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Personal identity means being at one with ourselves, perceiving and recognising the many different aspects of the self, and doing so in continual interaction with the world around us (Doering, vom Orde). Children and adolescents therefore face the great challenge of developing their self in negotiation with dimensions of collective identity. In this sense, they all have to find their very own way of being a girl or a boy in a world of stereotypically bipolar constructions of gender, a process of negotiation for which they use, for example, media – particularly television (Lemish). But what happens when children do not feel they belong in the traditional categories of boy versus girl (Jennings)? Borderline questions that quality television may not shy away from, as two outstanding documentaries on the subject of transgender show (Margrie, van Driel). Border areas and the interdependencies between religious and cultural identity (or better identities), such as in the case of the hijab and the meaning attributed to it by girls and young women, are addressed much more rarely (Kanso).

In order to understand – and communicate via media – these complex connections between identity, self-construction and self-portrayal, a high level of sensitivity and openness towards children and their form of self-expression is required (Jennings). Precisely when children and adolescents are faced with critical events and experiences in their lives, attentiveness and detailed basic knowledge are important (Spitzer et al.). Precisely when reporting about very critical moments of identity construction, it is important to find appropriate methods as an animation on the personal accounts of girls in a guerilla war shows (Gómez).

As current reception studies reveal, well made children's television can contribute to children engaging with different aspects of themselves and, as with *Pippi Longstocking*, thinking the unthinkable (Haager). Series such as *Vicky the Viking* symbolically reflect the typical experiences of children and can therefore reinforce pro-social behaviours (Holler). Especially when films for adolescents (Grimm) and children's television dare to go beyond stereotypes, as in the series *Annedroids*, it can be greatly enriching for identity development (Götz et al., Johnson). However, television can likewise reinforce pathogenic thoughts and behaviours, as in the case of eating disorders and the *Next Topmodel* format (Lahusen, Götz/Mendel).

### What shapes my self

This article describes the results of an artistic activity in the context of narrative identity completed with 114 5-19 year-olds from 7 countries. The shapes created by the children and adolescents give insights in their inner worlds.

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### Boys, girls, and their media experiences

What is the role that popular culture in general, and media content for children more specifically, play in the construction of gender identity? What stories do they tell us about what it means to be a female and what it means to be a male?

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Watching a show like *Annedroids* has a positive impact on children's attitude towards technology.

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# TELEVISION

## IDENTITY

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What makes the format *Pippi Longstocking* so strong that it has been a reference point for children's identity issues for 70 years?

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### How children negotiate their identity development with television

Maya Götz describes the most common ways in which children use television to negotiate their identity. It highlights the opportunities but also the problems this can entail.

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### I am who I am: media, identity and transgender youth

The article explains some of the terms used within the transgender community and developmental attributes of gender cognitions as well as examining the implications of transgender representation in contemporary media.

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