Conceptions of Girlhood Now and Then: “Girls’ Literature” and Beyond

Tuesday October 6:

Roundtable: “Girlhood in Academia: A Nordic Perspective”

The history of comprehensive analysis of “girls’ literature” as a genre is an established study in Nordic scholarship. Scholars such as Birgitta Theander, Marika Andræ and Mia Österlund have explored girls’ literature and coming-of-age stories in Swedish-language texts as well as in translated texts. The concept of “flickbok,” which roughly translates into “girls’ book,” is a specific genre label with a defined set of characteristics within a Swedish-language context. In English, however, there are several different terms for girls’ literature, such as girls’ fiction, girls’ stories, and classic books for girls. The contrast between the use of the term “flickbok” in a Swedish-language context and the multiple terms used to describe girls’ literature in English-language research raises interesting questions, not only about genre definitions but also about the genre as a whole. Using the Swedish/Nordic “flickbok” as its starting point, this roundtable will discuss questions such as the differences and similarities between the Swedish/Nordic “flickbok” and English-language girls’ literature, and the implications of labels like “flickbok” in the context of girls’ literature and girlhood studies.