Congratulations to our 2022 Graduates

Elisabeth Yang

Kacey Doran

Palak Vashist completed her preliminary exams this year. She has a forthcoming book chapter entitled, "Identifying Child Labor: Revisiting State's Craft in Bombay Textile Mills (1880-1920)", Childhoods and Youth in India: Engagements with Modernity, Routledge. She received the South Asia Summer Fellowship, Department of South Asian Studies, Rutgers University, April 2021. Palak will also be teaching the History of Youth course this summer 2022. This past academic year, Palak presented her work at various conferences, which includes but not limited to, International History Research Seminar organized by the London School of Economics, Childhood Application Seminar Series organized by Stockton University, and a panel presentation organized by SSHA- Social Science History Association, in Philadelphia.

Halle Singh published a requested article entitled “Method-ological Review of Girlhood Studies: Mapping the Landscapes of Girlhood,” in the journal of Girlhood Studies. She also presented original work from her dissertation, “Girlhood After Dark: Nighttime, Leisure, and the Reproduction of the Self,” at the Capitalism, Socialism, and Childhoods International Conference and the Popular Culture Association annual conference. This past spring, she taught a brand-new undergraduate course on Girlhood Studies, the first-time in Rutgers – Camden history. This year, she was nominated as one of Rutgers – Camden Remarkable 31 for her work in advancing gender equity through her research, teaching, and campus service as the graduate assistant for the Gender Studies program.
Kathleen Kellett co-chaired the Children and Childhood section of the 2021 Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association conference with Kacey Doran. There, she presented a paper entitled "Justifying Homicide: Killer Girls in YA Genre Fiction." In the fall of 2021, she completed an independent project on undergraduate writing education in the Childhood Studies department, and is currently teaching an Introduction to Childhood Studies course using the principles from this research. In the fall, Kathleen received IRB approval to conduct her dissertation research, and she is currently enmeshed in a digital ethnographic project with teen readers discussing monstrosity, literature, and politics.

Joseph V. Giunta presented his academic research at four academic conferences on his recurring scholarly interests. Firstly, his examination of weaponry in Jordan Peele’s first two feature films, Get Out (2016) and Us (2019), and their de/reconstructions of whiteness was presented at the Popular Culture Association’s (PCA) 2021 annual conference as part of a panel on Black Representation in Horror. His investigation and analysis of the contrasting constructions of childhood produced and reproduced through the acting, directing, and media coverage of actress Brooklynn Prince was the focus of a presentation for the International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCL) 2021 Congress’ panel on Ethics and Aesthetics. Additionally, research that began in Dr. Balagopalan’s Theories of Childhood Studies course on complex framings of mimetic faculty in adulthood in the films Hook (1991) and Christopher Robin (2018) molded the core of a presentation as part of a panel entitled Narratives of Childhood and Power: Memory, Death and Luck at the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association (MAPACA)’s 2021 annual conference. Finally, Joseph’s chapter on 1950s representations of girlhood in Disney’s Alice in Wonderland (1951) and Peter Pan (1953) in Social Order and Authority in Disney and Pixar Films, edited by Kellie Deys and Denise Parrillo, was part of a roundtable including other contributors to this exciting collection at PCA’s 2022 annual conference. Along with this chapter, which was published in December 2021, two chapters are in various points of the publication process: a chapter on depictions of children’s experiences of trauma through the character arcs of Aang and Zuko in Avatar: The Last Airbender (2005-08) in an edited volume entitled The Avatar Television Franchise: Storytelling, Identity, Trauma and Fandom, edited by Francis M. Agnoli, is in its final editing stage before an estimated late-2022 release, and a co-authored chapter with Ingrid E. Castro on robot parents and posthuman children in Raised By Wolves (2020–) and I Am Mother (2019) in Debbie Olson’s forthcoming collection Children in the Post-Apocalypse: Children and Childhood in Post-Apocalyptic Cinema and Television is in its early revisions. Joseph also had a fantastic experience teaching a section of Introduction to Childhood Studies during the Fall 2021 semester, and is very excited about future teaching opportunities.

Lidong Xiang received a prestigious research fellowship from the International Youth Library and conducted a research visit in Munich for her dissertation from October to December 2021. In the past academic year, Lidong organized and presented at the panel “Girls in School Uniforms” in the 2021 International Conference in the History of Childhood and Youth (SHCY), and presented another research in 2021 Children’s Literature Association (ChLA). She has three forthcoming publications: a book chapter titled “The Affective Construction of Chinese Child Citizenship in Little Friend, 1945-1949”, which is included in the forthcoming book Moving Stories: Emotion in, through, and around Texts for Children and Young Adults; a journal article “The Geography of Gender Divisions and Urban Girls’ Subjectivity” (in Chinese), and a book review for Bookbird. In Spring 2022, she’s teaching a writing intensive undergraduate course Young Adult Literature.
Gaylene Gordon, in early 2021, following her research interests, formed a relationship with the nonprofit youth intervention program, Women of the Dream, and has served in several key roles as a mentor, tutor, and group mental health facilitator. Through the program, Gaylene tutored 11th-grade girls in writing their personal statements for college entrance. In addition, Gaylene served as advisor and creative writing instructor for ten young ladies whose work has been published in the social injustice and advocacy anthology called “Speak Young Brown People, Speak Gaylene Gordon We Are Listening!” The book offered an opportunity for Black and Brown girls affected by social injustice to liberate their voices regarding the injustice they face and witness daily. This accomplishment also provided a platform for discourse on social injustice through a well-attended press conference and an article in The Philadelphia Inquirer. Gaylene also devised and conducted a youth-centric trauma-informed care workshop called Racial Trauma, Identity Development, and Defying Stereotypes. Additionally, she co-hosts a trauma-informed care group at Camden High School Campus. This is Gaylene’s second cohort of girls to participate in the training and she is preparing for the third group of young ladies. This will be a program that is taught several times during the academic school year for Camden youth. The group focuses on Adverse Childhood Experiences and circumnavigating the daily stressors that living in risky environments brings to youth from ages twelve to eighteen.

On the Rutgers-Camden campus, Gaylene taught the Fall semester’s Violent Crimes course in the Sociology, Anthropology & Criminal Justice Department. She was recommended and accepted a nomination to be a committee member for the Committee on Public Art and History: Representing Equity, Diversity, and Racial Justice on the Grounds of Rutgers Camden, where she was appointed and served as the chair for the Rutgers-Camden Buildings and Spaces Subcommittee. Upon completing the Interim Chancellor Margaret Marsh’s charge to recommend ways to increase and contextualize campus art, she accepted the opportunity to continue to the following Plaques, Major Markers, Monuments, and Artwork Committee. The current committee received a new commission by Chancellor Antonio Tillis to focus on implementing the Committee for Public Art and History recommendations put forth. Regarding Gaylene’s research scholarship, she participated in three research conferences: the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, the Social Science History Association Conference, and the Graduate Research and Creative Activity Symposium. Gaylene was an invited panelist for three events: the Centering Black Childhood Speaker Series and The Sankofa Collective’s Graduate Student Panel, both at the Camden Campus and the Childhood Application Seminar Series hosted by Stockton University. Lastly, Gaylene’s second co-authored manuscript for publication entitled Growing Up and Out of Crime Hot Spots: Young Residents’ Perspectives of Resilience was submitted. Gaylene looks forward to continuing her work to intercept youth of color before they are ensnared in the funneling apparatus that sustains the school-to-prison pipeline.

Sunny J. Reed has had a busy second year! In Fall 2021, she presented her research on transracial adoption and the American family in several virtual spaces, including Adoption, Kinship, and Culture: Engaging the Past, Imagining the Future, Stockton University’s Childhood Research Seminar, the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association’s Annual Conference, and The Adoption Initiative’s biennial conference. As part of her commitment to public engagement and public scholarship, she made public appearances on NPR and Adoptees On, speaking about race, adoption, and research. In the summer of 2022, Sunny will be publishing a book review for the Adoption and Culture journal, as well as papers related to her recent conference talks. Sunny looks forward to her continuing work with the Childhood Studies department in the upcoming year.