

Contesting

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This issue of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, while unthemed in the sense that it comes out of an Open Call, reminds us that a foundational principle of Girlhood Studies remains one of contesting and challenging inequities. Furthermore, how girls themselves might, under some circumstances, take up critical issues in their lives is evident in these contributions. Each of the contributors has placed front and centre the idea of contesting. Recently in a publications panel at a graduate student conference, participants, eager to get their work published, wanted to know more about this journal. Two of their questions stand out. “May the articles be quantitative as well as qualitative?” and “Is it enough that at least half of my participants are girls?” This collection of articles responds beautifully to these questions in offering an affirmative to the question about quantitative and qualitative data when the point is to use appropriate evidence to contest gender norms, and a negative to being about representation in terms of simply including girls.

In “Witnessing Public Mourning in Haudenosaunee Youth Theatre” Margot Francis considers *And She Split the Sky in Two*, a play by Aleria McKay, “a youth survivor from Six Nations.” She looks at the ways in which this work “provides a girl’s perspective on the long slow process of staying alive to create a different future.”

The “fantasy [that] future success [is] self-determined and accessible to ... sexually abused teenage girls [who are] willing to work hard is debunked in “Precarious Girls and (Cruel) Optimism: Protecting Sexually Abused Teenage Girls,” by Rosemary R. Carlton, who considers the cruelty of child protection practices based on the claim of “ubiquitous opportunity for all girls regardless of circumstance or experience.”



In “When Girls Lead: Changing the Playbook for Climate Justice,” Tsun-Chueh Huang and Emily Bent suggest that while the work of Greta Thunberg in relation to climate justice is invested “with immediate authority ... the work of five New York City-based girl activists of color ... reveals the transformative potential of intersectional feminist politics in the hands of Generation Z.”

Lindsay C. Sheppard and Rebecca Raby look at “young women’s on-line activism [and] explore the material-discursive contexts that co-create the meanings and possibilities” of this in “Honestly, Anywhere that I Have Wi-Fi”: A Posthuman Approach to Young Women’s Activist Blogging.” They use Karen Barad’s framework to help understand “the human and more-than-human complexities of young women’s activist blogging and activist subjectivities.”

In “(Un)romantic Becomings: Girls, Sexuality-assemblages and the School Ball,” Toni Ingram draws “on a new materialist ontology of sexuality to explore the relations in-between girls, dates, and the school ball.” This framework enables a conceptualization of sexuality “as becoming via an array of material-discursive, human, and more-than-human forces [that allows us to think] about girls and the school ball beyond popular cultural constructions.”

Yan Du, in “Intergenerational Writing Practices in Chinese Fiction for Adolescent Girls,” evaluates the “collective writing practices of Qin Wenjun, Cheng Wei, and Chen Danyan” with a particular focus on how their “stories address intergenerational dissent and explore models of communication between adolescent girls and women.” She does so “to further scholarly understandings of Chinese girls’ fiction as a unique literary phenomenon.”

Stephanie Harkin, in “Doing the Fairy Tale Quest: Contesting the Author in the Video Game *Jenny LeClue: Detectivú*,” considers how the “teen girl detective game” reinterpreted as “a postmodern fairy tale ... unsettles the master narrative” that curiosity in women and girls is “undesirable” and encourages the player’s active investigatory participation [in a] narrative that invites collaboration” while it critiques the notion of “the singular authorial figure.”

In “Girl Athletes in Ethiopia Finding Voice Empowerment Through Sport,” Kathleen Ralls explores “whether girl athletes experience greater voice empowerment as a result of playing sport.” She concludes that for her participants—30 Ethiopian girl athletes aged between 13 and 18—sport, “along with emotional and academic support, coupled with an effective life skills program, [did] affect voice empowerment.”

“Imagining the Girl Effect: An Ethnography of Corporate Social Responsibility,” a review by Carolina Garcia of Kathryn Moeller’s *The Gender Effect: Capitalism, Feminism, and the Corporate Politics of Development* (2018), ends this issue.

