Despite ground-breaking research by Julia Round, Joan Ormrod, and Mel Gibson, the comics canon still favours one gender over others. Girlhood scholars’ presence and the remediation of such imbalance was therefore key to a first edited volume on girlhood in comics: *Sugar, Spice, and the Not So Nice* (Pursall and Van de Wiele 2023). Furthering its feminist perspective, this special issue aims to deepen scholarly discussion on existing transmedia and trans-national relationships that regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of comics related to girlhood.

Following a transnational turn in childhood and comics studies (Abate and Tarbox 2017; Heimermann and Tullis 2017), we wish to acknowledge the transnational character of the medium itself as comics artists, their publishers, and their content have interacted with and inspired each other across borders. Rather than defining each comic as a national phenomenon, we invite the search for unique interrelations that overcome a rigidly Anglo-American or Global North interpretation of girlhood.

In light of their propensity to adapt to different platforms, genres, and formats, comics have been almost unanimously recognized as a porous, polymorphous medium (Rippl and Etter 2013). This, together with comics’ malleability and regenerative capacity, significantly contributes to the medium’s mythopoetic potential or, in other words, its talent in creating symbolic systems and cultural imaginaries.

In focusing on the connections between comics’ transmediality and girlhood, our interest here is twofold. On the one hand, we aim to deepen scholarly knowledge on transmedia practices when it comes to the representation of girls. On the other, we wish to initiate an academic discussion of the conceptual interconnections between comics and the construction of girlhood through the paradigm of transmediality. Not by coincidence, girlhood has been associated with “an idea of mobility preceding the fixity of womanhood” (Driscoll 2002: 47) that was later recognised as the basis for a theoretical correlation between girlhood and the principle of plasticity or malleability that dominates the production and circulation of content in our contemporary mediascapes (Warren-Crow 2014).

We look at transnationalism and transmediality as two specific areas of convergence that allow us to explore contemporary and past productions and receptions of graphic narratives as a connected system where girlhood is constructed, negotiated, and constantly re-shaped.

This special issue is particularly interested in exploring the following topics:

- **Comics for girls and other media.** Why is transmedia important in comics nowadays? What examples of adaptation/transposition of graphic narratives for girls are defining contemporary production?
- **Readership in/of girl comics.** How do girls read comics, and how has this practice changed over time at an international level? What kind of graphic narratives do girls continue to read and why? What are their socio-demographic variables?
- **Girls’ comics and education.** How can comics be a(n) (im)perfect educational tool for girls, especially in collaboration with other media?
- **Girlhood in the comics industry.** How do domestic and/or international distribution of graphic narratives affect, or shape, female audiences nationally or worldwide? How does international distribution shape comics aimed at girl-readers?
- **Gender studies and inclusion.** How can comics disrupt normative gender notions by featuring queer girlhoods? How do graphic narratives incorporate an inclusive idea of girlhood? Which historical and theoretical analyses help to understand and describe the creation of comics for girls and/or for boys? How do transmedia/transnational practices influence inclusion in girl-readers?
• **Power in girl comics.** How have girl comics and media franchises been used to educate, empower, and promote emancipation? How have comics and merchandising been used to pander to girls at a (trans)national level?

• **Manga and girlhood.** How has manga production impacted international comics and led to a new wave of comics for girls? How has anime’s media mix influenced comics production worldwide?

In addition to scholarly articles, we also consider book reviews (1500 words, 40-word bio), visual essays or short graphic narratives (a combined maximum of 6500 words), as well as comics produced by girls and young women that fit the above topics.

This special issue will be guest edited by Nicoletta Mandolini, Lisa Maya Quaianni Manuzzato, and Eva Van de Wiele.

**Nicoletta Mandolini** is FCT Researcher at CECS, Universidade do Minho, where she works on the project Sketch Her Story and Make It Popular. Using Graphic Narratives in Italian and Lusophone Feminist Activism Against Gender Violence.

**Lisa Maya Quaianni Manuzzato** has a Master’s degree in performing arts, cinema, and multimedia communications (Università degli Studi di Milano) with a dissertation on history of animation. Her current research interests are self-published comics and Italian and Spanish comics.

**Eva Van de Wiele** is postdoctoral researcher at Ghent University. Within the ERC project COMICS, she researches 1930s-1960s French-language children’s periodicals from the Van Passen Collection.

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**Abstract and Article Submission**

Abstracts of 125 words and a short biographical note (100 words) should be sent by 15 October 2023 to boundlessgirls24@gmail.com

Final unpublished articles of 6000 to 6500 words must be submitted in English by 15 March 2024 (total word count includes title, abstract, keywords (6 to 8 in alphabetical order), article, bio, acknowledgements, notes, and references). Images count for 200 words, and authors are responsible for securing copyright. The texts must comply fully with the journal’s style guide.

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For more information, please see www.berghahnjournals.com/girlhood-studies

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**References**


