new youth communities and youth identity transform our understanding of the expansion of global justice in new times?

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<sup>1</sup> Dillabough, J., Gulson, K. & Gleason, M. (2007). *Youth and Moral Panic in a New Age: History, Society and Change*. Draft Research Proposal, pp. 1-17.

## STRUCTURE OF THE DAY

We will open the day with a keynote presentation by Anoop Nayak, a cultural and human geographer from Newcastle University (UK). Dr. Nayak's presentation will be followed by a critical discussion of the key issues addressed and will be led by Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough, from the Department of Educational Studies, UBC and the University of Cambridge.

### **PANEL 1**

In panel 1, Tamara Myers (History, UBC) and Mona Gleason (Educational Studies, UBC) will be addressing issues pertaining to the history of youth and childhood, particularly in relation to moral panic, the policing of young people and associated public anxieties which emerge across different temporal periods.

### **PANEL 2**

In panel 2, presenters will focus primarily on the formation of "new youth" identities/identifications with a particular emphasis on immigrant, multiracial and queer youth identities, moral panic around youth difference and violence, and relationships between diverse youth communities. Wright's notion of "new youth" is a category that includes immigrant, queer and multi-racial youth, and this panel concentrates on both their sense of belonging to, and alienation from, established and traditional communities, (e.g. the nation state) and the formation of alternative communities deemed 'new' (e.g. cybercommunities). Handel Kashope Wright (Director of CCIE, Educational Studies, UBC), Leanne Taylor (York University), and Lisa Loutzenheiser (Curriculum Studies, UBC) are the presenters in this panel.

### **PANEL 3**

In panel 3, Jacqueline Kennelly (Educational Studies, UBC), Jo Dillabough (Educational Studies, UBC and University of Cambridge) and Mary Jane Kehily (Open University) focus primarily on the links between social change and youth cultures operating in the twenty first century in different national contexts, with a particular interest in highlighting some of the reasons why young people are targeted as sites of moral anxiety in new times. They also seek to showcase why young people have become a dominant focal point of study in education and the social sciences cross-nationally. They focus particularly on contemporary elements of youth subculture or new youth cultures as they emerge in relation to political and geographical contexts, and in relation to issues of gender, social class, new racisms and radical changes in the 'new global city'.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**OPENING REMARKS, (Handel Kashope Wright, Jo Dillabough, and the Dean, Rob Tierney, Education), Presenter-Audience Intermingling: 9: 00 – 9:30**

**KEYNOTE: 9:30 –11:00 (presentation, 45 minutes)**

**ANOOP NAYAK (RACE, SPACE AND GLOBALIZATION)**

**CHAIR AND DISCUSSANT OF SESSION: JO-ANNE DILLABOUGH (EDUCATIONAL STUDIES, UBC & UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)**

**Dark Matter: Race, Religion and Youth in Global Times**

This paper examines the complex articulation of race, religion and citizenship in the light of urban unrest in Britain in 2001, the destruction of the Twin Towers later that year and the aftermath of the London bombings in 2005. It considers the contradictory ways in which Muslim youth, asylum-seekers and minority ethnic young people are positioned in the post-9/11 landscape. A key fault-line identified in political rhetoric is the tension between asserting national citizenship while maintaining a belief in global multi-cultural difference. Based on the testimonies of minority ethnic subjects, asylum-seekers and refugees, I argue that the utopian ideal of a mobile cosmopolitan citizenship remains far removed from the prosaic struggles of many young people residing in working-class neighbourhoods. These insights challenge some of the postmodern aspects of a hybrid trans-national belonging, by suggesting that the lives of many minorities become fixed through the 'power-geometries' of race, class and religion. The paper concludes that asylum-seekers and ethnic minorities are better conceived of as 'bodies out of place' – dark matter that is challenging claims to whiteness, Britishness and the nation state.

**PANEL ONE: 11: 15 – 12:45 pm**

**CHILDHOOD, YOUTH and the STATE: Gender, Deviance, and Surveillance**

**1. Dr. Tamara Myers, History, UBC: "Morality Squads, Curfews, and the Sports Solution: Policing Youth in Mid-Twentieth Century Canada"**

This paper speaks to the symposium's main aims of "rethinking conceptualizations of marginalized youth identity" and of exploring "the history of policing and surveillance of young bodies over time and across national spaces" through an examination of a watershed moment in the history of policing youth in Canada. Faced with a deepening public crisis over youth in the 1940s Canadian police forces invented new technologies of surveillance and discipline and in turn reshaped their role in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Focusing on Montreal, this paper investigates critical developments in urban policing including fresh ventures like the creation of the Juvenile Morality Squad (later the Delinquency Prevention Bureau), a juvenile nocturnal curfew, and the Police Juvenile Club. It charts the work of male and female

officers as they enforced juvenile curfew regulations and launched the 'Sports Solution'. According to the Montreal police, these innovative measures were responsible, by the late 1940s, for cutting in half the juvenile delinquency rate from its wartime high. Shedding an earlier image of cop as disciplinarian, the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century police officer was intentionally positioned as paternalistic 'friend' to youth and the meaning and presence of the police in the lives of youth was transformed. The implications of these new developments, I argue, was that young people – especially working-class, racialized, and those labelled 'sexually precocious' - experienced unprecedented intervention from police in the name of protection, prevention, and discipline.

Born during the Depression, the Juvenile Morality Squad (*Moralité juvénile*) initially focused on interrupting immoral relationships between adults and youth. In an effort to protect juvenile morality this small squad targeted the insidious acts of adults. During the Second World War (1939-45) this morality force expanded and refocused its work. Responding to the delinquency panic and the fear over the spread of 'latchkey' children, the morality officers focused on the surveillance of youth in public places through "tours of inspection" of restaurants, pool halls, bowling halls, and the like, now targeting the 'ubiquitous immorality' of youth. A significant development with the addition of officers to this force was the heightened regulation of youth sexuality. Whereas prior to the war 'sex delinquency' was understood as a female status offense, during the war the morality squad 'discovered' boys' bodies and their sexuality.

In 1946 the morality squad was renamed the Juvenile Prevention Bureau. In this guise its mandate expanded, as did the definition of who was best suited for work with children and youth. In 1947 police women, who had been summarily fired at the close of the last World War and absent from the Montreal force for decades, were again deemed useful to police work. The advent of the Prevention Bureau also heralded the arrival of new bureaucratic measures of surveillance, leading to the centralization of processing minors and police records on "bad" youth. Women officers and these new bureaucratic measures were not the only innovations: a substantial effort on the preventative front was central to the mission of the 1940s policing. In response to the fear that parents and the community in general had neglected young men and boys, the police established a Police Juvenile Club. Its programs involved "the sports solution" in which policemen acted as instructors and guides for hockey and basketball games, boxing matches, and music lessons.

## **2. Mona Gleason, Educational Studies, UBC: "Navigating the Pedagogy of Failure: Medicine and Education Encounters The Disabled Child in English Canada, 1900-1945"**

At the turn of the twentieth century, medical and educational professionals in numerous national contexts solidified their relationship as partners against the challenges posed by disabled children. In the United States, as was the case in much of Western Europe, eugenic thinking suggested that biological solutions provided answers to social problems posed by 'abnormal' bodies. While American and British contributions to the fate of children labeled disabled over the twentieth century have garnered scholarly attention, the English Canadian experience suggests additional, yet often overlooked, affinities. Physical and mental 'defectives' or 'cripples,' as they were described in the context of the time, were judged largely ill-suited to the demands of public schooling, particularly as it was conceived and configured before World War II in English Canada. Yet, even by the 1920s, manual training was held out as a possible solution to the 'management' of the young 'mentally defective,' as numerous medical and educational professionals suggested. While children with physical impairments caused other kinds of social anxieties, English Canadian professionals engaged in similar patterns of hand wringing over their fate as well. Far more than just a problem of 'management,' however,

children labeled disabled brought to the surface transnational anxieties about the stability of the present and the future, particularly on the part of professional elites who feared threats to the social order.

Professional pronouncements about disabled children shifted over the century often leaving children themselves caught at the crossroads between scorn and sympathy, invisibility and admiration. Early in the new century, experts characterized physical and mental disability as the irrevocable corruption of body and moral fiber. In the context of English Canada, medical and educational experts who sought to identify, classify, and segregate 'normal' bodies from 'abnormal' bodies bolstered support for compulsory public schooling. By the early 1940s, however, disabled children were more likely to be cast as innocent victims, worthy of public sympathy, support, and motivation. By this juncture, professionals were advocating increased support for disabled children from the welfare state. Regardless of these significant changes, I argue that shifting versions of a 'pedagogy of failure' endured in the professional writing about disabled children. It conveyed powerful lessons about disability as tragedy, deficiency, and, ultimately, failure to mimic more desirable markers of 'normal.'

In addition to professional writing on the part of adult experts, I consider the oral histories of five adults who were disabled in childhood and who grew up in various regions around the country in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. While I think it critical to contribute to our understanding of the transnational character of professionals' construction of disabled children over the century, I attempt to consider also how individual children and their families in English Canada responded to the "pathologizing" of experts often thought above close scrutiny.

## **LUNCH BREAK 1 – 2 pm**

### **PANEL 2: 2: 00 –3:45 pm**

#### **NEW YOUTH IDENTITIES, MULTICULTURALISM AND BELONGING**

##### **1. Handel Wright, Educational Studies, UBC: "New Youth, New Times, Liquid Communities"**

Old conceptions are apparently giving way to the new. For example, conceptions of community based on ethnoracial uniformity, grounded in the local, and based on the nation and a public sphere are giving way to new, conceptions that are reflective of ethnoracial mixing and diversity, loosely based on the global and the glocal, cyberspace and a reconceptualized public sphere. Similarly, the hegemony of western conceptions of chronological time in modernity is challenged by the acknowledgement of alternative conceptions of time and its relationship with human activity (from Australian Aboriginal individual and community centred concentric time to the strolling flaneur). Finally, the historically and socially constructed category, youth, is shifting not only in duration (now extending well into the 30s) but now has what we might identify as new categories. I hold, however, that rather than a neat break from old to new forms, what we are witnessing is the juxtaposition and even comingling of old and new forms of community, time and youth. In this paper, I draw on Zygmunt Bauman's (2000, 2005) notion of "liquidity" to point to and acknowledge the reconceptualization of community and the emergence of what we might call "liquid community" (i.e. global/glocal, diasporic,

transient, expedient, sub-cultural, cyber, etc.). I also draw on Giles Lipovetsky's (2005) notion of "hypermodern times" and a revision of Walter Benjamin's take on the "flaneur," to speak to new times. Finally, I draw on a cultural studies approach to youth studies (Hall & Jefferson, 1976) and revive and amend some specific cultural studies notions (e.g. Dick Hebdidge's (1988) "hiding in the light" and Henry Giroux's (1996) "fugitive cultures") to outline how these and other factors are making what I am calling "new youth" (multiracial, queer, diasporic) and how new youth in turn are contributing to the making of new times and liquid communities.

In other words the paper points to both the gap and connections between old and new conceptions of youth, time and community. There is a Canadian commonsense conception of youth and a youth studies field (Gauthier & Pacom, 2001; Cote & Allahar, 2006) that "know" youth either as a problem (deviance, youth violence) or responsible group (volunteers, participants in democratic process). This is a conception that often takes for granted the developmental stages of the individual, the nation as primary identity category, notions of local and national community as sites of belonging, government responsibility to address the needs of youth, etc. On the other hand, there are new youth categories whose sense of identity and belonging are diasporic (e.g. the Chinese diaspora rather than new immigrant Canadian), cyber and sub-culturally identified (e.g. straightedgers online rather than local and ethnoracial community), multiracial and multiethnic and cosmopolitan rather than single racial and ethnic heritage. The old has not merely given way to the new, however, but rather the two intermingle in complex ways, as the example of the radical Muslim youth of colour illustrates- an identity based on old religion (Sayyid, 2000) that takes an always already global community (the Umma) as primary allegiance and reference point and thus troubles the taken-for-grantedness of the primacy of Canadian national identity and local identification, the success of multiculturalism and racial and other forms of tolerance.

## **2. Leanne Taylor, Faculty of Education, York University: "Interrogating identities: Exploring racism, community and belonging among mixed race youth in Canada"**

The past two decades have witnessed large, international shifts in the ways in which mixed race identity, experiences, and perspectives have been addressed and understood. Historically portrayed as tragic and confused, mixed race individuals are increasingly being celebrated and featured in a range of new settings. For example, new media such as mixed race blogs, websites, Facebook groups, as well as other emerging products such as dolls, toys, and books documenting experiences of growing up 'mixed', are all new resources from which many of today's young multiracial population can draw. Mixed race youth are not only participating in these venues, but are increasingly becoming their creators. In this paper, I explore a set of Canadian texts and new media in which mixed race youth narrate their experiences. I suggest that the ideas coming out of those conversations offer an important critique of contemporary discussions of not only racial identity construction, but of discourses on youth identity. Drawing on critical theories of race, critical 'mixed race' theory, and cultural studies, I ask: What do mixed race youth's stories tell us about what it means to grow up racially mixed? Accordingly, what do their experiences tell us about identity, community and Canada's multicultural context? How do mixed race youth use these forums to articulate and nurture identities, foster a sense of belonging and community, and negotiate their complex experiences with racism, ambiguity and over-celebration of mixture among family, friends, and in schools? I suggest that these experiences elaborate the complexities of youth identity, highlight the significance of youth group organizing, and uniquely invite us to challenge traditional conceptualizations of race and racism. As educators and academics,



our responsibilities must include a critical engagement with a variety of social contexts, knowledge sets and experiences if we are to understand the complexities of a host of youth identities, including those of mixed race youth.

**3. Lisa Loutzenheiser, Curriculum Studies, UBC: “The nexus of youth studies and gender studies: Questions of methodology”**

This paper explores the theoretical and methodological issues surrounding researching with, for, and about queer youth in ways that trouble youth identities that are represented in the wider social contexts. The primary lens of the paper is an examination of (hetero)normativity and the possibilities of queering qualitative methodologies. Opening with a brief contextualization of the ethical conundrums inherent in a qualitative research methodology, I am particularly interested in methodologies that emanate from epistemologies that attempt both to be ethical, and to acknowledge the very impossibility of such a move. The paper outlines possibilities for data collection, analysis, and representation that are particularly important when working with queer youth. Finally, there will be an attempt to engage in the difficult conversation about who ought be engaging in research with, by, and for queer youth.

**PANEL 3: 4:00 – 5:45 pm**

**SOCIOLOGY MEETS URBAN CULTURE IN THE STUDY OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

**1. Jackie Kennelly, Educational Studies, UBC: “Learning to protest: youth activist struggles for recognition and symbolic authority in a neoliberal moment”**

This paper explores the material effects of an array of cultural and subcultural forces on three groups of urban Canadian young people: youth activists in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. The main argument of the paper is that histories of liberal discourses, symbolic and material forms of racism, colonialism and class conflicts, as well as the contemporary ascendancy of neoliberalism, have created a specific cultural space that have identifiably shaped youth activist subcultures in Canada.

The paper builds this argument on the basis of a year-long ethnography with 38 young people (ages 13-29) engaged in youth activist subcultures contesting globalization, war, poverty, and/or colonialism across Canada’s three largest cities. In the first section of this three-part exploration, I consider the influence of liberalism and neoliberalism, reading the pressures faced by young activists through the lens of these two ideological forces. Here, I argue that histories of both liberalism and the construction of the ‘good and moral citizen’ play a specific kind of regulating role for young activists, creating a structure of feeling (Williams, 1977) that is marked by substantial burdens of guilt and responsibility. I also argue that the forms of individualism central to the operation of the liberal state, and the specific relationship this implies between citizens and the nation, is undergoing a transformation via the pressures of neoliberalism and the ongoing shift of the burden of citizen well-being away from the state and towards individuals (Brown, 2001, 2005; Rose, 1999).

In the second section, I consider the classed and raced nature of contemporary Canadian youth activism, drawing primarily on the cultural sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1997; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), and the work of two contemporary youth theorists who have made use of his ideas (Sarah Thornton (1996) and Julie Bettie (2003)). My primary argument here is that the symbolic economy of belonging within youth activist subcultures is bound by a particular set of cultural codes that can perhaps be best understood through Thornton's notion of 'subcultural capital' and Bettie's concept of 'class performance.' Layered upon histories of classism and racism, as well as the wide-spread pressures of liberalism and neoliberalism, I argue that this combination of social/cultural forces yields specific subcultural permutations that have a material impact on who feels that they 'belong' within youth activist cultures, and what such cultural belonging entails.

The third and final section turns to rituals of style and their relation to consumption and identity; this segment will look more specifically at who carries symbolic authorization within youth activist subcultures – who, in other words, are the bearers of authorized language (Bourdieu, 1991), and what consumptive strategies do they use to maintain their position as agents within this cultural field? Drawing on ethnographic data concerned with such symbolic elements of subcultures as dress and appearance, as well as the ways in which specific people acquire the elusive and desirable status of being 'radical,' I argue that the subcultural rules of comportment required within youth activist cultures are embedded within neoliberal frames of individualized consumption that have specific implications for social movements and progressive social change more broadly.

## **2. Jo Dillabough, Educational Studies, UBC and the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, UK: "Moral Panic in a New Age: Suspicion, Dread and Evolving Conceptions of Youth and the 'Dangerous classes' in urban space"**

In this presentation I showcase the beginnings of a theoretical approach which attends to the spatial relationships operating between young people, new modes of urban surveillance within and outside schools, and the global problematic associated with moral panic operating in the affluent 'West'. There has been a recent rise in global media reporting linking youthful urban cultures with incipient terrorist activity (e.g. Levi & Wall, 2004; Lyon, 2004; Mason, 2004). In many 'Western countries social anxieties about low income urban youth is also visibly on the rise, largely in response to recent political challenges to the idea of the liberal democratic state, and to racial tension and race riots exacerbated by increased urban poverty operating on the suburban fringe of many urban cities (e.g. French youth riots in Aulnay Sur-Bois, Paris). Simultaneously, national security activity and surveillance measures are rapidly expanding and now permeate many areas of social life in the 'West' (Lewis, 2006). Arguably, these changes represent a response to pervasive global anxieties about the emergence of post 9/11 terror threats, growing youth terrorist cells and the potential for related actions (e.g. London, 2005). Related educational research has also shown how such broader changes are impacting (both directly and indirectly) upon the nature of increasing surveillance measures directed towards young people in state institutions, particularly in urban schools. The groups most impacted by these trends are economically marginalized youth, often male, and from ethnic and religious minorities in contemporary urban centres, who are increasingly presumed to constitute a 'homegrown' problem, comprising – to use the much-quoted words of the former British Prime Minister Thatcher – an 'enemy within'.

How might we seek to conceptualise this consuming combination of suspicion and dread which is thought to be posed by post-9/11 low-income urban youth? Cohen's (1972) challenging dualism, 'folk devils' and 'moral panics,' though now more than three decades old, offers a potentially fruitful avenue for further exploration of this question. Here, the threat of those constructed as youthful 'folk devils' provides the symbolic focus for the concentration of a general social perception of uncertainty, loss and anxiety. Cohen's original notion of panic always retained the material and symbolic charge of its association with the de-stabilizing challenges presented by youth, but the analytical power of moral panic lies in its promise for engaging the radically changed conditions of a new, trans-national economic and cultural world. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, this concept needs further expansion and theorization if it is to be understood as a crystallized form of both social anxiety and moral regulation in the 'new global city'.

In summary, I seek to outline the relationship between the transnational mobility of moral anxiety as it relates and is responded to, by low-income young people living on the edge of the new global city. In so doing, I hope to illuminate the part played by an interdisciplinary approach to the study of those young people most effected by rising moral panic in urban centres with the hope of further clarifying elements of radical urban change and the regulatory classed properties of morality in new times. Drawing upon preliminary empirical work conducted in Australia, the UK, and Canada, case studies of urban youth and moral anxiety will be presented in order to elaborate and extend theories of youth, moral regulation and social change.

### **3. Dr. Mary-Jane Kehily, Open University, UK: "From the margins to the centre? Girlhood and the contradictions of femininity across three generations"**

New femininities suggest that young women are moving from the margins to the centre. No longer content with subordinate status in the bedroom or on the periphery of youth cultures, young women appear to have found their voice as the 'can do' girls of neo-liberalism. This paper charts the social change that has had a dramatic impact upon gender relations and particularly the emergence of new femininities that mark growing up girl as a distinctly different experience for young women in the contemporary period. Familiar tropes of new femininities position young women as agentic, goal-oriented, pleasure seeking individuals adept at reading the new world order and finding their place within it. Has femininity finally found a skin that fits or are there cracks in this unparalleled success story? The paper examines this question intergenerationally by looking at young women's experience across time. Specifically, the paper will explore the implosion of the public-private spheres in relation to the experience of being a girl as articulated by three generations of women. Based on interviews with intergenerational chains of women in the same family - daughters, mothers and grandmothers - the paper will examine the divergent accounts of girlhood experience from women who came of age in the 1950s, the 1970s and the present 2000 - 2005. Analysis of these accounts provide an insightful commentary on social change and feminine subjectivity, highlighting continuity and change while pointing to the implications for health and the ever present contradictions of femininity that may be re-shaped and reconfigured over generations.

**CLOSING STATEMENT 5.45pm-6:00pm**  
**Jo-Anne Dillabough and Handel Wright**