Reading Log #7

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March 2nd 2018

This reading log is based on the article “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in Early Primary School,” written by Anika Strafford. This article has a very strong opening as she starts out reflecting on a personal life experience with gender role as a seven year old female wishes to become a boy. 1 As well she continues to use personal examples from her life to demonstrate that her argument is valid. The purpose of this article is to shed light on the “inadequacies of a binary approach to gender in classroom teaching and [to highlight] the problems in conflating the terms/ concepts “gay” and “homophobia” when addressing gender and sexuality in schools.” 2 A really good example of this is when Anika observed a kindergarten class for three months 3 and found that even when these children were taught that being gay was okay, they still thought it was a bad word and didn't understand what it meant. 4 This was due to the fact that this topic was not discussed regularly and still seen as a taboo topic. Children still had gendered taboos embedded in their minds such as the idea that boys cannot wear pink 5 or be ‘queens’. 6 Stafford concluded that anxieties regarding sexual and gender diversity comes from a set of standards of behaviour for both boys and girls in a school setting. 7 Stafford believes that giving children a sense of power to be who they want to be will help encourage children. 8 I like this article because Stafford draws from many outside sources and articles to find reliable information for her article which couples really well with her own personal stories used. Something that really stood out to me is when Stafford pointed out that “the threat of becoming “like a girl” is used as a weapon against boys, signifying a loss of power, while the label “tomboy” cab be a point of pride for girls, accepted without risk of losing status with their peers.” 9 I have always understood that being seen as feminine is negative to males but I never realized why I felt good being a tomboy and felt bad when I looked “like a girl” and other girls were dressed more like boys. This has opened my eyes and will help me with my teaching in classrooms.

This reading log is based on the article “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender in the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” written by Tracy Penny Light. This article focuses on the medicalization of the female body over the 20th century and how society has changed the use of plastic surgery from aiding unhealthy women, to ‘modifying’ healthy women. Penny Light specifically looks at how cosmetic surgery fits into the important categories of embodied citizenship, defining and contesting illness, and authority and ideals and how they all relate to one another. In this society, the main focuses are on physical conformity and youth, 10 so when a person does not look ‘normal’ or looks aged, some people feel the need to alter their bodies to fit in. Two medical professionals discussed the “current trends in cosmetic surgery that promote the notion that women (and men) should alter themselves to look “normal”.” 11 Unfortunately Penny Light showed that the changing ideas of what is “normal” and “healthy” is based on society's overall beliefs. Women who wanted to enhance their bodies began to do so to “deal with psychological rather than physical issues that stemmed from societal expectations.” 12 Dr Richards’ report found that both men and women found breasts “highly important structures, both functionally and aesthetically” but females breasts caused concern even when healthy. 13 Penny Light stated that it is clear “that the authority of medicine and wider societal ideals for men and women were embedded in the Canadian medical discourse on cosmetic surgery” in the twentieth century.14 I would like to know how accurate this can be applied to the twenty-first century as it mentions that still today they are creating health care products to make people look normal.

Notes

1 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 9-10.

2 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 10-11.

3 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 16.

4 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 20.

5 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 26.

6 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 24.

7 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 29.

8 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 29.

9 Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 12.

10 Penny Light, Tracy, “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender

in the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” in Penny Light, et.al, Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 319.

11 Penny Light, Tracy, “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender

in the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” in Penny Light, et.al, Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 320.

12 Penny Light, Tracy, “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender

in the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” in Penny Light, et.al, Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 322.

13 Penny Light, Tracy, “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender

in the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” in Penny Light, et.al, Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 332.

14 Penny Light, Tracy, “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender

in the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” in Penny Light, et.al, Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 336.

Work Cited

Stafford, Anika, “‘I Feel Like a Girl Inside’: Possibilities for Gender and Sexual Diversity in

Early Primary School,” BC Studies, 181 (Spring 2016): 9-29.

Penny Light, Tracy, “From Fixing to Enhancing Bodies: Shifting Ideals of Health and Gender in

the Medical Discourse on Cosmetic Surgery in Twentieth Century Canada,” in Penny Light, et.al, Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 319-346.