

the girlhood studies collective
presents

The Girl in Theory: Toward a Critical Girlhood Studies Symposium

March 29th-31st, 2023
virtual

Official Program Guide



The Girl in Theory:

Toward a Critical Girlhood Studies Symposium

Hosted by the Department of Childhood Studies and the Gender Studies Program at
Rutgers University, Camden – USA

This symposium invited exploration of what it means to theorize through and with the girl and the category of girlhood. Well beyond the boundaries of “girlhood studies,” the girl often lurks where she is not an explicit subject of inquiry. As a figure enmeshed in processes of racial capitalism, colonialism, and carcerality, how might the girl inform visions of, and struggles for, transformation and liberation? In joining ongoing critical conversations in the field of Black girlhood studies and beyond, the symposium positions critical girlhood studies as a viable field that has much to offer contemporary modes of thought and inquiry.

This symposium centers critical conversations on the generative tensions and future possibilities of scholarship on girls and girlhoods. What does it mean to invoke “the girl” as the central subject of research and inquiry? In an ever-shifting landscape of gender politics that push beyond binary categories and narrow identities, what does the category of “the girl” have to offer critical research? How are scholars attending to shifting definitions of “the girl” and “girlhood”? And how might these generative tensions push the field of girlhood studies in new, critical directions? These are the questions “The Girl in Theory” explores.

Some themes this symposium investigates:

- (Re)defining the “girl” / challenging the bounds of girlhood
- Racializing, queering, transing, and crippling girlhoods
- Possibilities of indigenous and transnational girlhoods beyond the legacies of colonialism
- Semiotics, affect, and aesthetics of girlhood (appropriative, sexualized, or otherwise)
- Girlhood as it (dis)appears in history, media, literature, or art
- Girlhood in public institutions (carceral, educational, governmental) and processes
- Futures of Girlhood Studies as a field or discipline

This symposium is the first annual conference by the Girlhood Studies Collective, a new community of scholars, researchers, and practitioners who do critical work on the girl, girlhood, and girls' culture.

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Day One: Wednesday, March 29

9:30 am - 11:00 am, ET

Panel 1A: The Pasts and Futures of Critical Girlhood Studies (I)

Moderator: Halle Singh, Rutgers University

Re-conceptualizing Black African Girlhood in sub-Saharan Africa

Milka Nyariro, McGill University

The initial definition of a girl and girlhoods were based on Euro-American perspectives and has determined by adults. Girlhood a phase of development overlaps with other phases of development like childhood, youth and womanhood, girlhood studies overlap the same disciplines. Similarly, girlhood studies as a scholarly discourse transcends disciplinary boundaries and overlaps with childhood, youth, and women's studies. This presentation will draw from a wider array of literature in the fields of girlhood, childhood, and youth studies to give a deeper understanding of how the field of girlhood studies continues to develop globally. An environmental literature scan shows that in the developed and western countries, girls' voices, especially those who have been historically marginalized like the Black girls in North America are emerging in spaces that they never were allowed before. However, in the developing contexts like sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), girls' voices are still not being heard enough in conversations on girlhoods. In these contexts, it was presumed that the introduction of formal education would give girls agency and voices, but this has not been the case. Currently, experiences of girlhood the world over continue to be defined and determined by the adults Euro-American values. Moreover, African girls and African girlhood continue to be underrepresented in the discourse of girlhood studies and a lot of work in this context has been advanced by girlhood scholars from the developed and western countries. Despite of these, the conceptualization of girlhood is determined by context specific interconnected socio-cultural and political factors. With the introduction of formal education in SSA, the concepts of "the girl" and "girlhood" are further complicated and continue to evolve different contexts of SSA but has extended the period of girlhood for most African girls allowing them to experience longer periods of childhoods, its rights, and protections.

The Past and Future of Studies on Girls in Turkey

Fatma Fulya Tepe, İstanbul Aydın University

In 2021, the percentage of girls aged 10–19 in Turkey was 14.5. Among young persons aged 15–29, 26 per cent were not in employment, education, or training (NEET); 46 per cent of this group were girls. Despite this, there are few studies on girls. Moreover, in these few studies the special field of girls' studies is not mentioned or used. Sometimes the category of "woman" is used instead of "girl"; this indicates the adult-centeredness of the fields of women and gender studies, as well as the desire of these fields to distance themselves from the term "girl". Studies on girls are often positioned at the intersection of youth studies and adult-centered women's studies. However, based on the relevant literature, one can conclude that girl studies do exist in Turkey as a concept although the term "girls' studies" is not used and although girls as a category of young people is not being focused or prioritized. Moreover, the kind of studies that exist at the conceptual level are under strong influence of the approaches of other disciplines. The category of girls, being located at the intersection of gender and age, and suffering from social and cultural disadvantages, deserves clearer scientific attention. This presentation will give a concise picture of the existing literature on girls in Turkey and then point to the possibility of a historical approach to Turkish girls' studies, sharing a list of material from the pre-1960 period.

How Soon Is Now: Wave Resistance: Liminality, and Critical Girlhood Studies

Caroline K. Kaltefleiter, State University of New York College at Cortland

The last three decades have seen a substantial shift in cultural views girls. While previously girls were seen as unimportant and passed over for inquiries into boyhood and womanhood, girls and girlhood have become of central concern in academic and popular culture (Mitchell). This shift from the periphery gave rise to multiple, contradictory girlhood discourses that framed our understanding of girlhood in different ways. Importantly discussions of positionality and gender fluidity continue to advance critical interrogations of contemporary girlhood. Innovative projects in rural areas as well as communities have color have provided spaces for creative performance and expression to explore complexities and realities of Black and Brown girlhoods (Brown, Halliday; Kaltefleiter & Alexander; Lindquist et. al).

The use of wave theory to discuss contemporary girlhood is frequently tied to political agency, activism, and historical demarcations (Hewitt). However, such narratives serve as a faulty guide in the delineation of girlhood studies and generate reductive approaches so as to see past girl experiences as "outdated" or "out of touch." Using auto-ethnography, I examine the impact of wave theory on contemporary girl studies theory. I (re)articulate a politics of resistance by investigating a fluidity of girlhood that resurrects a discussion of liminality as means to constitute possibilities to navigate as embodied states of being a girl. As such, resistance and agency are constantly shifting,

creating spaces that illuminate fluid states of girlhood. Finally, this analysis interrogates questions as to how girls and young women construct their understandings of girlhood, of where the girls are, and the future of the field given subject positions in the neoliberal academy.

The future is female: using the girl as the figurehead for new understandings of marginalized identities

Alexandra Downing, Newcastle University

Childhood and feminist theories are often considered together as two areas focused on representations of a group which has been historically silenced, marginalized, or made invisible in literature and culture. Whilst feminist children's literature criticism has become increasingly common, the term 'girl' is still often contested or absent in feminist theory and acts as a derogatory term when it is used to describe fully-grown women. This paper will argue that if theory can reconceptualize and revalue age so that it becomes merely factually inappropriate, rather than offensive, to call women 'girls', it can also offer a framework for conceptualizing marginalized groups more generally as different, but not inferior. Thus, the girl, who is inherently multiply marginalized by her age and gender, can act as a starting point for new ways of understanding intersectional identities. Whilst discussions of gender, race, and marginalization are far from absent in both feminist and childhood theory, I argue that where previously these ideas have been isolated from one another, they may speak to one another to interrogate new questions: can questioning the methods and origins of the marginalization of girls lead to new ways of understanding intersectionality? How can empathy help to reform feminist and childhood studies by centralising the concerns of the girls today, rather than the girls that many of us, as scholars, were in the past? How can this new feminism include varied identities without expecting that the existing theories will automatically serve their interests? Raising these questions helps not only to contribute to the formation of a new feminism and revalue age, but also has the potential to theorize new ways of understanding intersectional marginalization, using the girl and girlhood studies as the figure head of the future of intersectionality.

Panel 1B: Mapping, Drawing, and Challenging the Boundaries of Girlhood

Moderator: Ida Leggett, Middle Tennessee State University

American Popular Girls' Fiction as National Narrative

Ya'ara Notea, King's College London

For the larger part of the past century, girls' popular culture was not taken seriously. The books girls read in their millions were presumed by critics and society to be

frivolous and simplistic, proof that their audience is nothing more than an impressionable consumer market. The Girl Studies critical turn has painstakingly argued against such assumptions, celebrating girls' agency in constructing their own cultural spheres and showing how these cultures are effective socializing and subversive tools. This talk shares its political motivation with these ventures, but what it sets out to do is different: rather than considering girls' fiction in relation to its audience, it asks what happens when we read popular American girls' books as the national cultural phenomena that they are. What, in other words, is the national pull of works such as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976) and *The Baby-Sitters Club* series (1986-2000), whose ongoing resonance transcends their intended readership? I want to suggest that reading popular girls' books in this way illuminates girlhood's symbolic and mediating functions in contemporary American culture.

This talk suggests that girlhood is what allows popular girls' books to mediate—to seemingly solve, but not really—socio-political debates in the United States that extend beyond what we traditionally consider the remit of girls' fiction. I offer Mildred D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder* and Ann M. Martin's *The Baby-Sitters Club* as examples, showing that their narrative strategies negotiate national anxieties and needs: the ongoing threat to Black futures, stories and histories in the United States; the contradictory demands of capitalism from American women; and the unrequited hope for a united but multicultural society. Ultimately, girlhood is what allows these books to suture contradictions, merge opposing narratives, and offer up harmonious tales that respond to deep national sentiments and hold continuous popular appeal."

Challenging the Containment of Girlhood in The Handmaid's Tale Series: Creating a Narrative of their Own

Sara Tabuyo-Santaclara, University of Vigo

The universe of *The Handmaid's Tale* has been expanded in recent years due to the success brought about by the release of the Hulu adaptation in 2017. In the series, the scope of the fictional world is broadened by including new storylines that show sides of Gilead, the fictional totalitarian nation, that were not portrayed in Margaret Atwood's original novel. Girlhood was firstly included in the franchise in 2018, through the character of Eden in the second season of the show. In 2019, Atwood published the long-awaited sequel to her dystopian classic, *The Testaments*, in which representations of girlhood and how it is mediated in Gilead take prominence. The experiences of young girls in Gilead, are limited by the restrictive politics of the fundamentalist regime, which are characterized by strict gendered roles that must be displayed through the ritualistic performance of expressions of gender (Butler 1990, 33) and through the inscription of meaning on the surface of the body (Grosz 1994, 80). Their bodies, revolting and

enticing at the same time (Grosz 1994, 203), are seen as monstrous (Cohen 1996, 52; Somacarrera-Íñigo 2021, 40), in need of containment and constant self-monitorization (Gill 2007, 151). These overarching mandates of the regime, however, do not serve to provide a full account of the girls' lived experiences. It is through "ordinary affects" and the potentiality they carry to set something in motion (Stewart 2007, 2) that the girls' challenging of their roles are initiated. This paper will analyze the containment of the girls' embodied experiences in dystopian Gilead, as well as their resistance to these impositions through diverse strategies that are set in motion by ordinary affects to transcend their roles and create a narrative of their own. In particular, this paper will focus on the portrayal of girlhood in *The Handmaid's Tale* series through the characters of Eden and Esther.

Just Another Pariah in the Bayou: Black Girlhood and Interiority in Films and Social Media

Wendyliz Martinez, Penn State University

What is Black girls' relationship to interior spaces? Artist Torkwase Dyson writes "For black people, moving through a given environment comes with questions of belonging and a self-determination of visibility and semi-autonomy." To extend this further, Black girls have to assess whether certain environments are safe for them to express autonomy and to be visible. This paper analyzes the films *Just Another Girl on the IRT*, *Pariah*, and *Eve's Bayou* and the relationship that Black girls have with interior spaces. Through close readings of these films, I analyze which interior spaces these Black girls deem safe enough to be vulnerable. Using Ruth Nicole Brown's framework that articulates the creative potential of Black girlhood alongside bell hooks' work on homespace and love as guiding principles for my close textual analysis, I argue that the Black girls in these films when observed in interior spaces, such as their rooms, we will see they are acutely cognizant of the nuances of their precarious positionalities within a hypersexualized, racist, and materialist country and express that in various ways. We see how Black girls are aware of their positionality even outside of these fictionalized depictions of Black girlhood in current social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, or Twitter. I compare these films to current social media practices enacted by Black girls to draw parallels as to how Black girls, even in the span of twenty years, continue to designate certain interior spaces as safe, similar to hooks' homespace, to produce knowledge that helps us expand Black feminist epistemologies.

Rendering girls and other bodies: How to draw and think in comics-based research about gender diverse girlhoods

Sally Campbell Galman, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

This paper details the process and problematics of writing and drawing an ethnographic graphic novel about a group of transgender and other gender diverse girls and their negotiation of self as they grow into and navigate childhood and experience puberty. The book itself, based on eight years of ethnographic data collection, is a piece of comics-based research (CBR) and creative non-fiction combined with the energy of ethnographic fiction, a genre best defined by Falcone (2015) as “the beating art of ethnography . . . a softly uttered challenge about the complex nature of true, and a whispered promise about the potential of fiction as a means of approaching it.” While the book is entirely hand-drawn and hand-lettered, comics are equal part asset and problem: so much of how cisgender parents relate to gender diverse daughters hinges on a question of “passing” and binarism and of a “girlhood” tied to archaic structures; And, as such parent participants were concerned first and foremost that I draw their children in starkly binary gendered ways, both in regard to their developing bodies and their clothing, accouterments and patterns of speech. However, both a realistic assessment of these things and the ethnographic imperative to disguise research participants made this difficult and raised the question of how artist/ethnographers can tell a graphic story about gender fluidity that is both critical and accommodating. We must ask how we truthfully represent other people’s bodies and how we frame “girlhood” in the context of a representational act. This is the methodological and personal story that provides the study’s ethnographic foundations and puzzles over the problematics of being an insider/outsider ethnographer in a complex and rapidly shifting context and “emotionally engulfing field site” (Dominguez, 2012) that is simultaneously both deeply transgressive and deeply entrenched in performances of a gender binary. Such comics-based contortions are deliberately but sparingly used, and while they only partially “solve” the problem and promise of how we draw gender diverse girlhoods, they are nonetheless an affordance of the medium that is not to be discounted. Discussion of the ethical considerations of the comic artist-as-researcher conclude the paper.

11:15 am - 12:45 pm, ET

Panel 2A: Disrupted Girlhood Temporalities

Moderator: Halle Singh, Rutgers University

From Power to Failure: Girlhood in the 2010s

Aleksandra Kamińska, University of Warsaw

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the figure of a girl was functioning as a symbol of the perfect neoliberal subject, fueled by the ever-present girl power discourse. However, in

the 2010s, the girl was no longer in power. In the 2010s, "girl" became a self-identifying form of identity claimed by young women who fail or reject traditional adulthood milestones. In the 2010s, Millennial women had been challenging and reevaluating how girlhood and adulthood operate in American culture through their autobiographical and semi-autobiographical narratives – both popular television series and comics from small publishing houses.

By analyzing selected autobiographical and semi-autobiographical narratives created by Millennial women in the 2010s, this paper will prove how girls entering adulthood in the years following the global financial crisis are no longer self-inventing subjects who fit the neoliberal narrative. Middle-class, well-educated Millennial young women should have every possibility to succeed, yet struggle with everyday life. Millennial girls in popular culture have unsatisfying and underpaid jobs and struggle to maintain romantic relationships. Their somewhat belated adolescence is, in fact, reflected in the self-identifying term "girls," which signifies the characters' incapacity to be seen and to identify as an adult. This paper will allow me to explore how the narrative of failure replaced the ever-present girl power discourse.

"From Power to Failure" identifies and examines three main characteristics of the 2010s girlhood: focus on failure and exposing one's vulnerabilities, the need for the relatability of one's narrative, and disrupted temporality – the notion of being "stuck" in girlhood. For an in-depth analysis of those characteristics, I will examine selected girls' self-representations in TV series, comics, and films published in the United States in the years 2010-2019.

Polaroid Possibilities: Enduring Girlhood & the Tangle of Temporality

Shauna Pomerantz, Brock University

My talk unfolds around encounters with girlhood through a set of Polaroid images taken of me in my bedroom when I was 10 years old. The Polaroids are part of a network of contingently bound relations, or what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call an assemblage. When the various bodies in the assemblage relationally connect through the nodal point of the Polaroids, possibilities for immanent girlhood emerge. As a developmental life stage, girlhood is always configured as "the past." Caught in a trap of linear temporality, we must move on to grow up. But this binary thinking leads to a separation between life-stages and diminishes the potential of ongoing girlhood as an affective force. Polaroid possibilities suggest that time is "dynamic and heterogeneous" (Coleman, 2008b, p. 85), enabling girlhood to endure not just as memory, but as embodied affect that reverberates through a co-constituting past-present. As a result, girlhood is construed as "constantly transforming relations" (Coleman, 2008a, p. 168),

rather than a bounded life-stage from which we are required to separate. This immanent approach is a different way to conceptualize girlhood without relying on a fixed developmental state that a girl-identifying child must successfully transcend to become an adult-woman (Gonick & Gannon, 2014). Instead, this talk explores the potential of abandoning boundary-making projects to ask what immanent possibilities emerge by attending to novel ways of feeling, thinking, and living girlhood? Such a question not only challenges the stability of girlhood's borders, but also opens new possibilities for research in the field of Girlhood Studies.

The Temporal Paradox of the Harajuku Girl

Andrea Liu, Center for Experimental Museology

"Harajuku" refers to girls in the neighborhood of Harajuku in Tokyo (beginning in late 1990's and 2000's) where teenage (and preteen) girls dress in outlandishly colorful outfits often corresponding to certain roles: Punk, Kawaii (cute), Ganguro ("average American"), Cosplay, Visual Kei, Lolita, Usa-Hara (goth, sailor suit, funeral-goer, etc.) Japanese kimonos are mixed with Scottish kilts, outfits replete with rainbow colored-clashing stripes, plaids, polka dots, floral prints, platform boots, plastic trinkets, double and triple handbags. For these girls, clothing is a type of 'semiotic guerilla warfare' (Umberto Eco) that expresses a dissident subjectivity; that is, clothing as a type of "anti-fashion" that is a rebuke to the dominant commercial fashion system.

My paper looks at the influence of "Kawaii" on Harajuku girls' style of clothing (particularly, the Lolita role). Kawaii is a signaturely Japanese aesthetic of the "hypercute" and the "hyperfeminine"—an aesthetic suffused through multifarious aspects of Japanese subculture, from fashion to anime to manga to film to visual art and beyond. Harajuku girls (especially Lolitas) manifest the "Kawaii" aesthetic in their attempt to look like Victorian era dolls, often wearing elaborately ornate garments with lace, ribbons, ruffles and bows. Harajuku girls are often attached to "kawaii" objects like Hello Kitty handbags, teddy-bear backpacks, and other childhood objects of affection. The use of Kawaii objects within Japanese culture is tied to neo-romantic notions of childhood, a childhood that is remote from contemporary trappings and responsibilities. One could say that Harajuku girls are attempting to prolong childhood with kawaii. Therefore, when encountering a Harajuku girl, one is faced with a surreal disjunction of on the one hand, a girl who looks like an impeccable porcelain doll from the Victorian era, but yet who has a punk-like subcultural seasoned irreverence towards established modes of dress, and yet who seems to be ridden with a masochistic drive to self-infantilize—that is, to throw herself back to a stage of unblemished childhood innocence. My paper attempts to unpack the temporal paradoxes of the Harajuku girl.

(Trans) Girlhood, Genre and Temporality

Celeste Sandstrom, Australian National University

This paper reflects on the status of “girlhood” within trans and queer theory and the possibilities and limits of thinking through and with the girl in this space. For large parts of these fields, girlhood seems to be relegated to the sidelines while “queerer” genders and sexualities take centre stage. In Jack Halberstam’s discussion of “female masculinities” (1998), for example, the girl is the site of gender’s bad feelings, associated with “various forms of unhealthy body manipulations from anorexia to high-heeled shoes.” In Andrea Long Chu’s discussion of her transition in the *New York Times* (2018), girlhood is a site never available to her, played out on other women’s bodies and in other women’s lives. While the impulses driving these feelings are understandable, there is something missing in the assignment of the girl to something of an extra in queer/trans theory’s cast. The above descriptions tend to relegate the girl to a fixed temporal point—a marker of white cisgender female identity progression. This paper is interested in what happens when girlhood is not conceptually restricted to a certain type of body in a certain temporal progression. I draw on theories of queer temporality and phenomenology, and readings of transfeminine experience in *Conundrum* (1974), *Trans: A Memoir* (2015) and *Detransition, Baby* (2021) to discuss how girlhood appears (or doesn’t) in these texts and explore relationships between girlhood, temporality and genre. Through these discussions, I aim to show how transfeminine experience provides new possibilities for understanding the phenomenology of girlhood.

Panel 2B: Carceral Legacies of Girlhood

Moderator: Jessica Calvanico, Rutgers University

"Very Dangerous...Remarks and Accusations": Masturbation, Violence, and Delinquency in the Early Juvenile Courtroom

Kyle Miron, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Nine-year-old Lillian stood in front of a Milwaukee juvenile court judge in February, 1924 on a charge of stealing. She would go on, however, to spend ten years under carceral supervision—first at the Wisconsin Industrial School for Girls and then on parole—for the practice of masturbation. Lillian was far from alone in losing her freedom because of medico-legal panic about her alleged masturbation. Whereas the nineteenth century had seen parents send their daughters to asylums for supposed masturbatory insanity, in the early twentieth century parents, doctors, social workers, and judges sent masturbating girls to state-run carceral institutions designed to punish and rehabilitate delinquency. I examine these ideas as they appear in *Children’s Bureau*

publications as well as in trial transcripts from girls incarcerated for masturbation in Milwaukee between 1907 and 1925. In these nationally-syndicated readings and in these trials, state-employed physicians located masturbation as a source of delinquency, and thus under the purview of the state. Milwaukee courtroom doctors examined girls who alleged they had experienced sexual violence and repeatedly claimed that these girls had not actually been assaulted, but instead had been masturbating. Further, physicians argued that masturbation could lead girls to make false accusations of sexual violence. Studying girls like Lillian as well as the Children's Bureau campaign against girlhood masturbation reveals that anti-masturbation projects lasted well into the twentieth century and were re-energized by the state. The movement from diagnosing girls with masturbatory insanity towards diagnosing them with a masturbation-induced inclination to make false accusations also reveals how the state deputized a moral panic in order to use legal mechanisms to deal with the social problem of sexual violence.

Adultification and Responsibilization: The Girlhood of Criminalized Girls Embedded in School to Prison Nexus

Maritza Salazar, University of Southern California

Continuation schools, also referred to as alternative schools, are learning environments intended to provide specialized instruction to students who have been discontinued from traditional schools for behavioral issues, truancy, academic performance, or pregnancy. These school sites have been critiqued for their substandard curriculum, focus on behavior control, and alignment with carceral logics and surveillance tactics. Continuation schools are one element of the school-to-prison nexus that disproportionately affects youth of color due to substandard curricula and limited educational opportunities (Lehr et al., 2009; Selman, 2017). Critical criminologists have only recently begun to uncover how youth who attend continuation schools experience heightened levels of adultification and responsabilization, or the notion that one's life and subsequent outcomes are a result of their own actions and behavior. Therefore, notions of responsabilization imply that crime and delinquency are a result of personal failure and not that of social issues. However, these critiques have not centered the unique experiences of girls of color who have been criminalized and stigmatized through the school removal process. Importantly the context of continuation schools is germane to exploring adultification and responsabilization for girls such that young women may be discontinued from a comprehensive high school for pregnancy-related reasons. Using life course criminalization as a theoretical framework, this work in progress study seeks to understand how Chicanas/Latinas that previously attended continuation schools in Los Angeles County experience adultification and responsabilization throughout their school removal process. Through life history

interviews with 15 participants, this study seeks to generate an understanding about who imposes adultification and responsabilization (i.e. a parent, school official, or self etc.) and how this impacts young womens' subsequent educational experiences.

Arson Girls and Abolition in the U.S. South

Jessica Calvanico, Rutgers University

In 1875, fourteen-year old Bertha Guth set fire to the Poydras Asylum, an orphanage for white girls in New Orleans. As punishment, Guth was transferred downtown to the House of the Good Shepherd, a juvenile reformatory that incarcerated "sexually delinquent" girls of all races, ethnicities, classes, and religions. Limited to a thirty-four word entry in the New Orleans Office of the Mayor's Records of the Deposition of Destitute Orphans, Guth is but a ghost in municipal records. Her first and only appearance in the archive ends with her incarceration after attempted arson. This paper explores Guth and other "arson girls" of New Orleans to understand the relationship between girlhood, carcerality, and rage. I speculate that "arson girls" channel their rage to perform their waywardness by burning down the buildings that incarcerate them. In this paper, I read through the disappearing archival fragments of court cases, insurance claims, and newspaper reports of incarcerated girls who set fires during the late nineteenth century to consider firesetting as a strategy of political resistance to girls' physical incarceration as well as to the carcerality of girlhood. The scant historical representations of these "arson girls" perpetuate the kind of suspended category of girlhood as a limiting prison of subjective boundaries, enmeshed with white supremacy and classism. Additionally, I examine how these firesetting girls translate their rage into the calculated political act of arson--a form of anti-carceral resistance to the category of girlhood itself.

1:15 pm - 2:45 pm, ET

Panel 3A: Posthuman Girls and Non-Human Relationality

Moderator: Inna Sukhenko, University of Helsinki

Greening Girlhood: Toward a Postcolonial Ecofeminism of Classic Girls' Fiction

Michaela Wipond, Queen's University

I have recently begun work on my doctoral dissertation, and my presentation provides a brief overview of my proposed theoretical framework. My dissertation utilises the emergent methodology of postcolonial ecocriticism to re-examine classic girls' fiction from a perspective that centres social and environmental justice. Although the relationship between postcolonial and ecocritical approaches to literature has, according

to Rob Nixon (2005), historically been one of “reciprocal indifference and mistrust,” John Miller (2012) argues that “the collision of imperial and environmental themes constitutes an unavoidable background to much work in the [Victorian] period which offers a fertile territory ... for future work.” As Clare Echterling (2016) suggests, bringing postcolonial ecocriticism and canonical children’s books into conversation means “refusing to read such texts as apolitical, ahistorical, or ideologically innocent, and instead foregrounding their engagement with ... [attitudes] that are deeply entwined with racism, sexism, speciesism, and imperialism.” My objective in employing this methodology is to create a more environmentally conscious postcolonialism and a more politically aware ecocriticism of classic girls’ fiction. Thus, I aim to revisit the critical tradition of ecofeminism, a philosophical and political movement that began with Françoise d’Eaubonne’s “Le féminisme ou la mort” (1974). While advancements in gender theory have rightfully contested d’Eaubonne’s claim that women and girls have a biologically essentialist connection to nature, there remains a sociocultural link between gender-based oppression, environmental degradation, and the cisheteropatriarchy. In recent years, scholars such as Greta Gaard (2011, 2015, 2022) have rejected gender essentialism and extended ecofeminist thought into queer ecology and intersectional feminism. I draw on Gaard’s and Echterling’s insights in my attempt to formulate a postcolonial ecofeminism of early twentieth-century girls’ fiction. Further, I counter previous critical assumptions by arguing that canonical children’s literature is not only relevant but foundational to contemporary eco-activism. Indeed, the continued popularity of classic girls’ fiction necessitates more—not less—critical engagement with the genre’s representations of Indigenous peoples, nonhuman animals, and the natural world.

Posthuman Girlhood & Android Embodiment: Nonhuman Surrogates in The Lunar Chronicles

Nichol Brown, Illinois State University

Just as girlhood continues to be reimagined, so does our definition of humanity. Characters who blur the human/machine binary may allow us to continue redefining the concept of girlhood by providing space for the reader to explore their own embodiment through a nonhuman surrogate. This paper will test this theory through Iko, a human-like android in Marissa Meyer’s young adult science fiction series, *The Lunar Chronicles*, as well as the graphic novel sequel series, *Wires and Nerve*.

Immediately upon her introduction, Iko is characterized by her love of hyper-femme activities, like playing dress-up and fawning over princes—all of which are aligned with a traditional sense of girlhood. This alignment invites the audience to see Iko as a stand-in for a “girl reader,” prompting us to ask ourselves whether nonhuman

characters in children's literature can provide a productive space for young readers to explore their own conceptions of and experiences with girlhood.

Although there is much to analyze regarding Iko's personality, I plan to explore this question through the realm of embodiment. Throughout the series, Iko progresses through three primary bodies—a traditionally robotic body, a painfully dysphoric spaceship, and an extremely humanistic droid body. Iko's acceptance of these versions of herself varies, as she comes to terms with her own dysphoria. For Iko, her dysphoria involves looking more "human," but this experience lends well to body dysphoria in girlhood. Drawing on the theories of William S. Haney, Philip K. Dick, and N. Katherine Hayles, this paper blends posthumanist and feminist scholarship, ultimately claiming that Iko's nonhuman character provides an emotional distance that allows a young audience to better conceptualize their own maturing and changing bodies, as they leave girlhood and enter adolescence.

Conceptualizing 'Nuke' Girlhood: Literary Dimensions of Girls' Nuke Traumatic Experience in Nuclear Fiction for Young Adults

Inna Sukhenko, University of Helsinki

Global debating on nuclear energy as a societal value in the energy dependent society includes not only issues on sustainability agenda, nuclear optimism, slow violence, toxic geographies, but also debates on feminist anti-nuclear and anti-uranium movements, regarded as 'an act of challenging patriarchy and... human security (Acheson, 2018), and feminist energy advocacy that 'sought to dismantle centralized, corporate energy' (A. West, 2020) and predominating 'white male academics' (Klien 1983). These debates contribute to conceptualizing girlhood within the Nuclear Anthropocene via girls' experience of nuclear infrastructure, a nuclear disaster and its aftermath: what happened to 'nuke' girls, going through nuclear optimism, nuclear phobia, 'slow violence' and finding the way-out of the coming apocalypse, which can make their close adults disappointed, scared and doomed in the post-nuclear disaster? what transformations do 'nuke' girls go through to have their critical thinking to nuclear energy-related issues, which trigger hope and show "way out" alternatives via 'slow hope' (Mauch 2018).

The presentation intends to show Mauch's "slow hope" concept's implications within focusing on the girls' perspective on a nuclear disaster and its aftermath (the Chernobyl accident), where the amalgamation of emotionalizing 'nuclear energy' and transmitting nuclear knowledge are among the tools of framing nuclear awareness and critical thinking at the Nuclear Age in the children's perspective.

The comparative analysis of narrative tools of depicting 'nuke' girls in nuclear fiction – Karen Hesse's *Phoenix Rising* (1994), Andrea White's *Radiant Girl* (2008) and Anna Blankmann's *The Blackbird Girls* (2020) – enables to depict the range of roles, performed by a girls, having experienced the nuclear disaster in the time of setting personal values' system: a seeker for truth about the nuclear disaster; a victim of the totalitarian system; an intergenerational link between indigenous knowledge and modern technological achievements. The special focus is made on referring to the literary representation of folklore/indigenous knowledge in 'nuke' girls' interpreting eutierria/tierratrauma/ solastalgia (Albrecht 2017) as components of emotionalizing nuclear energy and nuclear trauma in fictional writings.

Based on Nixon's *Slow Violence* (2011), Morton's *Dark Ecology* (2016), Cordle's *Nuclear Criticism* (2014), Maunch's *Slow Hope* (2019), Brugh's *Intermediate Ecocriticism* (2020), such literary analysis of depicting 'nuke' girlhood in the context of nuclear energy related issues, fictionally shaped in these novels, not only reveals the narrative toolkit of framing of nuclear storytelling on children's post-traumatic experience but also represents the literary dimensions of 'nuke' girls as actors of the nuclear discourse for further developing nuclear critical thinking skills in the context in the energy dependent society."

Panel 3B: Queer Girls On and Off the Screen

Moderator: E Lev Feinman, Rutgers University

Loving Buddy Lawrence: Queer Pleasures in 1970s Television

Kirsten Pike, Northwestern University

Kristy McNichol is, perhaps, best remembered for her two-time, Emmy award-winning role as boyish "Buddy" on the TV drama *Family* (ABC, 1976-1980) and as tough tomboy Angel in the 1980 film *Little Darlings*. She was hugely popular with female audiences—purportedly receiving 4,000 fan letters a week while starring on *Family*. Despite her popularity, as the actress grew up, the press often inquired about her sexuality, with hints that she would conform to heterosexual norms. She played along, embracing more traditionally feminine adult roles, but the failure of these attempts (especially in *The Pirate Movie*) led to her emotional breakdown in 1983.

Although McNichol's story sadly points to mainstream media's consistent preference for heteronormativity over sexual ambiguity, some liberation-era narratives nevertheless featured moments of resistance, including episodes of *Family*. On one hand, episodes that focus on Buddy's romantic relationships with boys seem to offer a relatively

straightforward example of the dominant effort to pin down ambiguous sexual identity; on the other hand, these same episodes often invite us to read the narrative in favor of sexual ambiguity and lesbian desire. In this presentation, I want to build upon what Kristen Hatch and Sarah Projansky have already said about the contradictory representation of tomboys in cinema during the 1970s by examining the era's most popular TV tomboy. Ultimately, I argue that despite the heteronormative parameters in which Buddy's stories typically unfolded, many episodes offered queer viewing pleasures, especially through the portrayal of Buddy's loving relationship with her best friend, Audrey. In so doing, I hope to show that Family—despite being largely overlooked in the academic literature on teen-oriented television—was doing interesting ideological work, including offering girls a crucial space through which to dream, perhaps differently, about liberation."

The Tomboy is Dead; Long Live the Tomboy: Gender, Nostalgia, and Extinction in Tomboy Films

Lynne Stahl, Wesleyan University

Recent discussions of girlhood have roiled around the question of tomboys—is concept outdated and essentialist, or does its alleged obsolescence bespeak misogyny and lesbophobia? In their putative extinction, filmic tomboys have become nostalgic objects whose disappearance is bemoaned by a curious mix of progressive and reactionary factions.

Tomboy movies have historically offered gender-dissident viewers affirmation despite the hallmark taming trope, biting their thumb at convention even while ultimately complying with it. From *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *Hunger Games*, this affirmation often relies on the material and emotional labor of Black characters, while the heroized tomboys themselves are predominantly white. In this paper, I address a range of debates around tomboys, including the her disappearance, refutations of her Anglo-eugenicist origins, and the perceived-by-some threat of identitarian extinction. My analysis draws on Svetlana Boym's differentiation between the critical ambivalence of "reflective nostalgia" and the paranoid reactionism of "restorative nostalgia" to suggest that what we really miss about tomboys might be recreated in ways that don't perpetuate racial hierarchies nor yoke bodies to behaviors, attitudes, and aesthetics.

Filmic tomboys both gauge the extent to which race and gender are co-constitutive and model an embodied form of resistance to gender norms. To embrace them uncritically, however, is to succumb to a major pitfall of identity politics—that in organizing around a particular identity, we can lose sight of the endgame of organizing against forces that dictate gender identity to begin with. I make these claims through *Jurassic Park*,

ostensibly a strange bedfellow for *Little Women*, *Juno*, et al., but a film very much about gender, nostalgia, extinction, and the unreclaimability of the past whose 2020 resurgence speaks resonantly to these ongoing conversations and to broader questions of how to navigate our attachments to cultural objects with troublesome politics.

Don't Say the L Word: Contemporary Lesbian Possibilities for Girls

Mary Zaborskis, Penn State Harrisburg

This work-in-progress considers what possibilities exist for lesbian girlhood in a moment when LGBTQIA+ possibilities for youth are being increasingly restricted across political, social, and cultural domains. Political conservatives' attempts to demonize children's encounters with queer knowledge, history, and content are clear in recent legislation like the "Don't Say Gay" bill, book bans, and attacks on trans youth healthcare. However, other versions of restrictions, both ideological and material, are playing out in spaces that claim to be LGBTQIA+ friendly. In recent years, social media platforms have assisted in the seeming democratization of queer discourse and queer-informed practices, especially among some demographics of youth. This phenomenon has resulted in generationality happening at a faster pace and in more rhizomatic ways. It also has, at times, circulated queer content in ways that are evacuated of history and context, which has led to demands and mandates for universal ways to understand gender, sexuality, identity, desire, and expression in ways that, I argue, have led to policing of the boundaries of identity among LGBTQIA+ persons by LGBTQIA+ persons. I am interested in how this is playing out among younger generations. I plan to use TikTok and youth engagement with *The L Word* (both the original and the Generation Q spinoff) in order to ground and explore these dynamics—the world "lesbian" itself has circulated in charged and conflicting ways among younger generations, as observed in classroom, online, and activist spaces. At times, "lesbian" is embraced for its "temporal drag" features, while at other times condemned for its presumed racial and gender essential connotations. This investigation is not occurring in a hand-wringing, pearl-clutching mode to lament today's youth, but rather comes from a place of critical openness and inquiry to consider if there are inroads for disrupting intergenerational tensions especially around the conceptualization, formation, and expression of gender and sexual categories that can open up possibilities for expanding LGBTQIA+ modes of being, in and beyond girlhood.

Finding Queer Girls in Early Film History

Diana W. Anselmo, California State University, Long Beach

So much of what we know about the reception of silent US cinema is gleaned through the pages of film magazines or the published impressions of screen personalities. In my work, I excavate unknown accounts of film spectatorship through an examination of

personal fan materials: movie scrapbooks, fan mail, memory books, diaries, and moviegoing ledgers crafted by adolescent girls. Described as the original “adolescents” and “movie fans” by early twentieth-century journalists and psychologists, everyday girls created an unexamined film-related repository that not only helps us track the cultural formation of non-heteronormative (i.e. non-heterosexual, neurodivergent, feminist) communities at a time women’s political activism and same-sex desire were openly pathologized, but also aids in historicizing the diversity of responses to the first movie personalities: from aspirational consumption to social disenfranchisement, and from homoerotic desire to heteronormative entrapment.

Queer, in the context of fan/star relationality, encompasses gender nonconformity, sexual attraction, homoerotic identification, mental divergence, and other non-normative emotions girl fans negotiated through the consumption and manipulation of female picture personalities. From a feminist historiographic perspective, I am interested in discussing ways to use personal fan materials to better center adolescent girls in the histories of US media. Pioneering works on Hollywood female reception by Jackie Stacey, Amelie Hastie, and Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, for instance, focus on white, educated, apparently heteronormative and well-adjusted women. As a result, their research tends to suggest that female audiences in the first third of the twentieth century related to Hollywood cinema as a means of escapism and uplift. In this talk, I will focus on adolescent girls heralding from all walks of life, leveraging that biographic diversity to question the roles inadequacy, pain, longing, defeatism, and alienation played in the reception of silent female stars.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm, ET

Welcome & Orientation to GSC Discord Community

Join us for our virtual kick-off of the Girlhood Studies Collective Discord Server! We will provide a live orientation on how to use Discord, as well as host a virtual meet-and-greet on the GSC server.

Day Two: Thursday, March 30

9:30 am - 11:00 am, ET

Panel 1A: (Re)defining "the Girl"

Moderator: Caroline K. Kaltefleiter, State University of New York College at Cortland

From Brides to Writers: Mapping the Future of the Girl in Theory Through the Figure of Writing Girls

Yan Du, University of Cambridge

In *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*, Catherine Driscoll interrogated the figure of the 'Bride' and forms of bridal culture in relation to Deleuze's theory of becoming. A decade has passed since Driscoll first disclosed the transgressive, shapeshifting image of the bride. What follows is an "antilinear, antioedipal" approach to girlhood "useful for a feminist theory that would consider conjunctions of body and identity without relying on transcendence or other distinctions from the embodied self" (2002, p. 200). The Deleuzian legacy to girlhood studies has since been developed further by scholars like Jessica Ringrose, Alecia Jackson, and Leisha Jones. Despite the proven usefulness of Deleuze in relation to our understanding of girls, one is tempted, still, to ask: what next?

Keeping with Driscoll's Deleuzian mappings, this paper proposes the writing girl as a crucial figure for our speculative thinking about the future of girlhood studies. Like brides, writers are not fixed identities. If the bride ushered in a non-hierarchical, anti-binary perspective to girlhood, the writing girl points us to the future by explaining how such perspective translates into possible frameworks of creative participation, allowing girls to become active agents in the shaping of feminist futurities. Before they become brides, today's girls will first become writers. Drawing from Deleuze's views on writing and literature, feminist negotiations on writing (such as those of Haraway, Braidotti, Cixous, Woolf, Richardson, Stewart, and others), and studies in youth authorship, this paper conceptualizes writing as an affirmative practice bringing tangible changes to the world we inhabit. Bridging theory and practice, fantasy and reality, writing is key to reconstructing the traditionally troubled relationship between girlhood and language—a reconstruction that has crucial political consequences for our field. Taking lines of flight and Deleuzian paths of becoming-minor through discourse, girls search for a style that best conveys their lived experiences and gendered performance. As they do so, they

push feminist dialogue into new, exciting realms, challenging, at the same time, how we understand their agency as girls.

(Re)centring the Teen Girl after #MeToo: Teen Girls, Sex and Sexuality in Film and TV after #MeToo

Polina Zelmanova, University of Warwick

Teen narratives in film and television have always demonstrated an interest in sex due to their link to gender and puberty (Driscoll 2011, 71) as teen bodies are a site upon which ideals and expectations play out around the formation of gender and sexuality. Narratives focusing on girls' experience are an especially fruitful ground for the discussion of the issue of sex and agency, as both girls' bodies and the genre itself are familiar grounds on which cultural discourse and anxieties around young women and sexual information, knowledge and experience are articulated (Gwynne 2016). It is not surprising then that in the context of #MeToo, as a new discourse for the discussion of sex which creates new forms of norms and knowledge around sex, a new attention has been placed on girls' sexualities. Recent emerging scholarship on sex, pleasure and #MeToo seems to exclusively focus on teen girl narratives with a common aim of theorising positive representations of sex (e.g. Wilz 2020; MacDonald 2022), models which have a new significance in the critical discourse related to mediated intimacy within the context of sex education (Barker et al. 2018). However, a discussion as to why the figure of the girl becomes central to this work is yet to be had. Through close readings of specific teen girl shows such as *The Sex Lives of College Girls* and *Heartbreak High* I want to signal the ways in which the figure of the girl offers the ground for experimenting with different ideas around sex and sexuality which are specific to the post #MeToo context. In establishing the importance of teen girl sexualities at this moment, I question the (re)definition of 'girl' within these texts and interrogate how, beyond a positive model of a hopeful sexual future, the girls' bodies become a site upon which the current contentions within popular feminism are negotiated, including how the girl herself remains far from a universal subject.

Generational Modernity and Implications of Girlhood Studies in Cultural Anthropology
Ida Leggett, Middle Tennessee State University

As a cultural anthropologist working with girl cultures both locally and internationally, I examine the complicated theoretical issues that arise from an ethnographic focus on girls and propose that such intellectual and methodological "discomfort" is well-worth experiencing. Based on fieldwork conducted long ago with Thai teenage girls, my current rapid appraisal research with refugee youth in a Tennessee high school, as well as analyses of the more recent ethnographic research on girl cultures, I argue here that girls' perspectives, narratives, and everyday experiences demonstrate a "generational

modernity": a unique age- and gender-based experience of this current moment of global financial, technological, and media connections. The concept of generational modernity does not only include girls' everyday experiences and other more traditional factors of cultural significance, it also prioritizes girls' emotions (like desire, fear, and hope) and highlights the significance of girls' imaginaries about the future. This concept thus pushes for a redefinition of the anthropological definitions of "girl," challenges more traditional interpretations of girls' experiences and ideas, and provides a methodological mechanism for shifting the ethnographic study of girl cultures beyond the traditional and into more transnational perspectives and beyond. For example, this perspective can reveal new spaces of inquiry beyond traditional singular field-sites, and into the realms of not just multi-sited ethnographies but also cyberspace, imagined realms, and fictional and the fantastic worlds. Thus a consideration of the generational modernity of girls' lives can capture the complexities and multiplicities of the 21st century and demonstrate how traditional ideas of culture and identity could transform to better understand and explain our global moment.

Nocturnal Rhythms of Girlhood: Time, Capitalism, and Life After Dark

Halle Singh, Rutgers University

Nighttime has been historically understood as a time of freedom, rest, rejuvenation, and sociality. At the same time, the freedom of the night is associated with deviance, in contrast with the productive hours of the workday. Given the normative understanding of nighttime's idleness and unproductivity under capitalism, the boundaries of nocturnal freedom constrict and expand with the social de/valuation of people's time.

One figure holds a particularly fraught relationship with the night: the girl. Scholars have excavated the moralized and racialized discourses of what it means to be a "girl" and to live a "girlhood," tracing the systems of oppression that fix "the girl" as an idealized, white, cisgendered, heterosexual, able-bodied figure. What hasn't been contended with is the temporal quality in which these boundaries around "the girl" are enforced and challenged. I argue that, in addition to the developmental, future oriented version of time, the girl is also regulated through the metronomic quality of capitalist clock-time.

As an eventual adult/laborer, as well as an embodied subject of diurnal time, the girl is a distinctive temporal subject, one controlled by capitalist logics of both present and future. In this paper, I aim to (re)animate the analytic potential of Henri Lefebvre's method of "rhythmanalysis" through the study of girls' nighttime leisure. Using rhythmanalysis to study girls' nocturnal experiences affords new interpretive possibilities, not only with and against understandings of capital, labor, and time, but

also against patriarchal, ageist, racist, classist, ableist ideals about what it means to be a "girl" and live a "girlhood." For girls, ideas of agency, protection, vulnerability, and transgression become amplified at night. But so too do freedom, dreams, alternative realities, and utopias. The girl out at night forces us to consider new ways of conceptualizing "the girl," capitalism, and the interstitial moments of life after dark.

Panel 1B: Girls of a Certain Era

Moderator: Jennifer Helgren, University of the Pacific

"Not a girl, not yet a woman": an interdisciplinary examination of the girl citizen in periodicals

Katie Taylor, Liverpool John Moores University

Rosie Steele, Northumbria University

This panel is an interdisciplinary discussion about the use of periodicals to support girlhood research. The two panel members are PhD researchers Katie Taylor (Liverpool John Moores University) and Rosie Steele (Northumbria University, Newcastle). Katie's research is in English Studies and her thesis examines theories of race in African American children's literature. Rosie's research takes a sociological approach to girls' experience of sex education and seeking advice using teenage girl's magazines.

In "not a girl, not yet a woman" we consider how across the different contexts of our research magazines aimed at teenagers have always been invested in ideas of what it means to be a good citizen. We consider which gendered and racialised notions of "good citizenship" are promoted to girls in magazines from across the twentieth century such as *The Brownies' Book* (1920-1921) and *Jackie* (1964-1993). Rosie will discuss her methodological approach which uses late twentieth-century British teenage girls' magazines with contemporary girls to co-produce data on the experience of seeking advice. Katie will discuss the role of girls' clubs in racial uplift using early twentieth-century African American periodicals.

Our discussion aims to be co-productive in its consideration of what it means to theorize girlhood using a disappearing format, the teen magazine. Kearney (2009) argues girls are often seen as either children or 'young women', separating them from the specific experiences of being a girl. Taking this approach here, we consider how magazines can function to both uphold and resist this "invisible" category. We argue that periodical research is valuable to Girlhood Studies as it helps us to explore how persistent the restrictive tropes of what a girl is and should be are.

Harlem Renaissance 'Nepo Baby': A'lelia Walker's Queer Patronage in the Face of Her Assumed Philanthropy and Expected Girlhood

Kailyn Gray, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

There has been a recent emergence and obsession with the idea of the 'Nepotism Baby'. But what children of the affluent do with their inherited wealth has consumed the public's attention long before today's captivation. This paper seeks to examine the effectiveness of her unorthodox patronage and the reactions to the social life of A'lelia Walker, the daughter of America's first female self-made millionaire. The life of Madam C.J. Walker, A'lelia's mother, is marked with philanthropy towards major Black political movements like the NAACP, involvement with anti-lynching protests, and leadership within the YWCA. Her mother's notable, more traditional, financial donations and contributions created high expectations for A'lelia's future career as a young socialite. Rising in prominence at the same time as the Harlem Renaissance, A'lelia Walker's name is attached to the likes of Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston. Her affluence and hospitality allowed Harlem artists to network, ruminate, and give birth to some of the greatest works in American literature and art. While the authors her wealth aided often garner grand epithets, the social reaction to her use of her mother's wealth was not nearly as appreciated. The depiction that emerges of A'lelia is split between glowing acclamations from her friends and beneficiaries and the concerns and scorn placed on her for diverging from her mother's legacy. This paper hopes to revisit the dismissal of A'lelia's social and financial contributions to the Harlem Renaissance due to her construction of queer-engaged spaces. How artists, queer or otherwise, benefitted from the space of her Dark Tower and her patronage are flushed out in this work. This research seeks to explore how she inherited not only wealth but a certain expected girlhood akin to other socialites and the reactions from the public in her deviation from that girlhood.

Challenging narrow identities: reassessing depictions of girlhood in the Roman world

Linda McGuire, école nationale supérieure d'art (ENSA Dijon)

Little is known about Roman girls outside the preparation they underwent to become ideal wives and mothers. One typical example is Attica, the daughter of Cicero's friend Atticus. Historians remember her as the wife of Marcus Agrippa (circa 63-12 BCE), at one time the second most powerful man in the Roman world, and mother of Vipsania, the first wife of Tiberius Claudius Nero (42 BCE-37 CE), future emperor. Around 50 references to Attica in Cicero's correspondence to her father capture details of her childhood spanning 6 years. Cicero praises the sweetness of a young girl who was lively and willing-to-please. These traits are repeated in imperial-age tombstone epitaphs, another key source for Roman girls that express society's expectations.

Attica features in Cicero's letters, Aelia Junilla in Tacitus' history. The terrible story of her execution, on the orders of the afore-mentioned Tiberius, shocks. Traditionally, Aelia is seen as a victim of her father Lucius Aelius Sejanus's failed bid to wrestle power from the emperor, and the consequent violence (rape and strangulation) inflicted on the body of a girl under 12 years. But do we really understand her depiction in Tacitus? Over 15 minutes, this paper will re-examine Aelia within the context of other female figures in The Annals. It will argue that by sharing several similar narrative features with strong and daring women, Tacitus' Aelia challenges the narrow portrayals of girls in other Latin sources. Here is perhaps another image of Roman girlhood, less seen but not necessarily less present in Roman society: one of bravery.

11:15 am - 12:45 pm, ET

Panel 2A: New Girl Subjects

Moderator: Yan Du, University of Cambridge

The Value of Dreams: Construction of the "Dreamy" Girl in "Twenty-Five, Twenty-One" and "20th Century Girl"

Emily Mohabir, University of Calgary

2022 saw tvN-Netflix's Korean television drama, "Twenty-Five, Twenty-One," and the Korean-made, Netflix-released film, "20th Century Girl," receive wide global viewer and critical acclaim. The narratives' similarities—both written by female-identifying screenwriters, with narratives set as dual 1990s-2020s storylines, featuring an adolescent girl main character who is on the brink of both new adulthood and a new century, and ending on a bittersweet tone—demonstrate a new trend toward a particular type of representation of girlhood in media narratives, which I identify as the "dreamy girl" construction—that is, a girl character whose narrative centers around a nostalgic time of their life in which developing and achieving dreams, both large and small, is a key preoccupation. Simultaneously, this construction of girlhood is also "dreamy," in that the girlhood forms of both texts' characters are set in the narrative past, contained within their own memories, and reflected on by their adult versions. Likewise, the marketing imperative for both texts highlights their potential as being identifiable to youth, with "Twenty-Five, Twenty-One" promising a story that encourages young people in achieving their dreams (Florendo, 2022; Kim, 2022), while "20th Century Girl" is inspired by its director-screenwriter's own girlhood experiences (Cho, 2022). While this characterization of girlhood is framed nostalgically, it differs from the highly-critiqued "manic pixie dream girl" construction (Nilson, 2019), in that both girl character's interior lives are extensively explored and are they are the main focalizing characters in the narrative, as well as from post-feminist ideals of "luminous" girlhood

(Kearney, 2015), in that the value of dreams are explored in an intersectional and nuanced context, rather than reproducing “girl-power” discourses. Ultimately, this presentation unpacks both texts’ construction of “dreamy” girlhood, particularly contextualizing its role in globalized South Korean media, as well as the larger framework of girl-oriented media texts.

"The Sorority Girl": Institutional Memory and Peer Culture in Twentieth Century Sorority Girls' Identity Formation

Amy Achenbach, Baylor University

Who is the “sorority girl”? In contemporary twenty-first century media she is a symbol of whiteness and class-privilege, often the subject of derision for perceived vapidness. In the marketplace she is a consumer of all things “girly,” from matching pink dresses to glitter canons. Yet, what is the sorority girl’s understanding of herself? Conceptualizing the sorority as an institutionalized liminal space of transition between American girlhood and womanhood – a “finishing school” of girlhood – my research explores the transmission of shared identity through peer culture and historic memory. As uniquely American cultural institutions emerging out of the late-nineteenth century, it is my contention that the “sorority girl” cannot be understood without historical analysis. In this paper I use sorority publications alongside individual diaries and correspondence to trace sorority identity throughout the long-twentieth century. I argue that as historic institutions sororities perpetuated an idealized white, middle-class girlhood through mythmaking and tradition. Even as collegiate peer cultures shifted, membership in a sorority continued to shape individual identity through an imagined community built on tradition and shared values. I conclude with a meditation on sorority girls in the twenty-first century and question whether there is a place for single-sex girls’ organizations like the sorority in the twenty-first century.

"I was Never a Hot Cheeto Girl:" Heteronormativity's Impacts on Latinas' Aesthetics, Mobility Pathways, and Sexual Subjectivities

Michelle Gomez Parra, The University of California, Santa Cruz

In the United States, discourses of girlhood reproduce racist, sexist, classist, ageist, and sexual inequalities. For instance, dominant discourses of female adolescence uphold racialized discourses about sexuality that construct certain groups of girls as sexually pure and others as deviant. Often, girls who do not adhere to gendered behaviors that fit within white, middle-class notions of femininity run the risk of being labeled “bad” girls and are subject to institutionalized forms of criminalization. In this paper, I extend theories of heteronormativity, particularly those contending that any gender and sexuality failing to uphold white, middle/upper class femininity and heterosexuality deviate from heteronormativity, to examine the image of the “hot cheeto girl.” By

undertaking a media and discourse analysis of 75 tik-tok videos that utilize the #hotcheetogirl hashtag and semi-structured interviews with 50 low-income Latinas who are college-going, I delineate the ways in which the “hot cheeto girl” is a discourse of heteronormativity. In particular, I suggest that discourses of the “hot cheeto girl” constructs low-income Latina girls as “bad” girls and students because of their racialized and classed urban-based aesthetics. Moreover, I show how society uses girls’ urban-based aesthetics to construct them as being nonheteronormative, having an excessive amount of sexuality. Lastly, I draw on interview data with Latinas to show the material implications “hot cheeto girl” discourses have on low-income Latinas’ mobility trajectories, aesthetics, and gender and identity. Overall, this project contributes to theories of heteronormativity and girlhood studies as it critically investigates discourses of the “hot cheeto girl” to produce an intersectional analysis of heteronormativity and mobility.

The Phallic Girl: Between Fantasy and Symptom, or from Cherry Ripe to Stranger Things

Jakob Rosendal, Aarhus University

One of the central versions of the “queer child” presented by Kathryn Bond Stockton is “the child queered by Freud”. A more specific version of this child – and one not explored by Stockton – is what Freud, in his notorious attempts at understanding femininity, presents as the girl of “the phallic phase”. In the present paper, I want to try to develop a further conceptualization of this phallic girl. The phallic girl, I argue, constitutes a kind of dialectical figure between fantasy and symptom, a figure that appears today both as deeply embedded in ideological fantasies and as an opposition to such fantasies. On the ideological side, she can appear as a reactionary construct of patriarchal ideology and/or as a fantasy figure of surplus-enjoyment. Instances of this are found recently in for instance the 38th Asterix album, *Asterix and the Chieftain’s daughter* (2019), and in the Disney Pixar animation film *Turning Red* (2022). As an oppositional and symptomatic figure, she appears as the embodiment of what Todd McGowan has called “the feminine ‘No!’”, that is, as femininity hors-norme (beyond or outside normativity), in Clotilde Leguil’s expression. We see this for instance with the figure of Eleven/Jane in the Netflix series *Stranger Things* and with (certain pictures of) Greta Thunberg. The symptomatic quality of the phallic girl in these instances also has to do with how these depictions of girls can be read as returns of the repressed (and oppressed) of phallic girlhood. A reading that will take us back to some of the painted girls by the Victorian painter John Everett Millais, such as *Cherry Ripe* (1879) and *Ducklings* (1889), and allow for a (re)reading of them as phallic girls.

Panel 2B: (Re)tracing Narratives of Girls' Colonial Education

Moderator: Kate Cairns, Rutgers University

Schoolgirl Pens and the Circulation of Knowledge in Late Colonial India

Sudipa Topdar, Illinois State University

Archival data on girls' voices and authorship in colonial India is rare. I use the writings of the schoolgirls in missionary schools in India as sites of knowledge, connection, and Catholic religiosity. Christian missionary schools and convents were active agents that defined, established, and maintained categories such as "religion," "girlhood," and "women" in colonial India. One of the earliest Roman Catholic convent schools were first established in India in the mid-nineteenth century for European, Eurasian, elite Indian girls and orphans. I examine how the missionaries used schoolgirls' writings to build social and cultural capital. Religiosity created a community of schoolgirls built inside the convent's spaces through daily practices of school learning and writing. The schoolgirls' academic performance and literary skills, a marker of a cultured subject, attracted girls from respectable families and increased funding for the schools. Schoolgirls' writings and authorship serve as an archive to examine alternative perspectives of female lives and religiosity based on personal experiences and thought. Focusing on schoolgirls' essays in Indian missionary schools, I ask: What did it mean to be a schoolgirl in the elite circles of late colonial India? How did the schoolgirls conceptualize domesticity and motherhood? How did schoolgirls build cosmopolitan selfhoods through their writing? How were enactments of citizenship tied to religion, race, and empire? How did Catholicism and empire shape human relationships in the schoolgirls' lives? By exploring these questions my paper centers girls' lives into a larger religious and historical context in late colonial India.

Forgotten Voices: The Survivance of Indigenous Girls in Boarding Schools

Matthew Cerjak, University of Chicago

Studies of Indigenous women have long focused on their survivance, the ability to culturally persist in spite of the genocidal or eliminatory practices of settler polities, though these stories often overlook a sizable, significant population: Indigenous girls. This paper seeks to reverse the aforementioned narrative by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous girls in unique, yet harrowing spaces: boarding schools in the United States and Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These spaces were specifically intended to erase the Indigenous cultures of the girls, ones in which women often led their communities and kinship groups or were at least equally respected—a sharp contrast to the age-old tradition of female oppression in Euro-American societies. Despite the physical, psychological, and

emotional trauma that accompanied the forced migration to and subsequent lessons in these 'schools,' Indigenous girls still found ways to resist and their stories deserve careful study and attention.

Intersectional Genealogy of Educational Devices for Girls in Belgian Congo, 1908-1960

Serena Iacobino, Université Libre de Bruxelles & KU Leuven, Belgium

Based on controversies surrounding the teaching of the colonial fact and Belgium's responsibilities in the colonisation of the Congo, this article aims to retrace the history of educational devices for girls in the Belgian Congo, between 1908 and 1960. This article's original methodology is grounded in genealogical and intersectional approaches, and aims to complexify the studies of Michel Foucault by integrating them with feminist and postcolonial studies. More specifically, the articulation of the multiple relations of domination relating to "class", "gender", "race" and "age" of colonized girls will be examined. The aim is to problematize the historicity of these multiple relations of domination within various educational institutions, by analyzing the technical instruments (programs, places, etc.) that enable such forms of power. Research concerning the history of girls' education and their oppression appears to still be scattered, poorly mapped and rarely comparatively assessed. This article will map the educational institutions for girls in Congo through the case studies of colonial schools. The focus is also to historicize their continuities and discontinuities with women's education in Belgium.

Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, while in Belgium both lower- and middle-class women began to have access to secular secondary and higher education, Congolese girls continued to end their education at primary school level, and to be raised under the aegis of nuns. By teaching them about evangelism, the care of children and the household, we can observe that the colonial educational system fully participated in the racialization of colonized girls: how was the figure of the Congolese girl constructed as the antithesis of the European girl? Why was she educated in "Europeanness" and civilisation? What were the representations of girlhood in terms of "gender", "class", "race", and "age" in these schools? This research attempts to fill these gaps in the history of girls' education by combining different sources and by an extensive and in-depth study of archival material."

1:15 pm - 2:45 pm, ET

Panel 3A: Doing Femininity, Doing Girlhood

Moderator: E Lev Feinman, Rutgers University

Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman: Transfeminine Periodical Communities as Spaces of Transfeminine Girlhood?

Chris Aino Pihlak, University of Victoria

From the 1960s onward, Anglophone, transfeminine people across North America, Britain, and South Africa found each other via a range of transfeminine periodicals. Detached from geographical anchors, given their subscription-based existence, the editors and subscribers constructed non-corporeal spaces overflowing with discussions, guides, and correctives on how one was to 'properly' embody womanhood. Those reading the articles, frequently lamented both their lack of knowledge on 'proper' femininity while pointing to the privilege non-trans women had in learning how to embody femininity from their families, societies, and peers via traditional girlhoods. Building off my ongoing thesis research on 20th-century transfeminine periodicals like *En Femme*, *TV/TS Tapestry*, and *Lady-Like* I wish to critically destabilize the category of girlhood as linked to life-stage by framing transfeminine periodicals as a socialization space for the figure of 'the girl': a person regardless of age, eager to learn the codes of womanhood. I will do so along three points. First, displaying transfeminine community members' frequent mourning of their lack of a traditional girlhood and rhetorically framing their entry into transfemininity as an alternative girlhood. Secondly, exploring some of the avenues of transfeminine socialization which periodical members positioned as their alternative girlhoods. These informal institutions where one learned 'how to be a woman' included transfeminine support groups, or sympathetic non-trans wives/girlfriends. Finally, I will speak to the most dominant norms of 'proper' comportment, etiquette, and style found in the articles of mid-century transfeminine periodicals. My paper builds off scholars Rachel Reinke and Melinda de Jesús' identification of the cisnormativity of girlhood studies. I will take up Marnina Gonick's 2006 provocation to the field, "are queer girls, girls?" And instead ask: "are those new to transfemininity, girls?"

The Role of Femininity in Girls' Lives

Tori Cann, University of East Anglia

In this paper I interrogate the concept of 'femininity' and explore the role it plays in the lived experiences of British girls. Drawing on empirical research, which was collected using ethnography, identity pages and focus groups to garner an understanding of young people's cultural lives, I present a nuanced picture of girls' relationship(s) with femininity. I use these experiences to make broader statements about the role of femininity within gender studies as a field of exploration more generally – this involves the potential (im)possibilities of hegemonic femininity under patriarchy.

In the paper I discuss that when it comes to their lives, the relationship that girls have with femininity is fraught and contested. While femininity is understood to provide the 'ideal' subject position for girls (by both girls and scholars alike) it ultimately offers dissatisfying possibilities. I illustrate these dissatisfactions by drawing on the numerous examples that demonstrate moments of otherwise 'traditional' (read: 'non-queer') girls distancing themselves from femininity and in some cases even rejecting it. This leads me to ask further questions about what this may mean for trans+ girls in their performances of gender, asking whether or not this rejection of the feminine is actually a privilege experienced only by cis-girls. The paper therefore not only develops our understanding of femininity from an empirical perspective, but also from a conceptual and theoretical one.

Trans Girlhood and Intersectional Politics of National Abjection on Turkish Stage

A. Berkem Yanıkcan, Kadir Has University

How do trans performers stage their childhood experiences of gendered and sexualized trauma in autobiographical performance, and how do they contextualize their childhood stories within broader sociopolitical dynamics? How can these performances provide a vantage point from which to analyze intersectional politics of national abjection? My presentation explores these questions by focusing on the Kurdish actor and activist Esmeray Özadikti's 2006 play *Cadının Bohçası* [The Witch's Bundle].

Framed as both fiction and autobiographical performance, *Cadının Bohçası* is characterized by a fundamental liminality. In her autobiographical one-actor play, Esmeray narrates her journey from Kars, a northeastern province in Turkey, to Istanbul. At the center of the story is her coming of age as a Kurdish transgender child, and her negotiations of the politics of belonging in urban Turkey.

My presentation will combine an archival research and a close reading of the play to study how Esmeray uses the liminal nature of autobiographical performance as she explores the intersectional dynamics of national abjection as they unfold in the lives of LGBTQI+ children in Turkey. Building on her own experiences, Esmeray investigates the performative constitution of gendered and sexualized identities, especially in childhood, and how such processes reflect broader sociopolitical dynamics.

Transing Girlhood Temporalities, Or Out-of-Time Trans Girl(hood)s As Trans Girl Worldbuilding

E Lev Feinman, Rutgers University

In this paper, I explore how trans women are transing girlhood temporalities through their out-of-time performances of girlhood. I describe these out-of-time performances

of dress and expression, play, recreation, and consumption as age drag, a term coined by Mary Zaboriskis (2015) that—building on Elizabeth Freeman’s temporal drag (2010)—describes cross-age, rather than cross-gender performances. Age drag disrupts the linear and progressive timeline of adolescent development, rupturing adult fantasies of a unified alignment between age, gender, and sexuality. I argue that trans women who do age drag call into question how we understand girls and girlhood through exploding the normative boundaries of who is included in the category of ‘girl,’ and whose experiences are included in the category of ‘girlhood.’ Analyzing social media posts and transition blogs, I use age drag as a framework to theorize how trans women are transing girlhood and resisting girlhood’s chrononormative temporal attachments.

Because many of these age drag performances are part of a trans project of (re)creating and (re)claiming missed, lost, stolen, and unrealized girlhoods, I also theorize the role of grief, mourning, and loss, as well as healing, survival, community, and worldbuilding. Specifically, I offer grief as a ‘bad’ and ‘not-so-great feeling’ that could be added to what Hil Malatino describes as the trans affective commons (2022). I close with reflections on how trans bodies, through age drag performances, produce transformative possibilities for resistance, healing, and worldbuilding, as well as radical relations to age and time that promise otherwise ways for being in the world.

Panel 3B: Complicating Activist Investments in the Girl

Moderator: Chante Barnwell, York University

Daughtering: Thinking Through Girlhood in Family and Community Contexts

Hannah Maitland, York University

From September 2021 to May 2022, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten activist girls (who identified as cis, trans, and nonbinary and were aged 11-20) and their mothers/mother figures. I applied a combination of one-on-one and paired interviews with daughters and mothers. By talking to girls not only about their mothers but with their mothers, my project uses an intergenerational lens to critically explore how girls are creating space for themselves within activist movements and interrogate how they see themselves (if at all) within a broader history of feminist action. Using a pair interviewing method to explore how girls experience their particular lived experience at the intersection of age and gender in their family relationships is a departure from how many girls’ studies scholars approach researching with girls. This method emphasizes how mother-daughter relationships are significant to girls’ lives but also recreates certain silences.

While analyzing these mother-daughter interviews, I have been especially interested in developing a feminist interrogation of daughterhood to synthesize how girls and their mothers are always engaged in a process of becoming that navigates future possibilities and past inheritances. Thinking about the social practice of daughtering requires contending with the ways that familial and community relationships are both sites of support and resistance while simultaneously reinforcing certain gendered expectations and obligations for girls and their mothers and mother figures. This paper reflects on the possibilities and constraints that emerge when theorizing girls' family and political relationships through their role as daughters. I explore the often-surprising ways their daughtering relationships could provide opportunities for retaining family and community connections for girls while they simultaneously expressed flexible and shifting personal identities.

Political Intersectionality and Black Girls' #MeToo Movement in Public K-12 Schools

Serena Wilcox, University of North Texas-Denton

The presentation examines the utility of political intersectionality as a survivor strategy for children experiencing sexual violence in public K-12 schools. Collective resistance strategies against systemic oppression are the action arm of an intersectional framework for women and girls at the margins (Crenshaw 2000). This work centers the activism of a Black girl collective called Rise Up (pseudonym) as the basis for thinking about political intersectionality as a survivor strategy for child survivors in K-12 schools. This research takes a critical approach that pushes scholars and practitioners to think about ways of knowing, methodologies, classroom practices, and its connection to social inequality (Collins & Blige, 2016). The girls in this research context are situated as a theorist and activists simultaneously. What can their work teach us about girlhood in public education institutions, survivorship, and school-based gender violence? How can education activists think about political intersectionality as a survivor strategy and as a possible alternative form of social justice in sexual violence cases in public K-12 institutions? The implication for this work seeks to provide suggestions for stakeholders to understand how and why sexual violence persists against Black girls in K-12 schools and examine the possibilities of alternative forms of reparative justice for survivors. This work calls attention to gendered-based sexual violence happening in public schools in the United States and provides suggestions for remedies.

How Do You Solve a Problem Like Khadija? The Failures of Strong Black Muslim Girlhood

Andrea Breau, Colby College

Drawing on ethnographic research in Lewiston, Maine, this paper tracks the narrative of "strong girls" circulating amongst youth in order to interrogate the particular demand

on Black, Muslim girls from recently immigrated families to adopt critical voices and to see themselves as inherently powerful. In the neo-Orientalist logics of dominant whiteness in Lewiston, these girls are positioned as passive victims of a backward “Muslim culture” and a patriarchal “Somali community,” against which they must prove their gender and sexual liberation within the West. Meanwhile, these dominant logics are compounded by the pressures they describe to carry precarious family racial-ethnic-religious identities into the future. At the same time, local feminist and youth empowerment projects that seek to address Somali girls’ social and economic marginalization uphold a narrative that naturalizes an intrinsically strong, critical, and defiant Black female “voice,” and youth as those who will usher in a post-racial future for us all. This paper examines the complicated effects of these competing investments on the girls themselves. Through a close reading of Somali girls’ narratives about the spectacular “failures” of otherwise strong Black Muslim girl-heroes in their communities, I argue that despite their expressed desires for subjectivities that exceed the intersecting forces of xenophobia, anti-Black racism and Islamophobia, sexism and heteropatriarchy that structure their everyday lives, it is this very narrative of prideful identities that allows them to hold themselves responsible for the terms of their own injury.

Funding Girls' Activism: Cooptation, Elite Capture, and Feminist Resistance

Jessica Taft, University of California Santa Cruz

Over the past fifteen years, the figure of the girl activist, as a cultural phenomenon, has gone from invisible to hyper-visible. Alongside the public praise and admiration for individual celebrity girl activists, the newfound enthusiasm for girls’ activism has also generated a wave of philanthropic engagement with girl-led organizations and initiatives. Drawing on in-depth interviews and an analysis of institutional materials and grey literature, this presentation will trace how girls’ activism came to be an area of philanthropic and development interest. First, it considers the multiple political and institutional convergences that made grassroots girl-led organizing into a legible funding category, including the surprising and contradictory role of the Nike Foundation and the Girl Effect. Next, I’ll argue that a small group of feminist allies of girl activists, located within an interlocking set of institutions, were able to strategically leverage the opportunities provided by these convergences to collectively imagine and build a funding ecosystem that could support girls’ activism and political power. Finally, I’ll demonstrate how these individuals’ earlier experiences navigating the deeply troubling political terrain around the Girl Effect apparatus shapes their approach to the current moment, making them well prepared to confront the looming dangers of co-optation and elite capture. While many funders and development agencies articulate visions of girlhood that imagine investing in girls’ activism as less politically controversial than

other social movement investments, the institutional allies of girl activists articulate an alternative theory of girlhood that foregrounds girls' experiences and collective critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy.

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm, ET

Keynote Event: Dr. Anastasia Todd, *Crippling Girlhood*

Day Three: Friday, March 31

9:30 am - 11:00 am, ET

Panel 1A: Cyber Girls in Digital Space

Moderator: Natalie Coulter, York University

The Internet of (Feminist) Girls: Re-reading Gendered Internet Histories

Jessalynn Keller, University of Calgary

In this work-in-progress paper I survey existing girls' media studies scholarship published over the past twenty-five years to begin to theorize a relationship between the girl, feminism, and the Internet. While girls have always used the Internet, in this paper I decenter their role as "users" to argue that girl's online practices, often informed by feminist politics, have been central to the evolution of the contemporary Internet and today's feminisms.

In this paper I discuss two examples: First, I look at some of the earliest published scholarship on late 1990s "grrrl homepages" to highlight how girls actively negotiated the affordances of early search functionalities to both intervene in patriarchal Internet design and produce digital spaces where girls are defining themselves through "grrrl power." Guided by this example, I suggest the need to re-read this moment of feminist history in relation to the history of Internet, rather than solely a history of postfeminism. Second, I look to Rookie Magazine, which launched a decade after the decline of grrrl homepages, to explore how girls digitalized their collaborative, creative production cultures, shaping social media aesthetics and popularizing feminist politics for teen girls. And while Rookie made girl feminisms visible in a new way online, leading other teen publications such as Teen Vogue to begin to publish digital feminist content, it also served as a space to grapple with how feminist concepts like intersectionality travel within digitally mediated cultures of the Internet, shaping feminist theory.

Taken together then, I suggest that these examples demonstrate how we must reimagine both histories of the Internet and histories of feminism as intertwined together, through the figure of the girl.

Crafting Digital Narratives: Black Girls' Literacies, Social Media, and Identity Formation

Lakisha Odlum, The State University of New York at New Paltz

This paper discusses the findings from a qualitative study in which I employed the Black Girls' Literacies Framework (Haddix & Muhammad, 2016) to analyze the digital literacy practices of adolescent Black girls who actively engaged on social media in the midst of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, mandatory school shutdowns, and the aftermath of the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. More specifically, I analyzed the TikTok accounts of two adolescent Black girl influencers, as well as six qualitative interviews I conducted with adolescent Black girls who avidly used video sharing social media apps during that time. The data analysis aligned with components of the Black Girls' Literacies framework, and revealed that Black girls espoused three different identities while using social media to address the COVID-19 pandemic: Crafting Digital Narratives of the Self as Educators, Crafting Digital Narratives of the Self as Nurturers, and Crafting Digital Narratives of the Self as Digital Activists. The paper concludes with implications for educational stakeholders and policy.

Geographies of Girlhood: Mapping the Online Girl

Montana Chandler, Texas Tech University

The girlhood experience has been widely researched in the field of Girlhood Studies, with scholars examining girls' internet presence through social justice, creativity, and their perceived safety and/or danger. However, these perspectives have not yet focused on the character of the "girlblogger" and her presence on social media platforms such as Instagram, tumblr, TikTok, and Patreon. "Girlblogger" is a word used to identify girls who use a social media site to document their life in addition to highlighting their creative endeavors. My paper addresses the online girl with special attention to the performance of femininity and the content created as vessels for self-theorizing. Specifically, in my project, I will be looking at the memes, videos, and writings of "girlbloggers," in order to show the relevancy and value of this site of girlhood in the field. Additionally, I will discuss the ways in which the "girlblogger" has revealed the trend of long girlhood. No longer a transitory period between childhood and adulthood, the young Millennial and elder Gen Z "girlblogger" inhabits the grey space for longer than her older counterparts. I argue that the online experience of girlhood reveals a far more nuanced understanding of what it means to be a girl in today's world as well as how girlhood and femininity are defined, performed, and theorized. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining online girlhood and the "girlblogger" sheds new light on the neglected issue of girls' experiences and impact online.

Panel 1B: (Re)imagining / (Re)telling Girl Figures in the 21st Century

Moderator: Ahona Das, University of Chicago

Gender Fluidity and Redefining Girlhood in Uprooted by Naomi Novik

Haniyeh Asaadi, University of Tehran

Maryam Daghigh Kia, University of Tabriz

Naomi Novik in her high fantasy novel *Uprooted* (2015) narrates the story of Agnieszka who lives in a village in the kingdom of Polnya. Every ten years the local wizard who is called 'the Dragon' collects one teenage girl as tribute and payment for protecting the local valley from the magical forest that borders it, 'the Wood'. The rules and the nature of this world rely on masculine and patriarchal hierarchy and the Dragon's magic which differs from the feminine magic, such as the witch Jaga. The tribute girls are only required to do the household duties of the wizard's castle, however, they are taught and groomed from adolescence to be lady-like, pleasant, genteel, and refined. It is accepted that it is an honor to be chosen by the Dragon wizard and to obey him. The chosen girls have always been conventionally beautiful and elegant. The year in which Agnieszka is chosen comes as a huge surprise to everyone and even herself due to the fact that she does not conform to the norms of a refined and beautiful girl. Naomi Novik by characterizing Agnieszka and her gender identity presents numerous fluctuations which could be described as gender fluid since the author deconstructs and disrupts the established definitions and categorization. The findings of this study tentatively conclude that Agnieszka redefines and reconstructs the norms of girlhood, gender identity, and the role of a tribute to the Dragon. She becomes an ally and a warrior on par with the Dragon in defending the village. In this paper, it will be discussed how the fantasy genre and retelling the traditional folklore can provide new spaces of consciousness and transgressive feminist utopia as proposed by Lucy Sargisson in order to challenge and destabilize the dominant paradigms concerning patriarchy, gender identity, and agency; moreover, it will be explored how the author by transgressing the boundaries suggests new alternative ways of being and thinking for adults and young adults.

Alice Grown Up: The Threat of Feminine Nonconformity and Sustained Imagination from Carroll to Burton

Anna Shapland, Illinois State University

This paper explores the influences of Lewis Carroll's original "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" on Tim Burton's (2010) film adaptation, "Alice in Wonderland." While many have lamented that the film deviates so far from the original text that it is nearly unrecognizable, particularly as Carroll's young girl protagonist is replaced with an aged up young adult Alice, I argue that the threat of imagination that Alice's girlhood poses to Victorian society remains a driving force in Burton's film, and that the gendered expectations of madness and play that dominate Carroll's narrative play a conscious role still in this contemporary adaptation. Specifically, Alice's position as a young Victorian

woman in Burton's film as opposed to the young child of Carroll's "Alice" tales situates the madness of her world as a more explicit threat to the societal standards that govern her "reality," especially as Burton's Alice matures into adulthood with increased responsibility and visibility while maintaining her connection to Underland - a space for the kind of boundary crossing that was typically only accepted in girlhood. Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" ends not only with Alice's awakening, establishing Wonderland as a dream concocted by her playful imagination, but also with her sister's vision of Alice's future as a grown woman indulging in the youthful fantasies of her own children. This narrative framing suggests that, for this Alice, Wonderland is an acceptable aberration into madness for a girl to work through as they are learning the governance of society. However, Burton's adaptation characterizes Alice from the onset as odd, atypical, and threatening to her Victorian reality. Utilizing a framework of Victorian girlhood and gender expectations, I argue that Burton's adaptation weaponizes Alice's young adulthood to establish her as the hero of Underland in a more active way than Carroll's original, because even though Alice has physically matured, she persists in blurring the lines between Underland and her Victorian world - between girlhood and adulthood - and the weapon Burton's Alice utilizes to push through these limitations is her sustained connection to her childhood.

(Re)Imagining Topsy: Finding Significance in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Social Justice Cypher

Elizabeth Carmel Hamilton, Fort Valley State University

This paper will examine black girlhood as it (dis)appears in history, media, literature, and art. Topsy from Uncle Tom's Cabin is reimagined from social justice cypher to a figure of significance in the creative works of Alison Saar and Misha Green. These former black girls talk back to Harriet Beecher Stowe's conception of black girlhood with a temerity that causes us to reconsider the racist stereotype that Stowe perpetuated in her abolitionist novel. Stowe presented black girlhood as a deficiency from which Topsy needed to be delivered. Saar's Topsy Turvy, an installation of prints and sculptures based on Stowe's novel and inspired by the murder of Philando Castile, leans into Stowe's characterization of Topsy as evil and uses the unredeemable qualities to arm a cadre of empowered little black girls who are ready to topple white supremacy. Saar's recovery of Topsy is hopeful and redemptive, while Green's appropriation of Topsy in Lovecraft Country is not worthy of redemption. The stereotypes that Topsy engenders seek to destroy another black girl, Diana, the protagonist in the "Jig-A-Bobo" episode of Lovecraft Country. The two Topsies emerge from the cover of the novel in an opening scene and pursue Diana throughout the episode until they finally begin to turn her into a Topsy as well. This paper will elucidate the continued power of a relic of slavery in its afterlives. Perceptions of Topsy still affect how black girls are seen and perceived.

Indigenous Girlhood and Anti-Nostalgia in Anne with an E (2017-2019)

Anna Szirák, University of Debreceen

The paper explores the representation of indigenous girlhood in *Anne with an E*. The series is an adaptation of Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and it tells the coming-of-age story of Anne Shirley, an orphan girl in late-19th century Canada. Unlike lauded adaptations of Montgomery's Anne-novels in the past, however, *Anne with an E* does more than nostalgically reproduce the most famous plot points of its source material: it opens up the social-political sphere of its setting and engages critically with it. In this rendition, Anne and her peers are shown to deal with menstruation, posttraumatic stress, sexuality, and racism against the Mi'kmaq nation with the introduction of Ka'kwet, a young indigenous girl. With a particular focus on the character of Ka'kwet, the paper explores how this representation of indigenous girlhood restructures our relationship with nostalgia, history, and the loss of innocence. Anne and Ka'kwet's stories intertwine to call attention to the oftentimes silenced experiences of indigenous people: the way members of the Mi'kmaq nation are treated on screen by Montgomery's beloved characters, Ka'kwet's kinship with Anne, and the failed mission to rescue her from the harsh life at the residential school are more than just an adventurous plotline in the third season of the series. These events depict the marginalization and outright violence that are an elemental part of what "coming of age" has meant for indigenous girls. With the apparatus of cultural studies, gender studies and girlhood studies, as well as Linda Hutcheon's and Susan Stewart's notions of nostalgia, the paper utilizes close reading to interpret how the television show constructs girlhood as a mode of speaking of the historical-colonial past and ultimately claims that by bringing Ka'kwet to the forefront, *Anne with an E* attempts to defy the notion of an unproblematic, singular girlhood.

11:15 am - 12:45 pm, ET

Panel 2A: (Re)defining the Relationship Between the Girl and Power, Resistance, and Justice

Moderator: Mary Zaborskis, Penn State Harrisburg

The Audacity of Black Girls' Safe Space Making: Liberatory Praxis of Black Girlhood in School and Education

Alissa Irvin, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

This paper takes up the ways that Black girls reconceptualize Black feminist thought's conceptualization of safe space (Collins, 1990, p. 121) within the US high school context

through historical and contemporary perspectives. Black girls continue to navigate US historical mappings as they traverse school spaces that operate as enduring institutions of oppression (Cahill, 2019; Butler, 2018; McKittrick, 2006). To this end, Black girlhood scholars continue to produce research on the various ways that school and education have been uniquely unsafe for Black girls (Brown, 2013; Morris, 2016; Love, 2019). This work draws from Black feminism and Black girlhoods to highlight school and education as materialized spaces of precarity.

This paper incorporates analytical insights of Black girls through interview data. The concepts drawn rely on methods of critical discourse and thematic analysis to identify the conditions in schools that Black girls felt require discerning. I argue that the reconceptualization of safe space provides insight in how Black girls make space in school. Understanding the ways Black girls navigate school offers the potential for better informed, less punitive discipline, mindful pedagogical practices, and an overall shift in school culture that preserves the well-being of Black girls. The preliminary findings of this study demonstrate school as a paradoxical space between historically rooted precarity and liberatory futures. Conclusions drawn from the data include school as a compulsory space with varying harms and the labor of self-preservation. The following are recurring themes which contribute to the conclusions drawn: 1) anti-blackness & isolation, 2) teacher silence/violence, 3) linguistic practices, and 4) deliberate silence. With four Black girls, from four different high schools, across three states, we learn that school values, cultures, and standards are less culturally congruent, equitable, and safe as they claim and that Black girls' cultural literacies are ontological tools used to make space."

"What about justice?": Power and the Girl in Young Adult Rape Fiction

Roxanne Harde, University of Alberta

In three recent YA novels, Nina Foxx's *And You Better Not Tell*, Kiersi Burkhart's *Honor Code*, and Hannah Capin's *Fair Is Foul*, girl protagonists succeed in bringing the boys who raped them to justice through questionable methods. While many of the novels in the large catalogue of recently published YA fiction about acquaintance rape follow standard "rape scripts" and sometimes reify rape culture even as they criticize it, these survivors actually succeed in punishing the rapists. However, are their challenges to rape culture effective, given that they find justice through deception and subterfuge? How do we theorize the movements of power in these narratives? Are these quests to punish a rapist by any means possible praiseworthy, or do they simply restate the commonly held "rape myth" that girls "lie about rape"?

In "The Subject and Power," Michel Foucault focuses on sites of resistance as the way to bring to light power relations, their positions, their points of application, and the

methods used. He begins with “immediate struggles,” such as opposition to the power of men over women, in which “people criticize instances of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the ‘chief enemy’ but for the immediate enemy. Nor do they expect to find a solution to their problem at a future date” (780). Capin, Foxx and Burkhart have positioned their girl victims in immediate struggles as they use craft to subvert a force they face daily, even as these girls understand the workings of rape culture. This paper considers girls and power alongside Foucault’s ideas; they demonstrate “insubordination and a certain essential obstinacy” that insists on justice and freedom, that challenges power relationships in a strategic struggle (794).

Beyond Herasure: Unpacking YAL Narratives about Sexual Violence

Brittany Adams, SUNY Cortland

Kathleen Colantonio-Yurko, SUNY Brockport

Numerous scholars have called for young adult literature (YAL) to be a pedagogical avenue for educating secondary and postsecondary students about sexual violence, who are often socialized into harmful beliefs about victims— specifically about girlhood. In this presentation, we draw on feminist philosopher Kate Manne’s theorizing of “himpathy” and “herasure” to explore the ways in which YAL considers the ideological and systemic dimensions of misogyny leading up, during, and after incidents of sexual assault. The results of our critical content analysis of eight contemporary novels reveal several themes including whose story is told, the discursive reinforcement of himpathy and herasure following instances of sexual violence, reactions from social groups, how conceptions of justice are enacted by survivors and others, and the gilded expansive shadow an assailant leaves on a survivor’s life. In the dominance of abuser-focused post-assault narratives, these works repeatedly focus on individual assault circumstances rather than the systemic forces that reify conceptions of rape culture. These themes offer insight and implications for scholars interested in how misconceptions about sexual violence inform girlhood.

Panel 2B: Marketing and Regulating Black Femininity

Moderator: Gaylene Gordon, Rutgers University

I Am More Than My Hair: A Closer Look at Hair Identity of Black Women & Black Girls

Kenesma John, University of Florida

For Black females, hair is a big part of our culture and the way we present ourselves to the world. This ranges from having “laid edges” to the label our hair texture falls under: most often 4A to 4C for Black females. People notice how your hair looks and judge you

based on how “appropriate” it looks in the setting (Donahoo, 2021; Johnson et al., 2017; Lee & Nambudiri, 2021; Macon, 2015). The experiences of Black females during their school years and the way they decided to wear their hair affected their experiences. This project is based on the assumption that during their school years (K-12 and undergraduate years), Black females had experiences that were central to how their hair was worn to school that day. In order to complete this research, it is necessary to investigate how the co-researcher perceives their hair identity (see Appendix B) and how it may change due to how others perceive their hair identity. The research questions that guide this study include the following:

1. Based on the intersectional role of race and gender in the surveillance and punishment of Black bodies in schools, how does the impact of Black females’ hair experiences in school affect their personal and educational growth?
2. Identify how various forms of media has reflected oppressive ideology regarding Black female’s bodies and describe the impact to Black females in relation to their experiences in educational and professional spaces.

Examine ways instances in which Black girls and Black women have reclaimed their power and speak back to oppressive ideology and physical control of Black girls and Black women’s bodies.

Black Femininity and The Corporatization of Allyship Through “Woke” Advertising

Chante Barnwell, York University, Toronto

In 2020, following global demonstrations against police brutality and acts of racism experienced by Black communities in America and beyond its borders, corporations of consumer goods and services vowed to address the role they hold in processes of anti-Black racism. As corporations strategized, new waves of seemingly culturally attuned content emerged. Defined as woke advertising, this marketing style is characterized by “postrace, postfeminism and postqueer discourses” (Kanai & Gill, 2020, p. 22). The term also upholds a “veneer of radical politics” (Kanai & Gill, 2020, p. 12) while co-opting the African American “antiracist and activist”(Kanai & Gill, 2020, p. 11) origins from which the original term woke is derived. Inspired by Black feminist scholar bell hooks book *Black Looks: Race and Representation* as well as cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall’s 1997 lecture, *Representation & the Media*, in my proposed presentation, I aim to examine how corporations have employed western neoliberal heteronormative notions of Black femininity in woke advertising to establish a record of allyship. I argue that a corporation’s tendency to enact woke tactics, combined with overtly intersectional “feminist” declarations of support, perpetuate “masculine ascendancy”(Hoskin & Blair, 2022, p. 4) and “gender hegemony”(Hoskin & Blair, 2022, p. 5). Furthermore, to “win identification”(Hall, 1997) with consumers, I contend that corporations use woke tactics to alleviate public anxieties of complicity in racist and

discriminatory practices, doubling the monopolization of corporate capitalist aims. To illustrate this, I will examine a corporate advertising campaign that subverts traditional mythical Eurocentric folklore narratives by utilizing North American-pop culture-based definitions of Black femininity, in particular, “Black Girl Magic”(Halliday & Brown, 2018, p. 222) and Girl boss aesthetic (Alexandersson & Kalonaityte, 2021), to attract predominately Black consumers, thus evoking the visualization of “woke bravery”(Sobande, 2019, p. 2724).

The Cultural Representations of Black Girlhood in Advertising

LaTiana Ridgell, Rutgers University

Lindsay Blair, Hair Care Specialist/Social Media Strategist

In the United States, the marketing of hair care products to Black consumers has a long and tenuous history that reveals an underlining struggle over market share and cultural representation. In October 2022, Black women on Twitter collectively tapped into their Black girlhood memories by sharing their affective attachments to children’s hair relaxer advertisements in the 90s. This research examines hair relaxer advertisements in Ebony’s magazine during the 90s to understand how these advertisements visually appealed to Black children, specifically Black girls, and produced affective value. Drawing on affect theory and visual culture studies, I use visual analysis and Sara Ahmed’s concept of “affective economies” to discuss how the visibility and cultural specificity of Black girlhood in these advertisements circulated emotions and shored up affect that could be felt decades later. Although the representation of Black girlhood brought forth positive memories, a closer look at the history of these advertisements reveals a contentious battle between Black-owned companies and White-owned companies over who controls the likeness of Black girlhood. This roundtable takes up the issues of how corporations targeted Black girls as future lifelong consumers and used representation as a marketing ploy. The proposed panelists seek to delve into the historical socio-political debates with the hair care industry. One panelist is a hair care specialist with a profound knowledge of the history of hair care politics and the discourses within the hair care industry. The second panelist, whose research is noted above, provides the context in which this discussion will take place.

1:15 pm - 2:45 pm, ET

Panel 3A: Designing Girls’ Material Cultures

Moderator: Monica Mercado, Colgate University

Barbie’s Having a Baby: On Sympathetic Magic and Inanimate Maternity

Allegra Chapman, Independent Scholar

Between the years 1990 and 2003, three pregnant dolls were introduced to the American market by major and minor toy manufacturers: The Mommy-To-Be doll, Tyco Toy's Mommy's Having a Baby and Mattel's pregnant variant of Barbie's sidekick, Midge. The ideas behind these products were based on the well established tradition of marketing domestic and maternal play items to young girls. Baby dolls and toy kitchens had proven reliably lucrative since the dawn of mass production, so it was thought that pregnant dolls would enjoy equal success in a culture already obsessed with selling girls motherhood in miniature. Contrary to expectations, the pregnant dolls received considerable backlash, with conservative consumers complaining that the designs were too overtly sexual for young girls. In asking the questions of how these dolls attempted to depict pregnancy, and why their depictions were so sexualized, this paper finds insights into the complex relationships between girls, dolls and maternity. Close examination of the dolls' designs reveals a consistent sanitization of the birthing process and reduction of the female reproductive system to the singular function of containment. Reduced to mere vessels, these dolls put forth an implicitly pro-life image of reproduction that verges on spermist preformationism. Despite these design choices, the dolls still received immediate backlash from conservative consumers who perceived their pregnancies solely as indexes of sexuality. This paper examines the impulse to associate these inanimate pregnant bodies with sex, and to object to them on the basis of that association. Ultimately, it arrives at the conclusion that sympathetic magic, a belief system previously reserved for the explanation of "primitive" cultures, shapes the way that Americans conceive of doll play and determines what is acceptable for girls to play with.

Playing House: Girlhood and the Evolution of Dollhouses

Brilynn Janckila, Michigan Technological University

Little girls' toys provide an interesting avenue to explore how older girlhood and womanhood are presented to little girls. I recently completed a two-week fellowship at The Strong Museum of Play to do a historical survey of dollhouses. I found that many of the mass-produced dollhouses were styled to be a specific room, with a similar pattern: kitchen, bathroom, living/family room, dining area, and two bedrooms—typically a nursery and parents' bedroom. What I didn't find, however, were bedrooms specifically for girls. This means that girls are playing with miniature homes within their own homes, without a private space for themselves represented.

Dollhouses provide girls practice with household management and domestic practices. Traditional dollhouses tend to have a nursery and a parents' room, but girls' rooms

seem to have developed with Barbie and other teen dolls. I am not sure what the room means, but girls' bedrooms are pivotal to girls' culture.

Dollhouses often require solitary or small-group play and, historically, girls' play typically happens within or close to the home. Girls' subculture has been described by scholars such as Angela McRobbie as "bedroom" culture, which is often applied to older girls, who engage in bedroom culture through cultural consumption-based activities in their home. I want to explore the play objects of little girls, which I loosely imagine as ages 3-10, because their media is more adult-mediated than that of older girls. Examining their toys can illuminate how older girlhood and woman- or adulthood are presented to them.

This is a new project, but I think it is generative for Girlhood Studies in theorizing the girl. By examining little girls and their toys, we can ask where is the girl? What does she do? Further, what assumptions do adults make about her or girls' culture? Among many others.

Girls+Museums: A Manifesto

Tiffany Isselhardt, Girl Museum, Inc.

Based on her recently published "Girls+Museums: A Manifesto" (FWD: Museums, 2022), public historian Tiffany Isselhardt reflects on the rarity of girlhood studies and material culture collaborations, citing over a decade of experience in museums compared with socioeconomic data on the value of investing in girls' history and culture as a means of empowerment. Turning to the girl as a subject worthy of concentrated focus for museums and historical sites, Isselhardt reviews museums and exhibitions that have quantitatively proven visitor demand for girl-focused content, showcasing both successful and unsuccessful modes of curation and educational programming that attempt to center the girl child. Isselhardt concludes by providing actionable steps that girl studies scholars can take to create meaningful opportunities for engaging the history and material culture of girlhood in their own communities.

How to Define a Girl in Art History

Ashley E. Remer, Australian National University

Girls have been active agents in cultural production across time, as evidenced by their faces looking back at us from museum walls, dorm room posters, and kitchen calendars. Traditionally overlooked as participants, these girls deserve acknowledgment of their contributions as the age and stage they were, not as very young women. Across time and cultures, these stages are tied to a variety of maturity milestones, so the individual girl experiences range widely. Assumptions about their maturity,

sexuality, marital status, and work experience all factor into how we define them. In art, there is the added factor of her appearance and how she is presented that further complicates her status. In the age of dismantling binary concepts of gender, it is important to consider the definition of 'girl', especially on the spectrum of infant to adult, while differentiating girls and women, and considering the socio-cultural implications and expectations of these categories and how they can impact real girls' bodies and minds.

This presentation will examine a developing method of defining a girl in art history, however, the questions and methods resonate into other fields and realities. This girl-centered framework is a unique method distilled from feminist art history, girl and child studies respectively, that has been developed through my research practice and work with Girl Museum. Using a girl-centered framework applied to artworks, I will demonstrate that girls are not only difficult to define in theory, but their realities are also taken for granted -what girls are and what they represent in art history. This research is a part of my larger PhD project on representations of girls in art history and museums.

Panel 3B: (Re)defining the relationship between child-, girl-, and womanhood

Moderator: Sarada Balagopalan, Rutgers University

"Quiet As It's Kept": Idealized Innocence and Girlhood Shame

Rachel Windsor, University of Toronto

Writing on Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Ruth Rosenberg suggests that "Pecola's childhood is cancelled one Saturday afternoon when, at the age of twelve, she is raped by her father" (441). Rosenberg's summary points to a central tension in *The Bluest Eye* and other literary representations of girlhood trauma: if sexual assault is sufficient to "cancel" a childhood, can there be such a thing as a "girlhood" separate from "childhood?" Using *The Bluest Eye* as a significant example, this paper argues that the "loss" of childhood following sexual assault gives rise to a shame-based ontology of girlhood. Many contemporary theorists of shame, beginning with Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank, take up Silvan Tomkins' shame-interest polarity: shame is interdependent with (unfulfilled, misdirected, or otherwise interrupted) desire. I suggest that Pecola's inability to access the coveted innocent white childhood, symbolized throughout the text by her fetishization of the titular blue eyes, creates the conditions for what Sandra Lee Bartky theorizes as a shameful "Being-in-the-world" (83). The "cancellation" of childhood in the sexual assault eventually confirms for Pecola that she is "in some

important sense, as [she is] seen to be" (Bartky 86), that is, "dirty" and "ruined" (Morrison 101, 199). This painful realization eventually induces a spiral into madness. I posit that *The Bluest Eye's* representation of traumatic shame thus encourages analysis of the violence inherent in the ideological abstraction of "childhood innocence," particularly as it relates to girlhood sexual assault, and allows us to question how the idealization of childhood purity may in fact foreclose upon girls and their experiences of girlhood.

Through the Theoretical Glass: Looking for the 'girl' within and outside of Euro-centric Conceptions of Childhood and Children's Literature

Ahona Das, University of Chicago

Where does childhood end and girlhood begin? Can there be such a linear transition? Standing between the peripheries of childhood and adulthood, girl, child, woman, other, she takes on the shape of the various names, like containers ascribed to her. Yet, she is also so often, rendered nameless – known only as, someone's wife, mother, daughter, sister. In literary theory, as in literature and culture, childhood went synonymously with boyhood.

Until recent scholars raised the figure of the girl from the oblivious pages of history, girlhood existed in its negation. Since then, scholars have acquiesced upon the difficulty of definitively tracing this figure. Girlhood is described in *The Girls' Own Paper* (1887) as the "melting stage" between childhood and womanhood. Yet other scholars have referred to the role of education in the creation of this category, 'drawn out' by the time spent under tutelage, halting the advent of adult roles like marriage or employment. Girlhood is often understood in terms of its transitions, yet as Beth Rodgers observes, the experience of "what it means to be a girl" has varied across time and culture. (Rodgers 2)

The girl child, like light through a prism, reflects and refracts definitions cast onto her, only to appear in partial glimpses. This paper would attempt to put together some of these glimpses, distilling various secondary texts and seminal works on girlhood, comparatively in Euro-American and Indian contexts, to lure out the elusive figure of the girl in the andro-centric history of childhood and children's literature.

A Girl or a Child? Examining the 'Rights Based' approach to Girl Child Marriage through An Intersectionality Lens

Linda Chimwemwe Banda, Arizona State University

The concept of 'Who is a child' remains one that attracts different responses in many different contexts. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

urges countries to consider an individual (whether boy or girl) a child until they reach 18 years of age (Ruck, et. al, 2016). Despite many countries adopting the UNCRC classification of a child, globally, many nations define a child based on the dominant cultures, social norms, religions, and traditions they abide by (Sayi & Sibanda, 2018). In many societies and cultures, being born female exposes the girl child to a multitude of disadvantages associated with discrimination and violence at every stage of her development, especially as she transitions into adulthood (Diamond-Smith et al., 2008). The recognition of girls' rights remains an evolutionary process, and around the globe women and girls are in different stages of realizing and assuming their rights and power. Power not to witness violence for girls remains an issue that needs special attention and continued efforts dedicated towards it. Despite international legal instruments being in place for many decades, violence uniquely targeting the girl child is prevalent on every continent, exerted by every social and economic class, and endorsed to varying degrees by every form of government, every major religion, and every kind of communal or familial structure (Rafferty, 2013).

This paper will focus on child marriage as a form of violence distinctively faced by the girl child. The importance of examining the 'Rights Based' approach to girl child marriage through the intersectional feminism lens, and how child marriage positions the girl at the margins of gender, age, and sometimes culture, will be addressed (Taefi, 2009). An important question remains: Why is girl child marriage still happening and what are the catalysts for its continuation, despite every effort having been put in place to bring an end to this practice? Important to Girlhood Studies, this paper advocates a joint analysis from both the child rights and women's rights movements on the way gender and age interact to marginalize girls to counteract gender-bias and adult-dominance in the implementation of human rights laws.

Deconstructing the Indian Adolescent Girl: A Discursive Analysis of Scheme for Adolescent Girls

Anusha Iyer, Rutgers University

This paper examines how we come to know the 'adolescent girl' in India, by focussing on the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG). This is done through a close examination of the various discourses of girlhood that dictate the formulation of this scheme. SAG aims at empowering adolescent girls from 11 to 18 years of age by improving their nutritional and health status, upgrading their skills, increasing their awareness of government services and increasingly mainstreaming out-of-school girls into formal education. The paper adopts a discursive analysis focusing on the use of language and word choice as well as reading into the timing, nomenclature and contextual background of the scheme. The analysis draws from various existing global discourses

on girlhood, with a special focus on Third World girl discourses. The paper studies the construction of girls by analyzing their subjectivities, as articulated within the scheme, with four different entities: State, neoliberal market, schools and family. Starting from the definition of the adolescent to the ideas of empowerment and the roles and responsibilities of girls, it was found that the themes of womanhood and motherhood are central to the construction of the Indian adolescent girl. I argue, through the case example of SAG, that even within discourses of empowerment, young adolescent girls in India are being trained for and pushed towards reproductive labor, by constantly imagining the girl within the ambit of the family. Further, reconstructing the adolescent girls would require a radical reimagination of the relationship of the girl with the market and the family.

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm, ET

Panel 4A: The Pasts and Futures of Critical Girlhood Studies (II)

Ashwini Tambe, George Washington University

Sabrina Curtis, George Washington University

Jameta Barlow, George Washington University

This roundtable takes up the question of how to define the past of girlhood studies and its more critical futures. It takes an interdisciplinary approach, with speakers from different vantage points in history, community psychology, and educational research. Each panelist takes up race and age as categories that must be analyzed critically as instantiated within girlhood studies. Tambe offers a schematic account of the past of girlhood studies and gaps in its attentiveness to race and colonialism. Curtis examines how examining Black girls' relationship to body politics in school settings changes how we think about girlhood and age. Finally, Barlow demonstrates the urgent need to use race as a lens in thinking about girlhood by exploring the reasons for high suicide rates among Black girls.

Teaching (Black) Girlhood Studies

Crystal Edwards, San Francisco State University

Like their experience in larger society, Black girls tend to be underrepresented in Girlhood Studies. In the more recent decades, scholars in various fields, especially Black Studies, have sought to fill this gap by offering insights into the experiences of Black Girls. This article seeks to continue that forward movement. Utilizing the research findings done with Black middle school, girls, this article will explore key themes that should be addressed in teaching Black Girlhood Studies, recognizing the dynamic and

varying experience of girls based on their intersectional identities. Additionally, the research findings will highlight the importance of not only presenting and discussing challenges girls face, but also the emancipatory potential of emphasizing the unique ways that Black girls resist and assert their agency. The article will close by presenting Black Feminist Epistemology as a theoretical framework that not only offers an effective tool of analysis for the newly forming field of Girlhood Studies, but also offers pedagogical implications for teaching Girlhood Studies from a pluralistic lens.

Presenter List and Bios (by alpha)

Amy Aachenbach	Amy Aachenbach is a PhD student in History at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Her research explores feminisms of difference in late nineteenth and twentieth century United States through women's clubs and organizations. Her current project uses sororities as a lens to view shifting understandings of gender difference within American culture.
Brittany Adams	Brittany Adams is an Assistant Professor of Literacy at SUNY Cortland.
Diana W. Anselmo	Diana W. Anselmo is a feminist film historian and queer immigrant. She is the author of <i>A Queer Way of Feeling: Girl Fans and Personal Archives of Early Hollywood</i> (University of California Press, 2023), as well as an Assistant Professor of Critical Studies at California State University, Long Beach.
Haniyeh Asaadi	Haniyeh Asaadi is a literature researcher who has completed her studies at the University of Tehran. Her research is mainly focused on feminist utopianism, cultural studies, postcolonialism, ecocriticism, and Arthurian literature.
Jameta Barlow	Dr. Barlow utilizes decolonizing methodologies to disrupt intergenerational trauma, chronic health diseases and structural policies adversely affecting Black girls' and women's health. She has spent nearly 22 years in transdisciplinary collaborations with physicians, public health practitioners, researchers, policy administrators, activists, political appointees, and community members in diverse settings.
Chante Barnwell	Chante Barnwell is a full-time PhD student in the Socio-Legal Studies graduate degree program at York University in Toronto, Canada. She holds an MA in Public Policy and Administration and a MFA in Documentary Media, both from Toronto Metropolitan University (formally Ryerson). She also graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree, where she specialized in Art and Culture, majored in Studio Visual Arts and minored in Art History.

- Lindsay Blair Lindsay is a social media strategist who has specialized knowledge of hair care politics as a former hair care specialist. She developed a club for Black youth called Young Melanated Beauties, in which she taught them to critically engage with the media's messages on beauty. She actively creates exhibits on Black hair for Juneteenth and maintains a community with other hair and beauty specialists.
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- Andrea Breau Dr. Andrea Breau is a Visiting Asst. Professor in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Her work examines how youth in the U.S. come to understand themselves and each other in and through the social spaces that shape their lives. Andrea's research foregrounds the narratives of Muslim youth from recently immigrated East African families and multigenerational white youth as they confront the social and cultural expectations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, and class in the shifting demographic context of the predominantly white, non-urban space of Lewiston, Maine. Andrea is a Maine-raised kid herself and received her PhD in WGSS from The Ohio State University.
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- Nichol Brown Nichol Brown is a PhD student in English Studies at Illinois State University. She received her B.A. and her M.A. from Arizona State University, where her research focused on contemporary young adult literature, fairy tale retellings, speculative fiction, and posthumanism. She currently teaches Foundations in Children's Literature at Illinois State, while preparing to begin her comprehensive exams in the fall.
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- Jessica Calvanico Jessica R. Calvanico is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice in the Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University. She completed her Ph.D. at University of California, Santa Cruz in the Feminist Studies Department, with designated emphasis in Visual Studies and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies. Her work explores foundations of the juvenile justice system and histories of girlhood in the US South.
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- Sally Campbell Galman Sally Campbell Galman is a visual artist and anthropologist doing arts-based and comics-based research around gender diversity in childhood(s). She is Professor of Child and Family Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and she believes that

gender self-determination is a human right. Learn more at sallycampbellgalman.com.

Tori Cann	Victoria (Tori) Cann is an Associate Professor in Humanities at the University of East Anglia. Her research is concerned with the processes through which identity is reproduced, and feminist politics more broadly. Tori is author of the monograph <i>Girls Like This, Boys Like That</i> (Bloomsbury, 2018) and is Course Director of MA Gender Studies at the UEA.
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Matthew Cerjak	I am a graduate student at the University of Chicago studying the history of women, gender, and sexuality in the Atlantic World, mostly in American contexts with respect to Indigenous women. I have a forthcoming article in <i>Matrix: A Journal for Matricultral Studies</i> that considers how Indigenous Cherokee women in early America acted as an alternative to the patriarchal, oppressive society of Euro-Americans, one that the latter deemed as perverse due to the respect afforded to women. The paper/presentation proposed here is very much a continuation of the aforementioned paper, one that turns the attention towards the perspectives of Indigenous girls and the significance their futures held for both Indigenous and Settler societies.
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Montana Chandler	Montana Leigh Chandler is a second-year master's student of History and Women's and Gender Studies at Texas Tech University. Her research interests include Anzaldúan theory, Chicana history, and documenting online girlhood. Her MA thesis centers the lived experiences of Chicana girls in the rural Southwest during the 1970s and 1980s. Montana is also digital native with more than a decade of experience online. She can spot a misattributed quote or edited photo a mile away.
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Allegra Chapman	I'm a costumer and seamstress currently living in Los Angeles. I graduated from Brown University in 2020 with a degree in Modern Culture and Media. I collect dolls frequently and write about them occasionally.
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Linda Chimwemwe Banda	Linda Chimwemwe Banda (she/her/hers) is a Post-Doctoral Research Scholar at Arizona State University- Office of Gender-Based Violence. She received her Ph.D. in Social Work at the University of Kansas where she also obtained a graduate certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality studies. Her research focuses on
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promoting human rights, social justice, gender equality, and the prevention of violence targeted at girls, specifically 'child marriage'. Her research agenda was formed around the following areas: policy and innovation in implementation approaches and child marriage outcomes, the impact of laws and policies on preventing child marriage, and evidence-based initiatives to promote sustainable practices to end child marriage.

Kathleen Colantonio-Yurko	Kathleen Colantonio-Yurko is an Associate Professor of Literacy at SUNY Brockport.
Sabrina Curtis	Dr. Curtis is a policy and research consultant focusing on civic education and advocacy initiatives that increase equity in education for Black girls. Her research focuses on community-based civic and citizenship education, the political identities of Black youth, and Afrocentric and culturally-sustaining pedagogies.
Maryam Daghigh Kia	Maryam Daghigh Kia is presently a Ph.D. Candidate. Her areas of interest include Contemporary Fiction, Psychoanalysis, Philosophy, and Post-Jungian analytical psychology.
Ahona Das	Hailing from Kolkata (India), Ahona pursued her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Presidency University and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Post-graduating in the pandemic, her favourite memories from her gap-year include sharing children's literature with children as a middle-grade teacher at St. Mary's School, Safdarjung. Spurred on by her childhood habit of talking too much, she curated the Project Chatterbox with The Critical Childhoods and Youth Studies Collective (CCYSC). She fosters a keen interest in the accounts of postcolonial girlhoods, and the way in which speaking back to power has entwined our memories of growing up. She loves how kids delight in little things and the hope nascent in children's literature. She is currently pursuing her PhD from SALC, UChicago.
Alexandra Downing	Alexandra Downing is currently undertaking a Masters degree at Newcastle University in English Literature, with a specialism in children's literature. She graduated in July 2022 from Newcastle University with a First Class Honours in English Literature and wrote her undergraduate dissertation on the figure of the imperial girl in Bessie Marchant's adventure stories for girls. Alex is primarily interested in girlhood studies and currently works part-time at

Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books, located in Ouseburn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Yan Du	Yan Du is a PhD candidate at the centre for research in children's literature at the University of Cambridge. She has articles published or forthcoming in peer-reviewed journals including <i>Girlhood Studies</i> , <i>Jeunesse</i> , <i>Barnboken</i> , <i>Nordic Journal of Childlit Aesthetics</i> , and <i>International Journal of Young Adult Literature</i> . Her research interests are Chinese and Canadian girls' fiction, youth literacies, children's authorship, and teenage girls' fan cultures.
Crystal Edwards	Dr. Crystal Edwards graduated from the Department of Africology with a Ph.D. in Africana Studies and a graduate certificate in Educational Policy from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Generally, her work centers the subjective experience of African descended people throughout the Diaspora, specifically the in the United States. Specifically, her work seeks to make visible the intersectional realities of African American women and girls, in their own voices. Dr. Edwards is an Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator in the Africana Studies Department at San Francisco State University.
E Lev Feinman	E Lev Feinman is a third-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University. Their research looks at the intersection of girlhood studies, queer studies, and trans studies to explore how queer and trans girlhoods disrupt girlhood's normative boundaries and temporalities.
Michelle Gomez Parra	Michelle Gomez Parra is a PhD candidate in the Sociology Department at UC Santa Cruz with a designated emphasis in Latin American and Latinx Studies. She utilizes feminist theories of color, such as intersectionality and transnational feminism, to examine how heteronormativity and mobility experiences of higher education and migration shape Latinas' own gender and sexual subjectivities as well as generational negotiations of these social forces. Her work has been published in two peer-reviewed journals, <i>Sex Education</i> and <i>Gender & Society</i> (forthcoming April 2023).
Kailyn Gray	Kailyn Gray is a junior studying English and history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. As the daughter of a first-gen, single parent her earliest memories are of being quizzed on historical movements and law jargon definitions on the way to her mom's 8am classes.

After graduating from UNL Kailyn plans to pursue a PhD and research, re-emerge, and present queer and disabled figures in Black-American movements that often go underrepresented. In between classes and foraging the archives under Love Library she can be found playing unending rounds of Candy Crush. As of writing this she is on level 5913.

Elizabeth Carmel Hamilton	Elizabeth Hamilton, Ph.D. is an assistant professor at Fort Valley State University and art historian whose research focuses on visual culture of the African diaspora, feminism, and Afrofuturism. Her first book is <i>Charting the Afrofuturist Imaginary in African American Art: The Black Female Fantastic</i> (Routledge), which is the winner of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art Publication Grant. Dr. Hamilton has published research in <i>Nka: The Journal of Contemporary African Art</i> , <i>African Arts</i> , the <i>International Review of African American Art</i> , <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> , <i>Smithsonian Voices</i> , and <i>CAA Reviews</i> .
Roxanne Harde	Roxanne Harde is Professor of English at the University of Alberta. A Fulbright Scholar, she researches and teaches American literature and culture, focusing on children's literature, popular culture, women's writing, and Indigenous literature. Her most recent books are the award-winning <i>The Embodied Child</i> , coedited with Lydia Kokkola (Routledge, 2017), and <i>Consumption and the Literary Cookbook</i> , coedited with Janet Wesselius (Routledge, 2021).
Serena Iacobino	Serena Iacobino is a doctoral student in History of Education at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the KU Leuven, Belgium. Her research focusses on the history of girls' education in Belgium and the Congo (DRC), between the 19th and 20th century. She specializes on the intersection of gender, postcolonial and decolonial studies within education.
Alissa Irvin	Alissa Irvin is a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her scholarly work focuses on the liberatory praxis of Black women educators through historical and contemporary lens, culturally congruent pedagogies, and safe space making with Black girls. Additionally, Alissa is passionate about teacher preparation through a freedom lens. Alissa is a mother of two beautiful Black girls furthering anchoring her in the work of Black girlhoods as a Black women educator.

- Tiffany Isselhardt Tiffany R. Isselhardt serves as Girl Museum’s Program Developer, where she oversees exhibitions, podcasts, community outreach, and social media. She holds a Master’s in Public History from Appalachian State University and has previously worked with the Hickory Ridge Living History Museum, Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, Theodore Roosevelt Center, Museum Hack, and the Kentucky Museum at Western Kentucky University. Her research focuses on uncovering the hidden history of girls and women in order to advocate for gender equality.
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- Anusha Iyer I am a second year Ph.D. student in the Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University. My current research focuses on the politics of age, innocence and malleability of the category of childhood and the socio-cultural construction of adolescence by specifically focusing on the Indian juvenile justice system. My future work aims to work towards the rehabilitation of youths in the juvenile justice space. Earlier, I have worked in the policy research space for 5+ years on aspects of gender, education, health, empowerment and early childhood.
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- Brilynn Janckila Brilynn Janckila is a third-year PhD Student at Michigan Technological University. Her current research interests include girlhood studies, usability, and feminist research methods. Previously, Brilynn earned her master’s from St. Cloud State University and her bachelor’s degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth.
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- Kenesma John Kenesma John is a third year Ph.D. student at the University of Florida, where she is pursuing a degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration on Teachers, Schools and Society, while also pursuing a minor in women’s studies. Kenesma’s identity as a second generation Caribbean American guides her research agenda which is centered around Black Immigrants, Black Feminist Thought/Black Girlhood Studies, and Culturally Responsive Teaching/Learning. She earned an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of St. Thomas and she is an experienced teacher with a demonstrated history of working in the primary education industry. In her spare time, she enjoys writing blog pieces for online magazines and uses her life experiences as a basis for the books she writes.

Caroline K. Kaltefleiter	Dr. Caroline Kaltefleiter is Professor of Communication and Media Studies and an affiliate faculty member in the Women's Studies and Gender Studies program at SUNY Cortland. She is a recipient of the SUNY Chancellor Award for Excellence in Teaching. She was awarded an Honorary Faculty Kente Clothe for her commitment to incorporate issues of diversity, justice, and inclusion throughout her classes and media content. Her research focuses on critical girlhood studies, girls and punk collectives, anarcha-feminism, and DIY-culture with an emphasis on alternative media and zine culture. Her recent work includes the edited collection, "Smash the System: Punk Anarchism as a Culture of Resistance", co-edited with Jim Donaghey and Will Boisseau. She continues work on projects related to the Riot Grrrl Movement.
Aleksandra Kamińska	Aleksandra Kamińska holds a Ph.D. in cultural studies from the University of Warsaw (Poland), where in 2023, she defended her dissertation titled "Archiving Girlhood: Self-Representation of Girls in Literature and Visual Culture." In 2018-2019, she was a Fulbright Scholar at Columbia University. Aleksandra earned her MA at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, where she now teaches and is a member of the Gender/Sexuality Research Group. Her research interests focus on girlhood studies, life narratives, feminist modes of production, and queer temporalities. Outside of academia, she is a founding editor of a feminist-queer zine "Girls* to the Front," published in Poland since 2015.
Jessalynn Keller	Dr. Jessalynn Keller is an Associate Professor at the University of Calgary, Canada. She is the author of <i>Girls' Feminist Blogging in a Postfeminist Age</i> (Routledge 2015), co-editor of <i>Emergent Feminisms: Complicating a Postfeminist Media Culture</i> (Routledge 2018) and co-author of <i>Digital Feminist Activism</i> (Oxford University Press 2019). Her research on feminist media cultures have also been published in journals that include <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> , <i>Social Media + Society</i> , and <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> . Dr. Keller is currently working on a new book project about the cultural history of the feminist blogosphere from 1999-2016.
Ida Leggett	Ida Fadzillah Leggett is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Middle Tennessee State University. Originally from Malaysia, her research focuses on girl cultures, experiences of refugee youth, the intersection of cultures and fictional worlds, and anthropological

narratives on affect and emotion. Her publications include "Negotiating Dangerous Spaces: Encounters with Prostitution and AIDS in Northern Thailand," (2008), "Girls' Agency through Supermobility: The Power of Imagined Futures in Young Adult Fantasy Literature," (2021) and the co-edited volume on "Field Stories: Experiences, Affect, and the Lessons of Anthropology in the Twenty-First Century" (2021).

Andrea Liu

Andrea Liu (<https://parsejournal.com/authors/andrea-liu/>) is a New York City/Berlin-based visual art and performance critic (and artist) whose research often involves genealogy, or the epistemic context within which bodies of knowledge become intelligible and authoritative, as a point of departure in art production. She was founder/curator of Counterhegemony: Art in a Social Context (theoretical fellowship program for visual artists) and received fellowship awards from Jarislowsky Outstanding Artist Award Fellowship at Banff Centre, Museum of Fine Arts Houston Core, Center for Experimental Museology "Museum in a Liminal State" Fellow. She has written criticism for Afterimage, ArtMargins, e-flux (AUP), Social Text, New Museum Social Practice Glossary, Movement Research Journal, and she has book chapter contributions to IN Works 931-14209 (Edition Fink, 2014), Deste 15th Anniversary 1999-2015 (Deste Foundation, 2017), An Anthology on Failure (Genderfail, 2018), The Ooze (Aditya Mandayam) (Kunstverein München Companion Series, 2019), The Furies (Cassandra Press, 2018), Museum in a Liminal State (V-A-C Foundation, 2023, forthcoming). She has given talks at College Art Association, NYU Performance Studies Conference (Affect Factory), MASS MoCA (Museum of Contemporary Art Massachusetts), Black Mountain College Museum & Arts Center, Geffen Museum (Los Angeles), CUNY, Centre for Postdigital Cultures (Coventry University, UK), and received her undergraduate education from Yale University. (She gave a talk on "Harajuku Girls" in Paris last year: <http://pind.univ-tours.fr/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Programme.pdf>).

Hannah Maitland

Hannah Maitland (She/Her) lives and works on Treaty 13 territory in Tkaronto, where she is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies Department at York University. She studies girl activists, their politics, and their relationships with their mothers

and mother figures. Beyond her research, Hannah is the co-founder of the Ontario Digital Literacy and Access Network (ODLAN) and producer for the Sexuality Studies Spotlight podcast. You can find some of her writing in the journal *Sex Education* and *Shameless Magazine*.

Wendyliz Martinez Wendyliz Martinez is a PhD Candidate in African American Studies and English Dual Title Program at Penn State. Her research interests include representations of the Caribbean and Black Girlhood in literature, film, and social media. She has recently published a chapter titled, "Tik Tok For Us By Us: Black Girlhood, Joy, and Self-Care" in *Tik Tok Cultures in the United States* edited by Trevor Boffone. Martinez is currently writing her dissertation, *The (Secret) Lives of Black Girls: Interiority and Black Girls in film, literature, and social media*, which explores Black girls relationship with interior spaces and how these spaces help shape their understandings of their positionality in the world.

Linda McGuire Linda McGuire teaches courses on Gender, Writing and Biography at l'école nationale supérieure d'art in Dijon, France. Since 2011, her research has mainly focused on the significant presence of women and girls in Cicero's epistolary collections, especially *The Letters to Atticus*. As the founding member of The Epistolary Research Network (TERN), she organizes annual international conferences for those engaged in Epistolary Studies. Her latest article entitled "Cicero and his daughter Tullia: grief and history in a Latin epistolary collection" appeared in the collection *Emotions as Engines of History* (Routledge) in 2021.

Kyle Miron Kyle Miron is a second-year PhD Student in U.S. History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with minor fields in Gender History and the History of Medicine. They are interested in Progressive Era sexuality, medicine, and carceral systems with a particular focus on ideas about juvenile delinquency in girls and how social problems become localized on the bodies of girls. Their master's thesis examines state anti-masturbation projects aimed at girls in the early twentieth century and the role of new medical disciplines in policing sexual violence.

Emily Mohabir Emily is a PhD Candidate in the department of Communication, Media, and Film at the University of Calgary. She holds a BA in

English and Conflict Resolution Studies from the University of Winnipeg (with specialization in Children's and Young People's Texts and Cultures) and an MA in English from Acadia University. Her research interests include youth digital cultures, transmedia, fan studies, and popular texts, broadly, and she is especially interested in Korean television dramas and transmedia texts. Her doctoral research involves young people's aesthetic and emotional experiences with Korean webtoons and dramas, and webtoons' and dramas' growing transmedia expansion into North American popular culture.

Ya'ara Notea	Ya'ara Notea recently submitted her PhD at King's College London. Her thesis focuses on popular American girls' fiction and its symbolic and mediating functions in contemporary American culture.
Milka Nyariro	Milka Nyariro is a joint McGill Third Century (M3C) Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Faculties of Dental Medicine and Ora Health Sciences and the Department of Family Medicine at McGill University. Her research interests span girlhood, youth, and feminist studies, addressing sexual violence, sexuality, equity diversity and inclusion in Artificial Intelligence in healthcare. Her work adopts a social justice approach and uses participatory approaches.
Lakisha Odlum	Dr. Lakisha Odlum has been an educator for 19 years, and received her doctorate in English Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is currently an Assistant Professor of English Education at The State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. Her passions and research interests are Black Girls' Literacies, Critical Pedagogy, and Digital Activism. She has presented her research at the Literacy Research Association's annual conference, and at the national convention for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Lakisha is a proud, former New York City public school teacher, and she has written curriculum for the New York Public Library and The Digital Public Library of America.
Chris Aino Pihlak	Chris Aino Pihlak is an emerging transfeminine scholar that has devoted herself to subjects denied space within the heterocisnormative academy. She is a white, settler scholar, currently working on the land of the Ləkʷəŋən peoples at the University of Victoria. In addition to her general interest in histories of gender and sexuality, Chris is currently examining how

Anglophone, overwhelmingly white, gender-variant communities constructed femininity from the 1960s through the 1990s via a range of transfeminine periodicals. As a trans woman studying transfemininity, she hopes her analysis of the complexities and messiness of past trans lives honors those who built the path she now walks on.

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- Kirsten Pike Kirsten Pike is an assistant professor in residence in the Communication Program at Northwestern University in Qatar. Her teaching and research interests include girls' and children's media culture, feminist media studies, and critical history/theory of television and film. Her research has appeared in *Feminist Media Histories*, *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, and *Girlhood Studies*, among other venues. She is currently working on a manuscript called *Girls' Media in the Women's Liberation Era: Girls Act and Talk Back* (Routledge).
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- Shauna Pomerantz Shauna Pomerantz works at Brock University in St. Catharines, Canada, where she is a Professor of Child and Youth Studies. Recent publications have been on TikTok and parent-child relations, post qualitative inquiry, and immanent cinematic girlhoods. She is author of *Girls, Style, and School Identities: Dressing the Part* (Palgrave), and co-author of *Girl Power: Girls Reinventing Girlhoods* (Peter Lang) and *Smart Girls: Success, School, and the Myth of Post-Feminism* (University of California Press). When not working, Shauna listens to music, lifts weights, watches shows and movies (especially coming of age narratives), and hangs out with fam and friends.
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- Ashley E. Remer Ashley E. Remer is a museum director, art historian, curator, writer, editor, and creative producer. She is the founder and Head Girl of the USA based non-profit Girl Museum, the first and only museum in the world dedicated to girlhood, that produces exhibitions, multimedia projects and publications celebrating girlhood and advocating for girls' rights. Ashley recently co-authored *Exploring American Girls' History through 50 Historic Treasures* with Rowman & Littlefield about girls' history in the USA told through objects and historic sites. Currently based in New Zealand, she is researching representations of girls in fine art and how they are interpreted in public museums for a PhD at the Australian National University.

- LaTiana Ridgell LaTiana is a second-year doctoral student in Childhood Studies. She has a bachelor's degree in Nursing from Chico State and a master's degree in Public Health from Drexel University. She worked with Nurse-Family Partnership as a Public Health Nurse Home Visitor for four years. Additionally, she taught first-generation college students at a non-profit before beginning her doctoral studies. LaTiana is dedicated to understanding how the public conceptualizes Black children through various mediums, such as new outlets, entertainment industries, or social media.
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- Jakob Rosendal Jakob Rosendal has earned a PhD in Art History from Aarhus University (DK), where he is currently conducting a three-year postdoc project titled "The Gaze of the Girl: Gender, Politics, and Aesthetics" in collaboration with KØN – Gender Museum Denmark. This project focuses in particular on the innumerable pictures of Greta Thunberg and her emergence as a global icon, and will result in an exhibition at the museum in 2024. Jakob has a particular interest in pictures of children, both those made by adults and children's own image-productions, especially when it comes to questions of gender and sexuality. In this connection, he has undertaken the first study of a transgender teenager's lifelong production of drawings, published in the article "Oliver's Birds: An Image-Semiotic Latency Period in the Drawings of a Transgender Child" (Lamella, 2021, published in Danish) as well as the article "The Seductions of Little Red Riding Hood: On the Thresholds of Children's Drawings" (forthcoming). Jakob is the editor of the art history journal *Passepartout* and the journal of the Danish Society of Theoretical Psychoanalysis *Lamella*.
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- Maritza Salazar Maritza Salazar is a third-year PhD Student at the University of Southern California in the Urban Education Policy program. Her research interests include college access and equity, justice impacted students, and the nexus between education and the criminal legal system.
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- Celeste Sandstrom Celeste Sandstrom is a PhD Candidate in the School of Sociology at the Australian National University in Canberra. Her work focuses on representations of trans women's experience within literature and how these inform discussions of the phenomenology of gendered embodiment.

- Anna Shapland Anna Shapland is a second-year PhD student in English Studies at Illinois State University focusing in Children's and Young Adult Literature. She obtained her MA in Children's Literature from Central Michigan University, where she primarily studied the heroic tradition in contemporary young adult fantasy. She currently teaches Foundations in Literature for Children at ISU while she develops her current research interests in care ethics, generational storytelling, and young adult activism.
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- Halle Singh Halle Singh is a PhD candidate in the Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University. As a feminist theorist of gender, age, and capitalism, she works across social reproduction theory, critical cultural studies, and girlhood studies. Her dissertation, "Girlhood After Dark: Nighttime, Leisure, and the Temporality of Gender" theorizes how capitalism regulates gender through one of its central mechanisms of control: time.
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- Lynne Stahl Lynne Stahl is the Humanities & Interdisciplinary Studies Librarian at Wesleyan University, where she provides research assistance to students and faculty in English, American Studies, the College of Letters, Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, and Romance Languages & Literatures. Her work lies at the intersection of gender studies, film theory, and critical information studies and has appeared in venues including Popular Culture Review, The Rambling, and The Washington Post. She is at work on a book manuscript tentatively titled Unhappy Medium: Queer Feminist Spectatorship and Filmic Tomboy Narrative.
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- Rosie Steele Rosie Steele is a third year PhD student in sociology and education at Northumbria University. Her thesis looks at girls' experiences of seeking advice and informal education using twentieth century girl's magazines in light of the 2019 sex and relationships reform. She is part of the Liberating Histories Group an AHRC funded project 'Liberating Histories: Women's Movement Magazines, Media Activism and Periodical Pedagogies'.
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- Inna Sukhenko Inna Sukhenko is a research fellow of Helsinki Environmental Humanities Hub, the Department of Cultures, the University of Helsinki. Her current project is focused on researching the literary dimensions of nuclear energy within energy literary narrative studies and energy humanities. After defending her PhD in Literary

Studies (Dnipro, Ukraine), she has been a research fellow of Erasmus Mundus (Bologna, 2008; Turku, 2011-2012), Cambridge Colleges Hospitality Scheme (2013), SUSI (Ohio, 2016), Open Society Foundation/Artes Liberales Foundation (Warsaw, 2016-2017), JYU Visiting Fellowship Programme (Jyväskylä, 2021). She is among the contributors of *The Routledge Handbook of Ecocriticism and Environmental Communication* (2019). Her general research interests lie within environmental humanities, energy humanities, petrocultures, ecocriticism, nuclear criticism, literary energy narrative studies, nuclear fiction, energy ethics. She is a member of the Association for Literary Urban Studies (Finland), HELSUS (Finland), the Finnish Society for Development Research (Finland), and Nordic Association for American Studies (NAAS).

Anna Szirák

Anna Szirák is a 2nd-year PhD Student of English language literature in the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Debrecen, Hungary. Her field of research is concerned with girlhood studies, under the realms of gender studies and cultural studies. In her upcoming dissertation, she is focusing on the textual representations of girlhood in literature and on film, with particular attention given to Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, Jennifer's *Body* (2009), Ian McEwan's *Atonement* and Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle*.

Sara Tabuyo-Santaclara

Sara Tabuyo-Santaclara is a predoctoral researcher at University of Vigo, under contract from the Xunta de Galicia since 2021. She is a member of the Research Feminar: Feminisms and Resistance, within the wider research group BiFeGa: Literary and Cultural Studies, Translation and Interpretation (Ref. ED431C-2020/04), and she is affiliated to the Interuniversity Research Centre for Atlantic Cultural Landscapes (CISPAC). Her PhD thesis analyzes representations of girlhood in *The Handmaid's Tale* Universe. Her main research interests are feminist, cultural, gender, and critical race studies and postcolonial literatures.

Jessica Taft

Dr. Jessica K. Taft is Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz. An interdisciplinary youth studies scholar, her work focuses on the political lives of children and youth across the Americas, with an emphasis on youth activists and social movements. She is the author of *Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas* (NYU Press, 2011)

and *The Kids Are in Charge: Activism and Power in Peru's Movement of Working Children* (NYU Press, 2019) as well as numerous articles on intergenerational relationships, age-based power dynamics, and young people's participation in social movements. She is especially interested in how age-based identity narratives shape social movements and how the subject categories of child, youth, adult, teenager, and girl are constructed and deployed within transnational and local political cultures, and how these subject categories matter to political strategies and practices.

Ashwini Tambe

Dr. Tambe is a scholar of transnational South Asian history who focuses on the relationship between law, gender, and sexuality. Over the past two decades, she has written about how South Asian societies regulate sexual practices. Her 2019 book *Defining Girlhood in India: A Transnational Approach to Sexual Maturity Laws* (University of Illinois Press) explores how the expectation of sexual innocence is distributed in uneven ways for girls across class and caste groups. She has published articles about age of consent and age of marriage standards in journals such as *American Historical Review*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, and *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*.

Katie Taylor

Katie Taylor is a final year PhD student in English Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. Her thesis considers theories of race such as fugitivity and futurity in its examination of how *The Crisis* and *The Brownies'* Book fostered new forms of writing for children that centred racial politics in their exploration of a range of topics including, environmentalism, education, visual culture, and photography. She works as a sessional tutor in the English department at LJMU and as a research assistant to the Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies.

Fatma Fulya Tepe

Fatma Fulya Tepe is Associate Professor of Sociology at Istanbul Aydın University, Turkey. She graduated with Magna Cum Laude from the department of American Culture and Literature at Istanbul University. Her Ph.D. is from the Sociology Department of that same university. In her Ph.D. thesis she studied the division of labour in the domestic life of Istanbul female academics working within the fields of basic sciences and engineering. Dr. Tepe has published

articles relating to sexism in engineering academia, motherhood studies, and state feminism in Turkey.

Sudipa Topdar	Sudipa Topdar is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the Illinois State University. Her research interests include the histories of childhood, schooling, embodiment, colonialism in South Asia.
Serena Wilcox	Serena M. Wilcox is currently a visiting lecturer in the Women's and Gender Studies Program at the University of North Texas-Denton. Her work examines the influence of racial thought on public education policy, particularly in small public rural and urban schools globally.
Rachel Windsor	Rachel Windsor is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of English at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on representations of girlhood sexual trauma in contemporary American literature. She is currently working on a dissertation chapter about traumatic shame in Toni Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i> .
Michaela Wipond	Michaela Wipond is a doctoral candidate at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, specializing in ecocriticism and classic girls' fiction. Her research interests include postcolonial ecofeminism, critical animal studies, and gender and sexuality in children's literature. She has published and presented extensively on the life and works of L.M. Montgomery, author of " <i>Anne of Green Gables</i> ." With Dr. Brooke Cameron, she is co-curating an exhibition on children's animal rights literature for the W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections. She is an Editor-in-Chief of " <i>The Lamp</i> ," a literary journal devoted to publishing the creative writing of graduate and professional students around the world.
A. Berkem Yanıkcın	A. Berkem Yanıkcın is a graduate student in Communication Studies at Kadir Has University, Istanbul, where he also works as a researcher in the ERC Starting Grant funded project, "Staging National Abjection: Theatre and Politics in Turkey and Its Diasporas." Berkem's primary areas of research are theories of performance, queer and feminist theatre, and activist aesthetics, with a focus on Turkey.
Mary Zaborskis	Mary Zaborskis is an Assistant Professor of American Studies and Gender Studies at Penn State Harrisburg. She works at the intersections of queer, critical race, and childhood studies in 20th-

century and contemporary American literature and culture. Her monograph, *Queer Childhoods: Institutional Futures of Indigeneity, Race, and Disability*, is forthcoming in New York University Press' "Sexual Cultures" series.

Polina Zelmanova Polina Zelmanova is an AHRC Midlands4Cities funded PhD student in Film and Television Studies at the University of Warwick. Her thesis is titled 'Sex in Contemporary Film and TV: Power and Pleasure after #MeToo'. She is interested in the representation and politics of sex and sexuality in popular culture, the #MeToo context, as well as broader frameworks of queer and feminist screen studies. Outside of her research, Polina has worked in film festival project management and as an audio-visual practitioner including for projects funded by IATL (Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning) Warwick and Coventry City of Culture.