Editorial: A Miscellany from Textual Readings to Comedy

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This Open Call issue of *Girlhood Studies* brings together a collection of articles from Canada, the US and Russia that address a range of themes of concern and interest to the study of contemporary girlhood. The issue opens with an article called “Little Girls on the Prairie and the Possibility of Subversive Reading” by Amy Singer as a way of signalling the importance of “differentiating between narratives that reinforce the status quo and narratives that challenge it.” As Singer points out, “a subversive story makes visible connections between social power and inequality.” Following this is Michael G. Cornelius’s “Sexuality, Interruption, and Nancy Drew.” In some of these stories, as Cornelius points out, we see a different kind of subversion of the status quo: “whenever the subject of marriage arises, Nancy interrupts the conversation or changes it altogether” so as to prevent any consideration of “marriage and the ensuing responsibilities (and identity shifts) that it—and mid-century womanhood in general—implies.”

Then, in the first of a cluster of three articles that deal, in vastly different ways, with the rift between the private and the public, Sonya Sawyer Fritz, in “A Room of Her Very Own”: Privacy and Leisure in the Victorian Girl’s Bedroom” argues that “various representations of the Victorian girl’s experiences with the bedroom ... reflect the unique tensions between public and private that girls of the period experienced as they navigated the variety of socio-cultural expectations placed upon them.” Deborah Stienstra reminds us, in her article “Trumping All? Disability and Girlhood Studies” that “research tells us little about the experiences and perspectives of girls with disabilities except that their lives are filled with barriers, violence and stigma.” As she points out, this “stigma, ... in turn, means that the girls may not be reported as having a disability or brought out in public” so we need to “[shift] the terrain from research *on* girls with disabilities ... to research *with* girls with disabilities that focuses on their experiences and stories.”

Completing this trio of articles is Irina Kosterina's "Modernization, Patriarchy, and the Life of Girls in the North Caucasian Region" in which she examines "the situation of girls in ... a region that combines features of both a traditional ... and a modernized society." She explores the agency of women and girls in their public and private lives through their use of a "patriarchal bargain" that allows them to "challenge and defy some elements of the patriarchal system while peacefully getting on with others."

In the first of the next pair of articles Sharon Lamb and Aleksandra Plocha discuss, in "Pride and Sexiness: Girls of Color Discuss Race, Body Image, and Sexualization" what "teen girls of color, primarily daughters of immigrants," had to say about "what it means to them to be sexy" given the tensions inherent in the fact that "a discourse of pride in the voluptuous female body" conflicts with the "discourse [that suggests] that girls of color, particularly black girls, are over-sexed and need to be controlled." Then, in "I Don't Want to Claim America": African Refugee Girls and Discourses of Othering" Laura Boutwell "draws from the Imani Nailah Project, a participatory action research initiative with a group of African refugee girls living in the US... [to interrogate] ... a sociopolitical discourse—the *refugee girl*—as a construct distinct from actual refugee girls." Her focus is on the "resistance strategies and emergent counter narratives of citizenship [that emerge] when actual refugee girls are in conversation with this imposed *refugee girl* discourse."

In their choice of subject matter the last two authors defy attempts at classification. In "Are Teenage Girls Funny? Laughter, Humor and Young Women's Performance of Gender and Sexual Agency" Fiona Cullen explores "how young women utilize popular cultural texts as well as everyday and staged comedy as part of a gendered resource that provides potential sites for sex-gender transgression and conformity." She is interested in the potential of "mobilizing humor as an educational resource and a site in which to explore sex-gender norms with young people." In "Girlltopia: Girl Scouts and the Leadership Development of Girls" Angela High-Pippert looks at the "renewed focus on leadership development and the empowerment of girls" of Girl Scouts in the USA, "the largest organization for girls in the world." Her focus is on "a content analysis of the National Leadership Journey books in relation to the "leadership development [available to]... millions of girls across the United States."

Bringing this issue to a close are reviews of two books. In "Listening to Latina Girls' Perspectives" Kasey Butcher reviews Lorena Garcia's (2012) *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself: Latina Girls and Sexual Identity*. Shauna

Pomerantz's review, "Spaces of Possibility: Mapping the Molecular in the Lives of Girls" is on Jessica Ringrose's (2013) *Postfeminist Education? Girls and the Sexual Politics of Schooling*.

Taken together the articles highlight the rich possibilities for scholarship in the area of girlhood, and I thank our contributors and also our dedicated reviewers for their continued support. As always, I thank Ann Smith, our managing editor, for her careful and patient work.

We look forward to the first issue of *Boyhood Studies*, edited by Diederik F. Janssen and also published by Berghahn.