

Vortrag

9. Januar 2017, 14.00-15.00 Uhr – A14-1-111

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RE-VISITING AND REVISING TOP GIRLS

In this lecture I return to my 2010 *Top Girls* book (VS Verlag) extracting from it some of the key arguments while more thoroughly engaging with the question of a feminist cultural studies perspective on contemporary neoliberalism. The session begins with a critical overview of recent writing which has considered this topic, particularly in regard to gender (Fraser, Brown, Kantola and Squires, Funk, Rottenberg). This is followed by my own analysis of how the neoliberal regime has addressed and also produced the category of 'woman', in particular young women, with particular attention to a re-appropriation of conventional mediated forms whose focus has been on the production of new styles of normative femininity. That is to say the fields of media and popular culture have been the privileged sites for this concentration of attention or 'luminosities'. First I provide a summary of the theoretical figures I see as undertaking this task focusing on capacity, agency, aspiration and success. I then consider in more detail than I did in the book the sociological implications of the 'dividing strategies' which this biopolitics of youthful femininity undertakes. My focus here will be on gender and material disadvantage, poverty, social marginalisation and how neoliberalism creates a particular intensity of individual and moral failure in this regard often directed towards single motherhood and reproduction. I end the lecture with some reflections on UK TV and press genres of 'benefit shaming' as anti-welfare strategy.