

Individual Presentations

Amina Ally

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Research as Improvisation: Digital and Arts-Based Participatory Action Research Tools

Abstract: The research project “Cultural Identity and Popular Culture: New Digital Media Platforms and Mapping Multiplicities of Childhood” examines the role that popular culture plays in identity formation. Digital and arts-based participatory methodological tools are reviewed in relation to conducting research with children.

Popular culture is understood as a site of tension between dominant and marginal cultures (Hall, 1981). This can be understood as a tension between what is consumed or created by/for adults and what is consumed or created by/for children. As this project is interested in both cultural identity and digital identity the research design includes a digital ethnography where participants will be asked to create a digital identity box as well as online observation of their social media platforms.

Working with children identifying as having hybrid cultural backgrounds, this research project has two goals: 1) understanding the relationship between popular culture and hybrid identity and 2) including children and their unique experiences in the creative processes of theorizing using arts-based methods. Here I focus on the question: how can we theorize cultural identity with children?

Drawing on anti-oppressive research practices (Strega & Brown, 2015), improvisational music as embodiment (Iyer, 2004) and new materialism feminist approaches to childhood (Spryou, 2018), this presentation argues for improvisational and embodied research practices.

Spryou (2018) outlines how childhood studies can draw on feminist epistemologies without falling victim to the limitations of overemphasizing child centered concerns. This research project de-centers the child by not doing research about children but conducting research with children through embodied approaches. Embodied inquiry (Leigh & Brown, 2021) can allow for young people to meaningfully engage in theorizing about cultural identity using data generation methods such as photography, artistic creation, dance, and other methods that emphasize process as well as movement.

Biographical Statement: Amina is a PhD Candidate specializing in Child Studies within the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning as part of the Critical Child and Youth Studies (CCYS) research group at NTNU. Amina's research focuses on children's cultural identity, belonging and citizenship, in relation to popular culture and digital media. Her research interests include decolonial and intersectional approaches to childhood, posthumanism, embodied inquiry and arts-based/creative approaches to research.

Meredith A. Bak

Rutgers University

Inside the Box: Imaginative Play and the Formalization of Cardboard Pedagogy

Abstract: In 2005, the cardboard box was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame at the Strong National Museum of play in Rochester, NY. Noting that cardboard was historically developed for the purposes of packaging and shipping, the Museum’s exhibition text reaffirms the common conception of cardboard as a material that children appropriate as a plaything and suggests its special suitability for children’s construction projects: “Over the years, children sensed the possibilities inherent in cardboard boxes, recycling them into innumerable playthings.”¹ At once an emblem of consumer culture and a symbol of children’s imaginary play, the cardboard box occupies a space in the children’s playscape that blurs the distinction between a toy as a commercial product and as a non-commercial object. Despite the box’s contribution to cultural narratives about children’s “natural” creative play, robust literary markets and product categories have institutionalized a pedagogy of cardboard box construction, commonly under the rubric of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education and sustainable design. In addition to books, several companies produce cardboard construction kits typically consisting of plastic fasteners such as rivets and screws, and tools including saws, perforators, and drivers, replacing ad-hoc materials such as tape and string with more standardized components. This paper will undertake a material and discursive analysis of cardboard construction literature and several cardboard hardware systems, such as MakeDo, BoxLox, and Elmer’s Build It line to interrogate cardboard’s privileged position within children’s material culture where the ideals of environmental and STEAM education coalesce. Tempering the assumptions that cardboard’s accessibility makes it an equitable choice and its recyclability makes it an environmental one, this paper will probe the extent to which cardboard’s promises of sustainability and equity play out and will investigate the other cultural narratives that cardboard’s role in children’s culture authorizes and perpetuates.

Biographical Statement: Meredith A. Bak is an Associate Professor of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University. She is the author of *Playful Visions: Optical Toys and the Emergence of Children’s Media Culture* (MIT Press, 2020). Her work has appeared in journals including *Ninth Letter*, *The Journal for Cinema and Media Studies*, *Early Popular Visual Culture*, *The Velvet Light Trap*, and *Film History*, and in several edited collections. She is at work on a project about the role of cardboard in children’s environmental pedagogy.

Tina Benigno

Albertus Magnus College

Understanding Teen Girl’s Care: “Play” Practices and Materialities of Care in Media-Making and Sport

Abstract: This paper will be discussing a new approach that explores how teens girls’ leisure activities such as (social) media creation and even sports are ways to understand what they care about. I argue that young people demonstrate their care in various and sometimes not obvious ways. This paper is aligned with the conference

theme in that these sometimes inconspicuous ways teens reveal care through their leisure practices calls into question the border between play and social criticism.

For young people who might be overwhelmed by narratives of extraordinary youth, the nuances and dynamics of their leisure activities can be significant revelations and even demonstrations of their care and social criticisms and concerns. Taking a neoliberal feminist approach and using media and cultural analysis methods, I will be analyzing various social media posts by young people for information about what they care about. While care in itself will not generate active positive action or change in the world, understanding young people's care is crucial in understanding how they experience the world, how social structures impact them, and how they might like the world to be. I am interested in the socio-cultural aspect of "play" and exploring the UNCRC's conviction that young people's rights to self-expression and recreation strongly intersect with their cultures of play, identity and politics.

Borrowing from health and social care studies, I will be applying the theoretical concept of "materialities of care" to teen girls' play practices. The materialities of care in health care scholarship works towards "making visible the mundane and often unnoticed aspects of material culture within health and social care contexts, and exploring interrelations between materials and care in practice" (Buse, Martin & Nettleton, 2018, p. 243). My project will similarly be making visible that (care) which might go unnoticed within various types of "play", challenging the boundaries between entertainment and social critique. From a girls studies and youth studies standpoint, I am interested in how girls participate in an acceptable and accessible "play" practices out of pleasure but also as a way for them to for them to channel or demonstrate care and feel agential in an adult-centric world.

Biographical Statement: Tina Benigno is an Assistant Professor and Advisor in the English & Communications department at Albertus Magnus College in Connecticut. Tina completed her PhD in 2021 at York where she specialized in girlhood, and young people's media and cultures. Tina holds a MA in Film Studies from York and a BA in Cinema, English, and Italian Studies at the University of Toronto.

Lies Beugnies

Ghent University

Exploring the Green Lunchbox: A Cross-Sectional Study Exploring the Content, Packaging and Food Waste of Children's Packed Lunches and Snacks

Abstract: Food consumption has a huge impact on global climate change and sustainable food choices and actions (e.g. reducing meat intake or reducing packaging and food waste) can significantly reduce environmental impacts. Children are an important target group here as food preferences and habits established in childhood often persist into adulthood (Movassagh et al., 2017). Based on the socio-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), children's food consumption is influenced by their preferences, their parents and the school environment, which is often reflected in the packed lunch they bring to school (Metcalf et al., 2008).

While most studies focus on nutritional aspects of packed lunches from a health perspective, environmental aspects are often ignored (for a review - see Lalchandani et al., 2023). Studies exploring the environmental impact of school meals stress the high amount of meat and leftovers (e.g. De Laurentiis et al., 2017). However, for packed lunches, this remains underexplored. Thus, this study examines packed lunches and snacks of 1051 children between 8 and 12 years old of 25 primary schools through a cross-sectional observational study considering socioeconomic status. Objective measurements, including weighing and photographing each packed lunch and snack, were used to assess the food content, packaging and waste. Additionally, surveys for children and school boards were administered to investigate variations according to child-related factors (e.g. gender, socioeconomic status), lunch-related factors (e.g. if the child chose the content, lunch satisfaction) and school-related factors (e.g. school policy and initiatives).

Results indicate that while the majority of children's packed lunches contain meat products, most lunches and snacks have environmental friendly packaging and food waste is low. This study delivers insights to develop interventions and help children and families in making environmental friendly food choices. The study focuses on children's food consumption, food desires and sustainability which is aligned with the conference theme.

Biographical Statement: Lies Beugnies is a PhD researcher in Communication Sciences at Ghent University in Belgium. Her research interests lie within sustainable and healthy food promotion, child and family food consumption and consumer behavior in general. In her PhD project, she investigates how children and families can be persuaded to eat more environmental friendly food options and waste less food.

Pat Bonner

Concordia University

The Life and Death of YTV: Canadian Children's Television and U.S. Cultral Dominance

Abstract: This talk examines the transformation, over the past 35 years, of the Canadian children's network YTV. During the 1990s YTV was the most watched network in the country with a schedule that featured several massively popular Canadian children's series. Now, the network—which is largely dominated by Nickelodeon TV content and American films—is indicative of Canadian children's television's struggles in the 21st century, where investment in children's media is diminishing while the most powerful U.S. children's brands dominate the digital TV landscape. This talk surveys some examples of Canadian series whose histories on and off YTV can help us better understand what was once thought to be Canadian children's TV's elusive "edge"—and how this edge has been exploited by the U.S. companies that have begun to drive the Canadian industry. Through tracing these histories I hope to point out new directions by which Canadian children's television can once again make itself an enviable player in the children's television/media landscape.

Biographical Statement: Pat is a PhD candidate in Film and Moving Image Studies at Concordia University and a coordinator for the Global Emergent Media Lab. His research interests include film and television, media history, and cultural studies, with a focus on Canadian television. His current research focuses on Canadian children's television, Canada-U.S. media production, and the Canadian kids network YTV.

Kara Brisson-Boivin and Khadija Baig

MediaSmarts and Carleton University

Young Canadians in a Wireless World: How the Digital Consumption Habits of Canadian Youth Blue the Borders of Online “Play”, Digital Citizenship, and Online Harms

Abstract: Initiated in 2000 by MediaSmarts, Young Canadians in a Wireless World (YCWW) is Canada’s longest-running mixed-methods research study on young people’s attitudes and behaviours towards the internet and digital technology. This presentation focuses on the most recent phase (IV) of this longitudinal study, beginning with focus groups with youth ages 11 to 17 and then with parents. Findings from the qualitative focus groups informed the development of a quantitative survey which we conducted in 2021 with over 1,000 youth across the country.

This research offers valuable insights regarding the how and why of young Canadians’ digital consumption patterns and how the borders between ‘play’, digital citizenship, and online harms are blurred. Research findings provide a glimpse into the online lives of young Canadians including when and why they first receive a digital device, what their online activities are, how they understand and negotiate privacy online, how they use technology to build, maintain, and manage relationships, and how they address problems they encounter online including harmful content and online cruelty. This research emphasizes how youth across Canada are maximizing the potential of digital technology as digital citizens and consumers. Furthermore, it highlights the role parents, caregivers, and educators play as moderators and mediators of young Canadians’ online consumption habits. Recommendations from YCWW phase IV, highlight the need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to digital literacy education in Canada, grounded in the experiences of especially marginalized youth, to increase their safety, well-being, and online resilience.

MediaSmarts is Canada’s non-profit centre for digital media literacy. Our vision is that everyone is empowered to engage with all forms of media confidently and critically. We have been conducting research and developing digital literacy programs for Canadian homes, schools and communities since 1996.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Kara Brisson-Boivin, is the Director of Research at MediaSmarts. Kara is responsible for the planning, methodology, implementation, and dissemination of key findings from original MediaSmarts’ research studies as well as evaluations of MediaSmarts’ programs. Kara also holds an appointment as an Adjunct Research Professor in the Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University.

Biographical Statement: Khadija Baig, Research and Evaluation Associate at MediaSmarts. Khadija supports the planning, implementation and dissemination of key findings from original MediaSmarts’ research studies and program evaluations. Khadija is also a Research Associate at Carleton University’s Human Oriented Research in Usable Security lab.

Kara Chan

Hong Kong Baptist University

A Discourse Analysis of YouTube Videos of a Key Opinion Leader (KOL) of Toys in China: The Case of Xiaoling Toy (*Online*)

Abstract: Key opinion leaders play a major role in the social media marketing of branded goods in China. Many key opinion leaders (KOLs) in China have millions of subscribers. A study of 1,779 posts of the top ten online influencers in China found that 8 percent and 6 percent carried information about brand promotion or marketing events respectively. Altogether 22 percent mentioned brands. However, posts with branded contents were less engaging than posts without branded contents.

Xiaoling Toy (<https://au.youtubers.me/xiaoling-toys/youtuber-stats>) was established in 2016. The channel has posted over three thousand videos, each about 10 minutes, introducing different toys and IP products. It has over one million subscribers and the videos together attracted over 1,024 million views. The host Xioling is a female aged 30 born in Chengdu. However, she dressed like a teenager and sometimes even act as if she is an eight-year old girl.

In this study, I propose to conduct a discourse analysis of three to four selected videos of Xiaoling Toy on her YouTube channel. The objectives are to examine the storytelling techniques, the underlying assumption about culture, and consumer cultural values communicated in these videos. The contexts of branded communication with children and youths in China will also be discussed. The study will inform us about the formation of the creative media economy of KOLs in China. It will also deepen our understanding of the toy culture in China.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Kara Chan research on areas of advertising and cross-cultural consumer studies. She was a Fulbright Scholar at Bradley University. She was the Finalist for the 2020 University Grants Committee Teaching Award, and a recipient of President's Award of Outstanding Performance in Research Supervision, Outstanding Performance in Scholarly Work. She was named World's Top 2% Scientists in the Economics and Business subject field in 2022 and 2023.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Bai is working as senior lecturer of Chinese in Faculty of Business and Law, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. Dr. Bai's research interests include Linguistics, Teaching English/Chinses as a Second Language, Transnational Higher Education, Language Academics' Research Capacity Building, and Foreign-Trained Chinese Academic Returnees. Over the years, she has been publishing in high quality international journals of education, and language and linguistics. In addition, she has extensive experience of teaching both Chinese and English as a second language at the university level.

Luc Cousineau[^], Kris Taylor^{*}, and Maeve Park

Dalhousie University[^] and University of Auckland^{*}

Talking Masculinities in the Time of Tate: Critical Analysis of Anti-Misogyny Workshops for Teachers and Youth Workers in Aotearoa/ New Zealand (Hybrid)

Abstract: While the internet has long been a site of virulent misogyny (Kendall, 2000; Nagle, 2017), the last two years have seen a marked proliferation of misogynist extremism online especially targeting young men through masculinist influencers like Andrew Tate. Behind Tate's popularity lie historic and existing networks of internet subcultures that support his form of extremism, including forums/groups like Black Pill (incels), Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), and Men's Rights Activists. More attention must be paid to the influence of such online movements, as they represent a shift towards an extreme form of anti-feminism and misogyny. They leverage child and teen consumption of digital media and a sense of aggrieved entitlement to recruit boys and men to online campaigns against girls and women. In some cases, this results in the use of terroristic violence to (re)assert masculine hegemony (Ging, 2019). Evidence from these internet spaces also indicates that members are seeking (and finding) communities of care, but are simultaneously indoctrinated and radicalised by their involvement (Cousineau, 2021; 2023).

Interventions that address the foundations of these belief systems and address youth from multiple points of influence are needed. Specifically, workshops with teachers and youth workers focusing on countering narratives of masculine entitlement and dominance can help boys and men make sense of themselves in relation to gendered expectations and norms. This presentation will critically analyse a data-gathering project and series of in-person workshops delivered by the research team in New Zealand in early 2024. These workshops, meant to provide teachers and youth workers with some of the tools needed to begin and maintain constructive discussions with youth about masculinities, highlighted areas where more work is required to help children and teens process and synthesize the (often) conflicting messages they receive online, in person, and from within about gender and identity.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Luc Cousineau, Dr. Kris Taylor, and Maeve Park are researchers and practitioners who co-developed and delivered research-based anti-misogyny workshops for teachers and youth through the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Fund (Aotearoa New Zealand). Luc Cousineau is an instructor of recreation management at Dalhousie University. Kris Taylor is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Auckland and works with Shifting the Line NZ. Meadhbh (Maeve) Park is a practitioner and freelance researcher in the field of Countering Violent Extremism.

Martha Currie

Queen's University

Victimization in Fandom Spaces

Abstract: From David Bowie to Taylor Swift, the victimization of fans in established fandoms is considered inevitable in the enjoyment and dedication to a beloved artist. However, in the normalized overconsumption of fandoms serving as guaranteed marketing campaigns to dictate algorithms and pressure record labels, what constitutes a “victim” within current fandom communities? In an exploration of the development from 1970s groupie culture to current 2020s name of their beloved artist. The perception of choice and autonomy within algorithmic recommendations encouraging continuous consumption of new material will be compared directly to the lifestyle sacrifices of a groupie within late-stage capitalism. Along with the benefits of identity formation through parasocial relationships, the disadvantages of perceived political positions exacerbated through pointed silence of beloved celebrities will be compared to the contradictory political involvement of public figures in the 1970s. The proposed presentation will answer the questions; Is it possible to be considered a victim of corporate greed within the designation of fandom spaces? Will the cultural connotations of victimhood eventually alter the perception victims of celebrity worship? How does the erasure and belittlement of women's enjoyment in fandom spaces contribute to the professed victimization of teen girls in consumption?

Through the examination of early fandom studies scholarship in the 1990s to contemporary observations of fandom culture, the proposed presentation will deconstruct the borders of *fangirl* and *victim* of consumption and corporate manipulation. However, the degradation of teen girl's enjoyment and consumption will not be vilified through outdated perceptions of a helpless young consumer. The contradictions of media literacy in fandom spaces will be approached within scholarly commentary of the expansive nature of internet culture.

Biographical Statement: Martha Currie (she/her) has a particular interest in nostalgia capitalism, fandom studies and screen-to-screen adaptations within reboot cinema. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Culture Studies with a specialization in Film and Media at Queen's University as an Ontario Graduate funded scholar. Prior to starting her doctorate degree, Martha worked in the independent film industry in Toronto including her positions at the Canadian Film Centre, TIFF and Hot Docs.

Juan Francisco Dávila

Universidad de Piura

Only the Lonely: Insecurity Feelings, Loneliness, and Materialism

Abstract: Since 2018, UK and Japan became the first countries to appoint a ‘ministry of loneliness’ to address this public health problem. This article follows Terror Management Theory to explore the effect of four types of

insecurity (existential, developmental, social and personal) on young people's loneliness, and the effects of loneliness on materialism.

The hypotheses are: existential insecurity (H1a), attachment insecurity (H1b), social insecurity (H1c) and personal insecurity (H1d) are associated with higher loneliness, and loneliness mediates the influence of insecurities on materialism (H2).

370 students answered an online survey at a private university in Peru, South America. The survey was sent to 731 e-mail addresses of students who attended classes virtually via Zoom during the Covid lockdown, with a response rate of 50.6%. It was approved by the university IRB. Respondents were aged 18 to 27 years. 203 students were female, and 167 were male.

The CFA model had an optimal fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.79$, comparative fit index CFI = 0.94, Tucker-Lewis Index TLI = 0.93, and root mean square error of approximation RMSEA = 0.046). The final SEM model, including age and sex as controls, had an adequate fit, $\chi^2/df = 1.96$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, and RMSEA = 0.051. The paths from existential insecurity to developmental insecurity ($\beta = .425$, $p < .001$), and to personal insecurity ($\beta = .210$, $p < .001$) were significant. The paths from developmental insecurity to loneliness ($\beta = .485$, $p < .001$) and from personal insecurity to loneliness ($\beta = .443$, $p < .001$) were significant. H1a, H1b, and H1d were supported. The path from loneliness to materialism ($\beta = .298$, $p < .001$) was also significant. H2 was supported.

This study contributes to the conference theme by showing how in a limit situation (lockdown), loneliness in young people, a well-studied antecedent of materialism, mediates the influence of insecurity feelings on materialism. Existential insecurity was an antecedent of both developmental and personal insecurity.

Biographical Statement: Juan Francisco Dávila is an associate professor of marketing at the Universidad de Piura, Lima, Peru. His research focuses on children, young people, materialism and social networks. He has co-authored articles in *Young Consumers*, the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, and the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. He participated in the CTC in 2012 (Milan), 2018 (Angouleme) and 2022 (Madrid).

Valérie-Inés de la Ville[^] and Maria Angeles Blanco Ruiz^{*}

Poitiers University[^] and Rey Juan Carlos University^{*}

Playing with Recent EU Legal Borders: Key Issues Concerning Minors Confronting Global Media Corporations—Some Interrogations from Roblox Case Study

Abstract: Recent EU regulatory frameworks have been decreed by the European Parliament such as “General Data Protection Regulation” (2018) and “Digital Services Act Directive” (2023) aim to protect minors in the digital environment, forcing global media corporations to adapt their policies at various levels. Drawing on an in-depth case-study of ROBLOX corporation, this paper explores the scope of some key changes brought about by this new legal framework in the practices towards minors at three levels:

- Advertising targeting minors: online platforms should not present advertisements based on profiling using personal data of the user of the service when they are reasonably aware that the recipient of the service is a minor. Moreover the principle of data minimization should lead the platform provider not to collect more personal data than it already has in order to assess whether the recipient of the service is a minor.
- Consent to use virtual currencies: the multi-layered and complex business model of the platform creates an array of varied opportunities to earn and spend the virtual currency - Robux - that question the legal capacity of minors to engage in commercial activities when using the platform.
- Playbour that exploits minors' creative practices: the possibility of transforming an amount of Robux won by developing game design activities on the platform into real money depends on complex conditions whose compliance with child labour laws raises legitimate legal, ethical and ideological issues.

Biographical Statement: Valérie-Inés de La Ville has a PhD in strategic management from Lyon III University. Full Professor at the Business Administration Department (IAE) of the University of Poitiers (France) where I run a master's degree in "Digital Youth Marketing" based in Angoulême. My research is carried out at the European Center for Children's Products (CEPE) and deals with the economic socialisation of young consumers, the innovation processes in industries targeting families and children, as well as the corporate social responsibility of companies operating in children's markets.

Biographical Statement: Esther Martínez-Pastor is a Full Professor of Advertising at the Faculty of Communication Science of the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos de Madrid. My current lines of research focus on self-injury of minors and young people, regulation of advertising, advertising of minors and transparency. She is currently the PI of the project "Media representation of self-injury of minors in the media and networks" framed in the call for Knowledge Generation Projects 2021, funded by the National Plan of the Ministry of Science and Innovation. I am also Co_IP of the European project "Safer Internet Centre Spain 3.0" led by the National Institute of Cybersecurity of Spain and in which we investigate the vulnerabilities of minors in social networks, specifically self-harm.

Biographical Statement: Marian Blanco-Ruiz has a PhD in Media Research from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) and a degree in Journalism and Audiovisual Communication from the UC3M. They are a professor in the Department of Advertising and Audiovisual Communication at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos de Madrid (URJC). Her lines of research focus on the analysis of gender representations in the media, new technologies in young people and gender violence. She coordinates and directs the Annual International Congress of Young Researchers with a Gender Perspective since its creation in 2016. She is co-director of the *Journal Comunicación y Género* (UCM).

Antara Dey

York University

Waffles + Mochi: A Global Culinary Adventure about Food Education and Playful Learning

Abstract: Waffles + Mochi is a whimsical Netflix children’s series about food, cooking, and cuisine. Based on Fisch et al.’s (1999) study on school readiness and Kirkorian et al.’s (2008) concept of curriculum-led television, the show combines food education with playful elements of puppetry and music. Starring Michelle Obama and puppets Waffles and Mochi, it introduces young viewers to a newly imagined world of food, ingredients, flavours and global dishes. Available in thirty languages, each episode communicates immersive messages about simple food such as tomatoes, rice, salt, and water while drawing attention to agricultural practices and environmental conservation.

Using the textual analysis methodology, the presentation will elaborate on how Waffles + Mochi teaches children about food and cooking through themes and contexts about globalization and inclusivity. The analysis will highlight how the show’s featured guests encompass intersectional identities to create familiarity and awareness, including a deaf actor, a Michelin star chef with a specially-abled son, and a Black culinary historian who is a slavery descendant. It will also examine the creative elements, such as animations and the motto, “Listen to your vegetables, and eat your parents,” and how they encourage a perception change of fresh food by making them playful and accessible to its young audience.

Cultivating the concept of play and learning, the study will explore the creation of delightful social relationships between the characters and the audience while showcasing the benefits of eating fresh and cooking from scratch (Richert et al., 2011). It will also emphasize how the protagonists experiment and embrace food from Peru, Spain, Japan, India, and Italy while learning lessons about family, belonging, sharing, and patience. Overall, the presentation will determine how the show encourages wholesome eating for picky eaters while softening the boundaries between food and media consumption, nutrition, and play-based learning through screen media.

Biographical Statement: Antara Dey is a Ph.D. student in the Communication and Culture program at York University, researching popular culture, food, and semiotics. She holds a Master of Design and Master of Public Relations and Advertising from the University of New South Wales and a Bachelor of Design from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi. She’s a Research Assistant on Dr. Anne F. MacLennan’s SSHRC Insight Grant, “The role of entertainment media in the persistence of Canadian and American poverty.”

Michael Dezuanni

Queensland University of Technology

Creating a Better Children’s Internet

Abstract: This paper outlines research undertaken by an interdisciplinary team in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child into how we can create a better Children’s Internet. The Internet has enhanced children’s lives in many ways, and it will continue to play an important role in their lives as they move through childhood, into their teen years and adulthood. Online experiences, however, are not always well designed, well regulated, or good for children. They are sometimes exploitative, risky and problematic. In addition, the Internet is made up of non-neutral technologies. Its products, services and experiences are often commercialised, largely self-regulated, and their governance is often opaque.

This paper describes how we can ‘play with the borders’ of defining the internet by inducing the term ‘Children’s Internet’ as a provocative and unifying concept to act as a reminder that children have a right to Internet experiences that are playful, exploratory, fun, entertaining, positive, and educational. The Children’s Internet is an idea that can be used to challenge industry, government, and various stakeholders to reflect on how digital products, services, and content are thought about, made available, designed, sold, regulated, and invite children to participate online.

The paper outlines how we used a political economy approach to understand power relations, business models, consumption patterns and digital platform dynamics to map six facets of the ‘children’s internet’ (for children aged 0-12): 1. Access, 2. Imaginaries, 3. Commercialised entertainment, 4. Learning and education, 5. Regulation, and 6. Co-creation. The paper outlines how we used a combination of desk research, industry expert interviews and co-design workshops to describe the ‘Children’s Internet’ and to construct critical positions on how best to improve children’s online experiences. It concludes by sharing 17 principles that form the basis for a ‘Manifesto for a Better Children’s Internet’.

Biographical Statement: Michael Dezuanni is a full professor in the School of Communication at Queensland University of Technology and he is a Chief Investigator in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child. Michael undertakes research about digital media, literacies and learning in home, school and community contexts. He is the author of 'Peer Pedagogies on Digital Platforms - Learning with Minecraft Let's Play videos' (MIT Press 2020).

Nina Duque

Université du Québec à Montréal

Digital Playgrounds: Navigating Adolescents’ Friendship and Sociability in Rural Quebec During the COVID-19 Lockdown

Abstract: This presentation investigates the transformational role of digital platforms as surrogate social environments for adolescents in rural Quebec amidst the COVID-19 lockdown. It critically examines how these platforms facilitated the continuity and evolution of social connections in the absence of conventional, physical interactions, focusing specifically on the complex dynamics of digital sociability and the juxtaposition of online and offline adolescent friendships.

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in the intersection of media effects theories and digital literacy concepts. It draws upon Kearney’s analysis of media environments within adolescent social spaces and integrates Kozinets’s netnographic principles. The methodological approach is qualitative, employing structured interviews shaped by the guidelines proposed by Williams and Onsmann, which are instrumental in encapsulating the experiential realities of adolescents’ digital socialization.

Consistent with the conference’s theme, "Playing with Borders," this research underscores the increasingly indistinct boundaries between the digital and physical domains in adolescent social interactions. It reveals the

indispensable role of digital platforms in facilitating social engagement and identity formation, particularly when traditional, physical venues are inaccessible. This study contributes to the discourse on adolescent consumer behavior in the digital era, with a particular emphasis on rural contexts.

This inquiry not only extends the academic understanding of digital sociability among adolescents but also provides practical insights into fostering their social and emotional health in an era dominated by digital interactions. By analyzing the interplay between digital and physical spaces in adolescent lives, the research offers a comprehensive perspective on how digital platforms serve as critical conduits for social connection and identity construction during periods of enforced physical isolation.

Biographical Statement: Nina Duque, a Ph.D. candidate at UQAM, teaches in their Public and Social Communication Department and School of Media. With 20 years experience in media, she serves on MediaSmarts' board at the Canadian Centre for Digital Literacy. Her research at the Digital Research Network and LabCMO focuses on adolescent digital practices and sociability.

Harry Dyer

University of East Anglia

Exploring the Ethical Implications of Young Children Wearing Head Cameras in Research

Abstract: This presentation aims to provide an overview of ethical considerations surrounding the use of head cameras in research involving young children when capturing how digital media exists in their everyday environments. The paper delves into the potential benefits and drawbacks of employing this technology, while critically examining the ethical implications it poses within the context of early childhood and digital literacies research. By exploring the ethical dimensions of privacy, autonomy, informed consent, and potential harm, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on ethical and playful methodologies that blur boundaries between contexts of use and digital content.

The paper begins by outlining the growing interest in utilising head cameras as a research tool to gain unique insights into the subjective and authentic experiences of young children, to promote child-centred research methodologies, to capture play with/through technology in contextualised spaces and places, and to capture data that plays with the borders and dichotomies between online/offline, technology/human, and content/context.

However, we also acknowledge the need for a balanced approach that considers the ethical implications associated with this technology. Privacy emerges as a central ethical concern, as head cameras intrinsically record the child's visual and auditory experiences, potentially capturing sensitive information about their private lives. The paper explores the tension between the researcher's pursuit of knowledge and the child's right to privacy, emphasising the importance of implementing robust privacy safeguards and ensuring data protection.

Autonomy and informed consent are crucial ethical considerations when involving young children in research. The paper critically examines the challenges of obtaining meaningful consent from children who may lack the

cognitive capacity to fully understand the implications of wearing a head camera. We explore the need for ongoing dialogue and child participation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the potential harm associated with wearing head cameras is explored, including the potential for psychological distress, stigmatisation, and unintended consequences. By critically examining the ethical dimensions of privacy, autonomy, informed consent, and potential harm, this paper aims to inform researchers, policymakers, and ethics committees in making informed decisions regarding the use of head cameras in research involving young children.

Biographical Statement: Harry T. Dyer is a digital sociologist and educational researcher at the University of East Anglia. His research broadly explores the impact of social media on culture, public knowledge, and education. He serves as Editor of Digital Culture and Education, and is a co-convenor of the British Sociological Association's Digital Sociology Study Group. His second book, titled *Researching Digital Society: An Introduction* is due for publication with Sage in 2025.

Mackenzie Edwards

Queen's University

"As a fat girl who isn't on a diet": Defiant Food Diaries on TikTok

Abstract: This piece investigates the playful borders between diet and anti-diet content creation among girls and young women on social media. Specifically, I employ a feminist phenomenological perspective to locate the political potential of fat, anti-diet variants of the What I Eat In A Day (WIEIAD) format on the short-form video-based social media application TikTok (Stahl). These videos generally proclaim the creator to be a fat or plus-size girl who is not on a diet, who is eating intuitively, or who "doesn't give a fuck" (Strapagiel). Drawing from intersectional social media phenomenology (Mason) and fat feminist phenomenology (Rodier), I examine the multi-sensory eating experience as chronicled by the flippantly fat and non-dieting feminine youth who are creating food diary videos on TikTok. To contextualize this, I contrast the anti-diet WIEIAD trend with gendered online diet culture, including on TikTok in particular (Minadeo). These TikToks are contextualized by previous unapologetic fat eating on social media, including hashtags like #glorifyingobesity and #obeselifestyle (Pausé).

To understand subversive food diaries as a resistant phenomenological tool, I frame the quotidian dialogue with iterability and meme formats as a potential disidentificatory practice (Kanai, Muñoz). This is backgrounded by an acknowledgment of TikTok as a contested border space itself where eating disorder recovery is ambiguously and intersectionality negotiated (Herrick et al.) Crucially, disability studies is used to highlight how these anti-diet WIEIAD videos casually divest from ableist notions of 'healthy' (Gibson, Mollow). These young creators use their fat feminist WIEIAD content not just to chronicle their gustatory realities but also to deliberately manipulate the attention economy for liberatory ends (Abidin), deserving more serious study than TikTok is often afforded (Pierce, Schellewald, Stahl).

Biographical Statement: Mackenzie Edwards is a PhD candidate in Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies at York University. Her research uses queer, anti-capitalist, and disability influenced approaches to study fatness and resistance in popular and social media. Mackenzie's dissertation research navigates the body positivity movement on Instagram in Toronto/Tkaronto. She is the Communications Officer of CUPE 3903 and a member of the Centre for Feminist Research's Critical Femininities Cluster, as well as a co-editor and social media manager of Excessive Bodies. Her previous experience includes advocacy, event planning, and community organizing. Mackenzie's work has been published in *Fat Studies*, *Canadian Woman Studies*, and *Screen Bodies*. She has presented at conferences internationally, both virtually and in-person. Mackenzie is the recipient of an Ontario Graduate Scholarship among other awards for her work.

Nesreen El Kord

University of Windsor and Mount Saint Vincent University

Play Deprivation in Conflict Zones

Abstract: This presentation, titled "Play Deprivation in Conflict Zones," explores the intricate intersection between play, borders, and the rights of children impacted by war. Within the framework of the 11th Child and Teen Consumption Conference's theme, "Playing with Borders," I critically examine the experiences of children in conflict-ridden spaces, where cultural boundaries are fluid, contested, and often disrupted.

Children living in war-torn areas face unique challenges in navigating the complex borders between play and conflict, authentic and disrupted childhoods, and global and local influences. By adopting critical perspectives that center marginalized voices, including those of children in conflict zones, I aim to shed light on the profound implications of play deprivation on their rights and access to justice.

The theoretical foundation draws from children's rights and justice perspectives, emphasizing play as a fundamental right essential for holistic child development. Employing qualitative methodologies, my research seeks to capture the nuanced narratives of children in conflict, exploring how they negotiate and resist boundaries imposed by war. This presentation aligns with the conference theme by challenging traditional notions of play and providing insights into the ways children in conflict zones interact with borders shaped by violence and displacement.

Ultimately, this contribution aims to deepen our understanding of the dynamic relationship between play, conflict, and children's rights, advocating for inclusive and justice-oriented approaches to their well-being in the context of war. By bridging the academic study of play with the lived experiences of children in conflict, I strive to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of child and teen consumption in challenging circumstances.

Biographical Statement: Nesreen Elkord is a Professor of Child and Youth Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University. She also serves as part-time faculty at the University of Western Ontario and holds the position of Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at UWindsor. Nesreen teaches undergraduate and

graduate courses, contributing to the Bachelor of Education, Master of Education, and Child and Youth Studies programs. Committed to research, her focus includes inclusive education, cross-cultural student experiences, newcomer students' education, and teachers' intercultural competence to enrich educational opportunities for diverse learners.

Nesreen El Kord

University of Windsor and Mount Saint Vincent University

Playing with Borders: War, Poverty, and Food Insecurity for Children in Gaza

Abstract: The 11th Child and Teen Consumption Conference, explores the theme "Playing with Borders." It aims to investigate how young people navigate the fluid and complex boundaries within consumer culture, digital culture, and media culture. My presentation will focus on the critical study of the profound impact of war, poverty, and food insecurity on children in Gaza, offering insights into how they negotiate these challenging borders.

Gaza's children face unique challenges within the intersections of global and local dynamics, where the boundaries between play and labor, authentic and branded experiences, as well as analog and digital spaces, are constantly contested. Employing a qualitative social sciences perspective, my research examines the ways in which these children engage with and resist the borders imposed by geopolitical conflicts, economic hardships, and food insecurity.

My theoretical framework draws from critical perspectives that center marginalized communities and individuals, including queer, feminist, antiracist, and decolonial lenses. Through a media analysis approach, I will explore the multifaceted experiences of children in Gaza, shedding light on their resilience and agency in the face of adversity.

This proposed presentation aligns with the conference theme by challenging traditional notions of children's play and emphasizing the importance of understanding how young individuals in marginalized contexts navigate and transcend imposed borders. My research contributes to the broader discourse on child and teen consumption by offering a nuanced examination of the lived experiences of children in Gaza, thereby advocating for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to understanding the complexities of their everyday lives.

Biographical Statement: Nesreen Elkord is a Professor of Child and Youth Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University. She also serves as part-time faculty at the University of Western Ontario and holds the position of Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at UWindsor. Nesreen teaches undergraduate and graduate courses, contributing to the Bachelor of Education, Master of Education, and Child and Youth Studies programs. Committed to research, her focus includes inclusive education, cross-cultural student experiences, newcomer students' education, and teachers' intercultural competence to enrich educational opportunities for diverse learners.

Charlene Elliott

University of Calgary

Food Marketing to Teens on Digital Platforms: Mediated Tastes and Persuasive Power

Abstract: Food marketing to teenagers has received considerable attention in recent years, given teens' unique vulnerability to such marketing (WHO 2016, 2018) and its negative impact on dietary habits and health (Qutteina et al. 2019). Yet it is the shift to digital food marketing that has sparked particular concern, given teenagers' immersion in digital culture and the integration of food brands throughout young people's media experiences. As the World Health Organization's most recent (2023) guideline on "Policies to protect children from the harmful impacts of food marketing" concludes, the problem with digital food marketing is that it "facilitates engagement, which can amplify the marketing message and overall impact of marketing" (WHO 2023, 22).

In Canada, little research exists on the nature of food marketing to teenagers across digital platforms or on teen "engagement" with the marketing message. This paper responds to this research gap. It presents the results of participatory research with 278 teenagers who (using a specially designed app) captured all the teen-targeted food and beverage marketing they saw on digital media for 7 days and identified (among other things) the specific appeals that made it persuasive. The study reveals the shifting importance of food brands and marketing appeals (such as visual style, special offer, humor, celebrity) to teenagers depending on platform, gender and age. It also introduces a novel theoretical approach (focused on selection and salience) to understand the "persuasive power" of food marketing to teenagers.

This proposal strongly aligns with the conference theme: the food advertisements overwhelming communicate messages of food and fun, while the teens' insight into what is salient within the ads reveal their own negotiation of the message. The paper engages with the question of what marketing exists versus what marketing teens engage with--and what teens find salient within the marketing that they see.

Biographical Statement: Charlene Elliott is a Professor of Communication at the University of Calgary. Her program of research focuses on promotional culture and taste, exploring how marketing and regulation channel sensory experiences (through promotion, packaging and trademarking). Dr. Elliott held the Canada Research Chair in Food Marketing, Policy and Children's Health (2011-2022) and has published extensively on this topic. She is editor/co-editor *Food Marketing to Teens on Digital Platforms: Probing mediated tastes and persuasive power* and author of several books, including (most recently) *Communication and Health, Media, Marketing and Risk* (Palgrave, 2022).

Christina Fawcett

University of Winnipeg

Consuming Play and Playing Consumption: Cozy Games and Prosocial Values

Abstract: Digital spaces of play and participation give young people opportunities for exploration and discovery; social-sim games, part of the broader category of cozy games, invite players to establish domestic spaces and roles in communities in escape-the-city or explore-the-deserted narratives. These games, while offering creative design, world control and agency, also ask the players to participate in the community through service-based actions. Social sims thus offer prosocial pedagogies, rewarding players for engaging in the social activities and forming relationships with the community. Games like *Animal Crossing*, *Stardew Valley*, *Cozy Grove* and others have the player participate in different social settings where play does not have a fixed end-point or specific win condition. These games centre what Waszkiewicz calls “playbour,” asking them to participate in economic systems of financial exchange, wealth accumulation, or debt. So, these games create spaces where players are asked to become part of the systems of exchange: they are invested in the consumer culture through the medium of task-based play. The comforting veil of coziness, using affective game mechanisms to invest players in digital parasocial relationships, integrates them into financial and labour systems. The games also simultaneously offer aspects of free-play: they function as sites of expression and self-definition. The tension between the agency of play and the underlying didactic pressures results in games that can draw in young players while exerting normative values. Using Isbister’s and Bogost’s theories of emotion-based gameplay, Waszkiewicz’s conceptions of cozy gaming, Ruberg’s consideration of empathy in gaming and Stewart’s theories of affect, this paper will examine how young players are encouraged to participate in systems of consumption and exchange through design and mechanics, emotion and empathy.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Christina Fawcett is a genre and media scholar, monster theorist and video game scholar in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg working in young people’s texts and cultural spaces. Her work has focused monstrosity, trauma, emotion and affect, recently moving into the cozy turn at work in young people’s monster texts and digital games.

Beatriz Feijoo[^] and Patricia Núñez Gómez*

Universidad Internacional de la Rioja[^] and Complutense University*

Advertising Literacy among Minors and It’s Impact on the Perception of Influencer Marketing for Physical Appearance Enhancement Products

Abstract: Society's fixation on body image pervades marketing strategies, especially in influencer-generated content. Influencers, often brand representatives for fashion, cosmetics, food, beauty, and fitness products, exert substantial influence over their followers, affecting their body satisfaction levels (De Jans et al., 2021; Feijoo et al.,

2022). Consequently, it is crucial to examine protective mechanisms for the public, particularly minors, against influencer content that blurs the lines between organic and promotional material (Rozendaal & Buijzen, 2023).

This study asserts that advertising literacy serves as a key protective factor for minors exposed to influencer-sponsored content, particularly when it centers on appearance and body image themes.

We designed and administered a customized questionnaire to Spanish minors aged 11 to 17, with 1055 participants, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of +/-3%. We measured advertising literacy using Rozendaal et al.'s (2016) ALS-C (Advertising Literacy Scale for Children), assessing cognitive, attitudinal, and moral dimensions. We adopted a situational perspective, evaluating advertising literacy based on how minors interpret specific cases (Hudders et al., 2017).

We selected three real-life examples from TikTok and Instagram, popular among the surveyed minors, featuring influencer content promoting appearance and body-related products. Notably, our findings indicate that less than 50% of surveyed minors recognized the persuasive intent behind shared influencer content. In the second example, only 7.9% identified this intent, while in the first and third cases, the figures were 22.6% and 42%, respectively.

These findings have implications for companies employing influencers in marketing, families and educators enhancing minors' media literacy, and public administrations concerned with shielding vulnerable audiences from potentially harmful advertising tactics.

Biographical Statement: Beatriz Feijoo is an Associate Professor of Advertising and Marketing at the School of Business and Communication, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (Spain). Her research focuses on communication and children, the use of screens in new generations, and more recently on the relationship between minors and advertising through the mobile devices. She is also the principal investigator of funded research projects on communication, new media, childhood, and adolescence.

Biographical Statement: Patricia Núñez Gómez is the Head of Applied Communication Science Department in Complutense University, Spain. Director of Excellence Complutense Chair of digital Communication for kids and teens. She is also the Spanish Chair of Unesco Unitwin (University Network) in Gender, Media and ICT, the Vice-Chair in IAMCR (Section Gender and Media). Member of the ECREA Executive Board. She is leading the European project Safe Internet for kids and Branded Content project funded by UK. She is the Head of Advertising Section in AE-IC and the Headmaster of the Complutense Research Group Socmedia: (Socio-communication competences and digital Natives)

Isabella Fortino

York University

“I Guess I’m Just Not Like Other Girls”: Fan Fiction and The Roots of Intra-Fandom Hate

Abstract: Through a critical intersectional feminist lens, this paper explores the impact of fandom participation on adolescent and teen girls' social-emotional development. Fiske (1992) notes that the world has long been separated into the haves and have-nots: a binary informed by racist, classist, and patriarchal conceptions of gender, class, and race. For example, white women have through their skin tone what they have not due to their gender. This combination of identifiers is a direct result of hegemonic masculinity for which female identity is constructed within, rather than despite. For girls who do not have the social privileges afforded to one by skin whiteness, fanship is subject to acceptability politics created by fans, for fans. According to Brown (2011), "girls negotiate their identities rather than 'take up' what is given to them and construct themselves against what they are not, thus always invoking the 'other.'" For example, the notion of what girls are not—or rather what they ought not to be—was constructed for One Direction fans through personalized narratives, known as fan fiction. These narratives became didactic as one thing was for certain across websites and fan affiliation—in order for a girl to be loved, she must present as unique, complex, and apologetically feminine—constantly compensating for her inferior femininity through masculine performance to set herself apart and earn male validation: she cannot be like other girls and be a legitimate fan. Through an analysis of hegemonic gender conventions, as well as the social, cultural, and psychological impacts of early digital access and the label "fangirl" on girlhood development, this paper will argue that hegemonic masculinity informs and encourages the development of exclusionary narratives of self and others in fandom, as well as explore how adolescent girls' identity development relies on a poignant expectation of womanhood.

Biographical Statement: Isabella L. Fortino (she/her) is a student and research assistant in Children, Childhood and Youth Studies at York University. She is a recipient of the Carole Carpenter Memorial Prize in Writing. Isabella's research explores child-centred literature, foreign childcare policy, and methods to advocate for children's rights.

Robert Gabriel

Independent Researcher

Pop Culture Industry Neoliberalism: Tween Sitcom Aspirations

Abstract: Many tween sitcoms revolve around aspirational fantasies and career dreams. In Nickelodeon's *Game Shakers*, two tween girls become CEOs of a gaming/app empire, so the series idealizes entrepreneurial capitalism while it also broadcasts a girl power ethos. This series demonstrates what I refer to as 'producer citizenship,' building upon Sarah Banet-Weiser's use of consumer citizenship in her previous studies of the network, in which the tween subjects learn self-determination, success, and empowerment in order to become economically productive citizens. In fact, many tween sitcoms double as workplace sitcoms, in which young protagonists are hailed as neoliberal subject. Even though these sitcoms include main characters who are either teens or preteens/tweens, the young protagonists roleplay as successful managers and, by extension, reinforce entrepreneurial capitalism. Scholars, including Laurie Ouellette, have long examined reality television to assert that this genre reinforces values of neoliberal citizenship. However, the tween sitcom genre also revolves heavily around similar neoliberal values. These values include an embrace of identity formation through creative enterprise and entrepreneurship, which serves to reify the American Dream of success and class mobility. In summary, tween sitcoms double as class fantasies.

This presentation considers tween and girlhood studies, neoliberalism, and cultural studies scholarship along with a textual analysis to offer an ideological analysis of *Game Shakers*. This presentation directly aligns with the conference theme by discussing the concept of playbour as the series collapses the borders between work and play, as well as with the borders of childhood with adulthood.

Biographical Statement: Robert Gabriel has taught courses in media and communication studies at Fordham University and George Mason University. His research interests include popular culture, television studies, tween studies, and class. He received a PhD in Television Studies at the University of Glasgow, an MA in TV/Film/Radio at Syracuse University, and a graduate certificate in Media Studies/Media Management from The New School.

Bharghavi Gopakumar

Mount Saint Vincent University

Examining the Effects of 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth's Agency with Dress and it's Relation to their Sense of Self

Abstract: Dress is seen as a symbol that marks boundaries visually and gives non-verbal information about the individual. It plays a strong role and it enables individuals to develop and present their identity. Furthermore, dress serves as a visual representation of an individual's identity (Davis, 1992). As 2SLGBTQIA+ youth develop, it is expected that they seek to express themselves through dress to express their identity. However, dress is a factor that is often regulated by environmental factors such as parents, peers and through the school dress code. This article aims to study the relationship between autonomy of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth with dressing style and how that affects their sense of self. The study uses the methodology of photo-voice in order to provide the youth with the space to express their views and feelings in a creative manner free of restriction and to exercise their agency. Additionally, using this unique qualitative visual method allows us to look at their perspective in an in-depth manner. The theoretical framework that is used to examine these experiences is queer theory and feminist theory. Furthermore, the article adopts a critical perspective that challenges heteronormativity. In my proposed presentation, I will discuss the impact that dress codes and regulation has on the identity of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Additionally, I will also discuss the strategies that 2SLGBTQIA+ youth have suggested for professionals who work with them to improve their environment and create a more inclusive and accepting space.

Biographical Statement: Bharghavi Gopakumar is a first year graduate student at Mount Saint Vincent University and she is currently pursuing her master's in Child and Youth Study. She holds a master's degree from Amity University and has experience working with children and youth as a psychotherapist. She is interested in studying factors that affect agency and sense of self in children and youth.

Sara Grimes, Riley McNair, Bronwyn Swerdfager, and Alan Bui

University of Toronto

“AS SEEN ON... Wait, Video Games?” An Analysis of Children’s Responses to Commercialization in Digital Games

Abstract: Children are subject to increasingly high levels of commercialization in their media and digital worlds. Deregulation and corporate convergence over the last 30 years have led to “the widespread normalization of cross-promotional media and tie-in toys aimed at children” (Grimes, 2021). Commercial content is particularly prevalent in online games, where children regularly encounter manipulative monetization strategies (e.g., ‘freemium’ games), invasive data collection, and deceptive forms of cross-promotion. In Canada, games are loosely regulated using US-industry-managed rating systems that largely ignore commercial elements (Bui et al, 2022). Canada is long overdue for a new approach to regulating games that more effectively addresses children’s rights, including their right to be free from commercial exploitation. Using a child-centred approach, the Child Appropriate Game Design study seeks to produce research-based recommendations for game developers and policymakers on how to better support children’s rights and best interests. Our three-year study applies a longitudinal, cross-cultural, and mixed methods research design aimed at understanding how ideas about “age appropriateness” in games shape policies, children’s gameplay, and industry (business and design) standards. In this paper, we present findings from our first round of play-based focus groups, conducted with 35 children aged 6 – 12 years from Ontario and Quebec, in which participants discussed their needs, desires, and concerns related to gaming. We explore the children’s views on the commercial facets of the games they play, which ranged from seeing ads as inconsequential and annoying, to worrying that freemium games are unfair and deceptive. The commercialization of childhood (Cook, 2004; Pugh, 2009) has blurred the boundaries between play and consumption, player and product in children’s digital spaces. This paper contributes to the conference theme through an analysis of children’s interpretations and transgression of these boundaries, highlighting children’s own ideas about how they might be redrawn to better support their rights.

Biographical Statement: Sara M. Grimes is the Wolfe Chair in Scientific and Technological Literacy and a full Professor in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University. She is the principal investigator of the Child Appropriate Game Design project. Previously, she was part of the global team that conducted the children’s consultation for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child’s General Comment 25 on children’s rights in the digital environment. Dr. Grimes is the author of the award-winning book, *Digital Playgrounds: The Hidden Politics of Children’s Online Play Spaces, Virtual Worlds, and Connected Games* (UTPress, 2021).

Biographical Statement: Riley is a PhD student in the Faculty of Information at The University of Toronto, where she researches the impacts of datafication processes on children’s rights and wellbeing. Her research interests are motivated by her professional experiences developing community support programs in her former career in the non-profit sector.

Biographical Statement: Bronwyn is a PhD student in the department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). She is researching ethical arts-based ways to facilitate chronically ill and disabled children's participation in society. Bronwyn brings a child rights and social justice orientation to her work with the CAGD team.

Biographical Statement: Alan Bui is a graduate student at the University of Toronto and a research assistant on the Child Appropriate Game Design (CAGD) Project. His interests in video games and science communication brought him to the field of children's media research. He has worked on projects looking at media content ratings across spatial scales as well as children's books as a form of science communication. Since joining the CAGD team, he currently explores "age appropriateness" in video games and how the interpretations can vary between children and adults.

Alison Halsall

York University

Young People and/in Graphic Medicine

Abstract: Comics about young people and/in graphic medicine narrativize complex information about health, illness, and disability, encouraging empathetic identification among readers. Frequently told from the perspective of the young patient, whose voice is too often lost in medical dialogue, comics (like Raina Telgemeier's texts *Smile* and *Guts*) can communicate how illness manifests in a young person's body and how that experience shapes their interactions with their sociocultural and geographical environment. The personal perspectives from which these texts are narrated refute the spectacularization of illness and disability that can occur (as permitted by photography, according to Susan Sontag) and, instead, present affective experiences of health, illness, and disability for young readers. Readers, in turn, can read, learn, and think critically about the structures of power that govern the bodies and minds of people, young and old.

Many of the texts about young people and/in graphic medicine name and interrogate the social and cultural constructions of disability that shape the experiences of their young protagonists. Discussions informed by a disability studies or disability rights perspective have the potential to help young readers develop more informed views of impairment, ones that rely less frequently on rhetorical patterns of triumph or overcompensation over one's bodily or mental variation. As I will argue in relation to Telgemeier's popular comics *Smile* (2010) and *Guts* (2019), characters draw attention to the social and cultural barriers that people with disabilities experience on a daily basis, providing direct verbal and visual challenges to myths and stereotypes, especially in terms of making decisions and acting in ways that counter pervasive narratives that depict them as pitiable victims needing rescue or heroes that save the day. As this paper will explore, comics about bodily variation are persuasive tools for knowledge-building, narratives that can educate young readers about their own assumptions about normality, and in turn inspire them to become more aware of their experiences moving through an able-bodied and able-minded world.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Alison Halsall is Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities at York University, Toronto, Canada. She specializes in Victorian and modernist literatures, with a particular emphasis on

visual cultures, which includes the study of paintings and illustrations, contemporary film, comics and graphic narratives. She co-edited the first-ever collection of LGBTQ+ comics criticism, which was published by the University Press of Mississippi in 2022 and won an Eisner Award for best scholarly work on comics.

Soomin Hong

The University of Sydney

Lost Things in the Play World: New Materialism in Toy Studies (*Online*)

Abstract: In *Homo Ludens*, Johan Huizinga emphasizes multiple times that play is a non-material activity and is related to mind but matter. He describes, “the very fact that play has a meaning implies a non-materialistic quality in the nature of the thing itself; in acknowledging play you acknowledge mind, for whatever else play is, it is not matter; it is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it.” In *Homo Ludens Revisited*, Jacques Ehrmann criticizes Huizinga’s such characterization of play for being “anti- or an-economic” as Huizinga fails to recognize the economic function of play. It does not solely entail blaming Huizinga for excluding gambling, games of chance, and commercialized sports from play due to the potential monetary corruption. Ehrmann argues that Huizinga’s definition, portraying play as devoid of material interest or utility, fails to justify the conclusion that play is unrelated to economics. While Ehrmann admits that play may yield no tangible products, he highlights that play consumes time, energy, and property. Recognizing this consumption implies a corresponding production somewhere, influencing how people engage in play, the extent of their involvement, and the reciprocal impact between play and the surrounding social order in which it takes place. Thus, any valid play theory must contextualize play within the material world, acknowledging their shared participation in the same economy. Ehrmann argues that such acknowledgment will transform play from an isolated phenomenon to a form of communication like all other cultural phenomena, offering crucial insights into the society in which it unfolds. Following that, in this paper, I aim to search for an alternative way to study play by exploring the application of consumer culture theory and new materialism such as actor-network theory in the study of play.

Biographical Statement: Soomin Hong is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. Her M.A. thesis was about a 50-year history of interrelations and mutual interdependency between Japanese girl consumers and Magical Girl franchise. A book based on this research has been published in Korea in 2022 and later translated into Japanese in 2023. Currently, Soomin is working on her second book project in Korea and her Ph.D. dissertation about the theorization of toys.

Kholod Saleh Huneiti

Eastern Mediterranean University

Jordanian Children’s Decision Making Process in Consumption

Abstract: As children take a role in the decision-making process, they become a potential target audience that has a role in society’s consumption patterns. In light of the transformation of society’s behavior due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been affected in different aspects. The main aim of this study is to analyze the decision-making

process of consumption within the family for children (8–12), as it will evaluate the Jordanian parents supervising their children throughout the decision-making process during the pandemic. Nevertheless, there is no research done on parental mediation strategies and consumer communication scales within the consumption decision-making of Jordanian children. In other words, there was a literature gap on the study of Arab-child behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic period, and this study will fill that gap. Information Processing Theory and Cognitive Dissonance Theory were used in this research and explained the process of consumption that children went through to understand more about their consumer behaviour. The quantitative methodology was conducted to collect research data, and a survey method was delivered to 240 parents and to 287 children aged 8–12 in Amman, Jordan, to understand more about their consumption choices. By using the statistical analysis software (SPSS) to analyze the collected data. This paper gives insight into the differences in cognitive structures between families. During decision-making, they decide to buy a product or use a service; usually, the conflict happens. This study paves ways for discussion to avoid conflict among family members, providing a variety of knowledge structures that may include various buying motivations (aims) and perceptions of alternatives.

The study's findings showed that almost half of Jordanian parents proved they are willingly able to parent and follow their kids on the issue related to media consumption and reduce its negative influence. The major changes in parents' and children's consumption behaviors are due to increasing hours spent on the internet and much exposure to advertising. This also leads to a change in their daily routine in different aspects and their consumption behavior. Findings demonstrated a correlation between the influences of COVID-19. They changed the purchasing behaviour of children, as their daily habits have changed to increased periods of stay-at-home, leading to a long preoccupation with watching the internet and commercials. As a conclusion, the data suggest that Jordanian parents first apply parental active mediation to their children (50%). The children were told by their parents (47.%) that advertising aims to sell products. Jordanian children (post-millennial) are more involved in consumption decision-making within their family than the previous generation, who could not access multi-screen media to learn about any products. Family consumer communication patterns and parents advertising-mediation have played a role in increasing the children's autonomy, being more self-consumers, and having the ability to make a consumption decision independently among Jordanian children.

Biographical Statement: Kholod Saleh Huneiti, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Media and Communication Technologies at Gulf University, Bahrain. Her research interest areas include children & media, consumer behavior, media literacy, young consumers, children & media psychology, consumption decision making for (Children, Parents, Family), health & communication, and positive media psychology for children.

Helle Strandgaard Jensen

Aarhus University

Bordering Worlds on the Early WWW

Abstract: In this paper, I combine childhood and web history, as I want to explore how the Internet was imagined as a new, globally connected digital space created for, by and with children. I see the handful of websites from Denmark and the United States, which I have chosen to analyse, as a display of interconnected (bordering) adult

and child online activity: adults first built the sites, but children later populated and enhanced them. Taking its starting point in this shared labor of meaning-making and building digital content, the paper discusses children's media consumption as it looks at how children in the late 1990s were conceptualised as a 'digital generation,' sometimes even 'digital natives' (Bennett et al. 2008; Bayne and Ross 2007) more tech savvy than adults. These labels imply that children potentially possessed competencies that went beyond those of adults, creating a possible tip of the online power balance in children's favour and making them cross the borders into otherwise adult-dominated spaces. However, this conceptualisation did not always match the ways adults build websites that children were meant to populate, which could be rather restrictive in their purpose. On the other hand, children did themselves build sites where they exercised independence and pursued interests not catered to in the online landscape adults had built for them.

Comparing sites from the US and Denmark, I investigate the overall themes of digital content creation and generational power balances, using a mixture of computational and more traditional material. The main body of sources are archived websites from the Wayback Machine, print books that informed children and adults about the web as well as newspaper articles and scholarly text from the period 1995-2005. I draw upon new critical writings about children's agency and voice (e.g. Vallgård et al 2015; Gleason 2016) as well as work on Web history (Brügger & Milligan 2018), as I investigate how discourses on childhood and media consumption were influenced by the early WWW (c. 1995-2000).

Biographical Statement: Helle Strandgaard Jensen is Associate Professor in the Department of History and Classical Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark. She is the author of *Sesame Street: A Transnational History* and *From Superman to Social Realism: Children's Media and Scandinavian Childhood*. She holds a Ph.D. in History from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, and has been a visiting fellow at universities in the UK, the US, Norway, Canada, and Sweden.

Ben Johnson

Brock University

Enhancing Digital Engagement in Civic Education with Generative AI to Foster 21st Century Literacies (*Online*)

Abstract: In the context of civic education, understanding council/parliament agendas or motions are an intriguing example of the benefits of viewing literacies in plurality, as opposed to a narrow, singular view of literacy. However, one barrier to understanding political structures through civic education is how twenty-first century literacies, such as navigating web platforms, can be particularly challenging for students with genetically-based learning disabilities (LD), especially amid learning new abstract concepts such as government structures and democratic institutions. Such barriers do not justify neglect of delivering civic education, for which there is an increasing relevance due to predatory media practices. News consumption is often designed to polarize and minimize critical thinking. Therefore, innovative solutions must be explored to advance equity in education. One way to spark interest among youth in civic education modules that promote critical thinking and twenty-first century literacies while accounting for diverse learning styles is through the scaffolded use of generative artificial

intelligence. The theoretical model followed is threefold: (a) an analysis of barriers faced by students with LD in engaging in civic learning opportunities through digital literacies; (b) a review of how youth are underestimated in the relevance of civic education to their lives; (c) an analysis of generative AI's application to sociocultural theory, using targeted digital literacy plans to cultivate civic knowledge for students with LD. Insights from this analysis uncovers opportunities such as leveraging governments' increasing use of digital technology, including advancements in transparency (e.g., posting recorded meeting proceedings on the internet). These platforms offer increasingly accessible funds of knowledge whereby students can observe democratic processes first-hand and draw their own conclusions, circumventing misleading media narratives and empowering students' autonomy. Moreover, following open government movements, these platforms can more easily integrate generative AI for classroom activities that mitigate barriers for students with LD.

Biographical Statement: Ben Johnson is an MA student at Brock University in the Department of Child and Youth Studies under the supervision of Dr. Erin Panda. He is also a member of the Lifespan Development Research Institute. He received a BA in Psychology at Brock University. He has a variety of research interests, including digital technology, invisible disabilities, and children's literacy. He is also passionate about the ways in which research informs policy and practice, particularly in the educational context.

Maria Karmiris

University of Toronto

In the Threshold of Disabling Impossibilities: An Invitation to Inhabit Events in an Elementary School Hallway

Abstract: Jackson and Mazzei state: "A threshold has no function, purpose, or meaning until it is connected to other spaces... The excess of a threshold is the space which something else occurs: a response, an effect. Once you exceed the threshold something new happens" (2012, p.6). Described as a space of both nowhere and somewhere all at once, the threshold is conceptualized by Jackson and Mazzei as an in between place of possibilities. In addressing the CTC conference call for papers focused on the theme Playing with Borders, the purpose of this paper is to offer an examination of select events that I have experienced in an elementary school hallway. An analysis of these experiences is offered as an entry point in between the possibilities of what we think we know about teaching and learning amidst disability to be and what it still might become. The theoretical and interpretive framework for this study will be informed by concepts situated at the intersections of decolonial studies (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2018), post-structural feminist studies (Butler, 2016, Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) and critical disability studies (Chandler & Ignagni, 2018). This interdisciplinary interpretive framework will be applied in a critical self-examination of my own experiences with disabled children in the middle of the hallway when understood as a threshold intended to question and disrupt the normative and ableist assumptions that remain pervasively taken for granted assumptions within elementary education. In seeking to foreground how embracing disability might invite new possibilities for teaching and learning outside of preserving the current western colonial neoliberal order, this paper seeks to inhabit Jackson's and Mazzei's threshold as an opportunity to foreground embodied relations with disability (our own or those of loved ones, colleagues or students) as integral to reimagining education as accessible, inclusive and socially just.

Biographical Statement: Maria Karmiris (she/her) currently teaches as a sessional lecturer at Toronto Metropolitan University and OISE/UT. She has also been an elementary school teacher in the Toronto District School Board since 2002. Her research interests include critically examining the role of racism, ableism, heteropatriarchy, and classism in sustaining the practices of conditional inclusion/exclusion in schools.

Kate Moo King-Curtis

Toronto Art Therapy Institute

Intersecting Borders with Youth: Reflections on my Experiences in Animation, Childhood Studies and Therapeutic Arts

Abstract: The digital age has led to new generations with unique ways of consumption, global and local social networking, and the ability to create content without the adult gaze. Traditional ways of creating content in Animation, for example, ignore the richness of youth perspectives and how they access narratives that challenge the Hollywood model, creating a gap in what we generate through the adult gaze. Therapeutic spaces establish standards of practice and ethics that follow traditional ways of healing, while ignoring the unprecedented childhood experiences of young people as digital natives from their perspective. Yet, through the lenses of childhood studies, the arts as a form of expression and healing, and my work with young people since my teens, the true coding and narratives of young people are where the truth is held. In *Intersecting Borders with Youth: Reflections on my Experiences in Animation, Childhood Studies and Therapeutic Arts*, I look at bringing a reflexive view on the importance of looking toward our biases and power dynamics as scholars, practitioners, and content producers and the inclusion of youth voices, so we can more effectively research, create, and interact with young people. What can we learn from how we see the world as non-digital natives? How does that limit the way young people connect with our work? Can we redefine knowledge production in adult-youth partnerships to find new ways of *seeing* and *feeling*?

Biographical Statement: Through art, peer facilitation, and volunteering, Kate has committed a lifetime to children, youth, and their communities in Venezuela, the US, and Canada. From literacy and mentorship to responding to issues like grief and marginalization, her passion has been for building collective care. With over 20 years of experience at the highest levels of the Animation industry, Kate has worked as a Layout artist at Fox, DreamWorks and Warner Bros., contributing to films such as *Anastasia* (1997), *The Prince of Egypt* (1998), *The Road to El Dorado* (2000), *Osmosis Jones* (2001) and *Curious George* (2006). Upon her return to Canada, Kate taught at her alma mater, Sheridan College. In 2004, she became a founding member of *House of Cool*, a boutique pre-production studio in Toronto, where she shaped her approach to production, trained talent, built community, and managed projects at the studio until 2017. Kate earned an Honours BA in Children, Childhood and Youth Studies and an MA in Humanities at York University (Toronto, ON, Canada). As an art therapy advocate, she is pursuing a post-grad in Art Therapy at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute to do practice and participatory-based research with young people and their communities.

Marine Lambolez

Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon

Cultural Realms with Fluid Boundaries? Adolescent Practices Between Injunction, Transgression and Negotiation

Abstract: This presentation uses data collected during a field survey conducted as part of my doctoral work with French teenagers in 8th grade. I examined the cultural practices of adolescents from three socially differentiated schools, showcasing a diversity of students in terms of social class, race, sexual orientation and gender. During this field survey, I observed their cultural practices in the making, interviewed them about their media preferences and representations through questionnaires (120 respondents), and delved further into these issues in oral interviews with willing students.

As expected, cultural practices among adolescents are divided along gender lines. Certain books, songs, television series, etc., are labeled as "for girls," while others are labeled as "for boys," constructing seemingly insurmountable boundaries. Disregarding these assignments exposes young individuals to reminders and reprimands from their peers.

Nevertheless, the analysis of questionnaire responses shows that the demarcation lines between legitimate or shameful cultural practices are not solely gendered but can also be social or racial. What may be considered "cool" by some can be perceived as lame or even ridiculous by others. It usually is socially advantageous for girls to consume works intended for boys, thereby mimicking the social hierarchy within a patriarchal society. Conversely, appreciating certain works endorsed by youth from lower socio-economic and racially marginalized backgrounds allows more privileged youth to showcase a particular "coolness" or "street cred." However, this does not fundamentally challenge the social hierarchies that position affluent white youth in a dominant position.

Some teens, especially those at the crossroads of different identities, including queer kids, non-white privileged kids, and lower-class Muslim girls, navigate the lines between what was supposedly made for them and what constitutes legitimate taste according to their peers.

I will address the issue of the rigidity of boundaries between various adolescent cultural practices and provide an examination of transgressive practices and the back-and-forth movement between teens cultural realms.

Biographical Statement: Marine Lambolez is a PhD candidate in Sociology. She is a member of the Max Weber Center, the sociology unit of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon. She studies the ways in which teenagers learn romantic norms and behaviors through media consumption, under the supervision of Pr Christine Détrez. She was awarded the PhD contract of the ENS de Lyon for the year 2021. Her work is featured in journals such as *Genre, Education, Formation* and *Cultural Express*.

Grace Lao

University of Winnipeg

The Feminist Arc of the Marvel Cinematic Universe: An Official Launch of *Diverging the Popular, Gender and Trauma AKA The Jessica Jones Anthology*

Abstract: *Marvel's Jessica Jones* was the second Marvel Television series (within the Marvel Cinematic Universe; MCU) to be released on Netflix in 2015, after *Marvel's Daredevil*. While both Jessica Jones and Daredevil had similar film noir undertones, Jessica Jones was (and still is) one of few female superheroes given a solo series. She does not present as the “typical female superhero”: She suffers from PTSD and alcoholism, which are often depicted from the male perspective. She does not maintain close relationships other than with Trish Walker. This is unlike other female superheroes rooted in “girl power” feminism, such as *Supergirl* (2015-2021), where one of Supergirl's/Kara Zor-el's strengths is her network of friends, whom she depends on in every episode.

Marvel's Jessica Jones was groundbreaking for its realistic portrayals of trauma, sexual violence, and living in patriarchal systems. However, the series was also heavily criticized for its white feminist undertones, particularly around the underrepresentation of characters of colour in the series and Jessica Jones's ways of using the Black men throughout the series for her own personal benefits.

This presentation introduces the edited collection, *Diverging the Popular, Gender and Trauma AKA The Jessica Jones Anthology*, published by the University of Calgary Press to be released in the Fall 2024. This edited collection reflects Donna Haraway's concept of “situated knowledges” to examine the entangled relationships women and girls have with themselves, the spaces they occupy, sisterhood, race, class, toxic masculinity and violence all within the confines of patriarchy. Additionally, as both scholars and fans, this collection considers the importance of positionality of the researcher “within the frame that [they] attempt to paint (Harding 2004, 461). Finally, this collection considers the series' place within the growing feminist arc of the MCU, the future of the superheroine on the big screen, and the Disneyfication of MCU.

Biographical Statement: Mary Grace Lao (she/her) is a PhD candidate in the Joint Graduate Program in Communication and Culture at York and Toronto Metropolitan Universities and an instructor in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. Her doctoral research looks at media(ted) discourses of gender-based violence and rape culture. She is part of a SSHRC-funded project, “The Embodied Tween: Living Girlhood in Digital Spaces,” that examines media constructions of girlhood and its intersections with race and class. Her favourite superhero is Superman.

Anna Lippman

York University

Listening and Resisting: Youth Consumption and Rejection of Commercial Rap Music

Abstract: This presentation explores how Black youth in Toronto consume rap music to affirm their identity and lived experiences, while also rejecting stereotypes in this music and culture. Rap music, and hip-hop culture generally, can help young people articulate their experiences of systemic injustice, feel connected to a larger community struggling with similar issues, and challenge the continuation of these injustices. Despite all these

positive aspects of rap music, commercial radio and mainstream media often perpetuate discourses and lyrics that paint rap music as necessarily misogynistic, violent, and celebrating poverty.

Undertaking a community-based research project with Rise Edutainment, this project uses participant observation, narrative analysis, and semi-structured interviewing to understand how 8 Black youth from the Greater Toronto Area both consume and create rap music to challenge discourses commonly heard in commercial rap music and centre rap in the tradition of Black music for social change. This project utilizes the theoretical frameworks of critical race theory, Black geographies, and community cultural capital. Through these lenses, rap music plays a key role in the lives of these youth by offering a counter-narrative to the discourses of peaceful multiculturalism in Canada. These stories, both consumed and produced by the youth, help bring attention to anti-Black racism in Canada while simultaneously allowing for a celebration of Black culture and community.

Through rap music and hip-hop, youth are able to claim space, thereby challenge narratives of Canada as white, gentrification as positive, and policing as neutral. Participants emphasized the importance of a community space that affirms their Blackness, both in encouraging them to engage in social movements, and in inspiring them to create similar opportunities for other youth.

Biographical Statement: Anna Lippman is a third-generation Ashkenzi Jewish settler on Turtle Island (North America). She is a PhD student in Sociology at York University. Anna's research looks at identity, and how young people's thoughts about themselves are influenced by the world around them.

Xiaoran Liu

Tsinghua University

Media Consumption of Chinese Kids on Short-Video Platform (*Online*)

Abstract: In China, the popularity of short-video media platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou and Bilibili, has pushed the media consumption of kids into neoliberalism, consumerism and postmodernity. Parents, especially mother in the family, are consumers and content providers at the same time. They make videos of their children for online traffic, purchase and sell children products at the same time, in which, the complexity of users' behaviors has generated a new ecology.

Analyzing the ecology in postmodernity concepts and semiotics, the missing borders between parents and children, producers and consumers, play and business are reconstructing by "fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents" (Jameson, 1984). The blurred distinction of reality and representation has been made and amplified by signs and symbols (Baudrillard, 1994). The preferences of audiences have defined how to play the dual "game" and "business" and children are being commercialized.

This paper uses content analysis and discourse analysis for the contents of recent popular Douyin users whose videos are mainly about their children, or teenager users themselves. For example, Douyin user UUXuedi a 14-year old boy who has 2.93 million followers. He posts hip-pop dances with recent heat music and also sells products

like boy sweaters, t-shirts, and pants on his Douyin personal page. Another example involves a close cooperation between parents and the child: Douyin user majestymuyan. Muyan is a 4-year old little girl whose father is an actor of low rank. However, the cuteness and beauty of the little girl attract 2.65 million followers. It is hard to say whether the account is under the parents control or the girl's control. Further research will include interviews and focus groups to observe and explain the motivation, purpose and behavior of the user-consumers.

Biographical Statement: Xiaoran Liu is currently a PhD candidate on communication at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. She got her MA degree from Tsinghua University, and her MS degree from Columbia University, Journalism School on broadcasting and documentary. In between, she has worked in the documentary industry for over 10 years. Her films won Chinese Film Academy Documentary Award, Hong Kong ArtHouse Film Festival Best Documentary, etc. She has spent half a year at Simon Fraser University for her research on children images.

Taylor Lodge

University of Sussex

Mainstreaming Queer Teens: A Critical Analysis of Becomer Netflix Series (Online)

Abstract: In this presentation, I explore the representation of teenagers in teen-oriented television using a combination of visual, critical and textual analysis. I take a queer television theory approach to conduct close readings of four Netflix original media texts that centre teenage sexuality as core plot points. I explore queer, feminist, trans and crip sex themes in these mainstream texts to examine how teens of these groups are being portrayed in television. Throughout my study, I examined every sex-scene to analyse how queer sex was depicted as compared to straight sexual encounters. There are numerous depictions of teenage sexual play and queer expression, in a display of teenage boundary bending, breaking or abandoning entirely. My findings revealed an exceptionally vast array of sex, sexualities and expressions of queerness that clearly promote sex as the main element of coming of age and becoming oneself. This is extremely important as television, and greater visual media, works as a political mechanism to potentially control, and quite literally shape our world, particularly youths worlds'. I make this point by using my own analogy that incorporates theories of Minkowski spacetime, meta-consciousness and metaphysics to argue the vital nature of television in forming human perception. Rather than passive, the television should be treated as an active agent in reality-shaping and world-making. For young people, these texts help to normalise sexuality in a positive way, normalising taboos like masturbation, abortion and fantasy play, while also portraying sex as the main focus and motivation for young people, ultimately relying on outdated tropes of sex-hungry teens. I fear we may have overcorrected when it comes to the representation of youth sexuality, but I urge television professionals to continue to push the envelope in portraying complex teenage characters on-screen.

Biographical Statement: Taylor Lodge has completed their graduate education at the University of Sussex studying Gender and Media. Throughout this MA, they wrote numerous academic essays analysing portrayals of gender, sexuality and queerness in film and television, as well as explored the evolution of visual media from early cinema to the internet and social media. Their master thesis focuses on Gen Z representations of sexuality in Netflix

original programming with an emphasis on the emergence of queer relationships and identities in mainstream television.

Sheng-Mei Ma

Michigan State University

Judy I. Lin's High Tea EXotica: Young Adult Orientalism to a T

Abstract: The capitalized “EX” in “High Tea EXotica” calls attention to Taiwanese Canadian Judy I. Lin’s literary strategies, even if subconsciously, of troping tea as a metaphor of yesteryear as banally Oriental as silk or lacquer, worse still, as bound feet or death by a thousand cuts in her young adult tea duology—*A Magic Steeped in Poison* and *A Venom Dark and Sweet*, both published in 2022. High Tea EXotica invokes at once the historical and conceptual enigma of the eighteenth-century Europe’s stock image of a celestial, aesthetic, and extravagant Orient collaged with the nineteenth-century Europe’s stock image of an opium-infested, abject Orient. The “EX” denotes the obsolete yet undead imagery, which abides as the West’s ex-spouse, stalking still, still housed in the breast. Lin’s EXotica in the twenty-first century continues to espouse—both subscribing to and being married to—the idea of Oriental binarism. The X-factor, the mystery, of the Other simply externalizes, displaces the Self’s, i.e., the West’s, own premodern, unmodern repressions, romancing and banishing, in the same breath, the Orient. That thrilling, magical X-factor flips, on a dime, into the X-rated taboos. The colloquial “on a dime” registers, psychically, the fleeting whims of attraction and repulsion, the mental twists and turns of any individual or any collective unconscious. Monetarily, “on a dime” connotes the profit potential of literary conceits. The West, including a Westerner with the Sinophone surname of Lin, comes to cosplay the Orientalist fantasy with utter impunity—Lin’s self-Orientalizing flaunted as insider exposé. The essay proceeds to probe into The X of Eye/I, or what the Orient looks like; the X of Ear, or what the Orient sounds like; and the X/Acts/Ax of Tea, or what the Orient tastes like, both the gustatory sensation on the tongue and the psychic sensibility of the West. The triumvirate “likes” stand Lin in good stead, like a three-legged stool, above the Anglophone YA market flailing for EXotica.

Biographical Statement: Sheng-mei Ma is Professor of English at Michigan State University in Michigan, USA, specializing in Asian Diaspora culture and East-West comparative studies. He is the author of over a dozen books, including *The Tao of S* (2022); *Off-White* (2020); *Sinophone-Anglophone Cultural Duet* (2017); *The Last Isle* (2015); *Alienglish* (2014); *Asian Diaspora and East-West Modernity* (2012); *Diaspora Literature and Visual Culture* (2011); *East-West Montage* (2007); *The Deathly Embrace* (2000); *Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literatures* (1998). Co-editor of five books and special issues, *Transnational Narratives* (2018) and *Doing English in Asia* (2016) among them, he also published a collection of poetry in Chinese, *Thirty Left and Right* (三十左右).

Anne MacLennan

York University

Grief, Play, and Children as Represented in the Media

Abstract: Children playing as represented in film after the death of a parent provides a window into perceptions of grief and conceptions of the parent and child after the loss of a parent. Stuart R. Poyntz, Natalie Coulter and Geneviève Brisson (2016) quite effectively make the call for the expansion of media studies. The loss of a parent remains a common element of Disney animated films, however, media representations of children after the loss of a parent remain limited. One of the strong themes that emerges is the regulation of play or lack of regulation. *The Boys Are Back* (2009) and *The Holiday* (2015) demonstrate a depiction of an immersive home environment of play that dominates the parent-child relationship and quotidian lives after the death of a parent. The common areas of the home become areas of play and the social mores associated with adult life are abandoned. While somewhat gendered, the widower immersed in play is represented as the father reborn, rediscovering his children and taking on their expanded role in their lives with enthusiasm. The imaginary world of Graham's daughters in *The Holiday* is viewed as charming and a sign of a devoted parent. The immersive play and dominance of the children and their desires is deemed positive for the most part, however, the desire for regulation of that play by those outside the nuclear family is one of the thematic considerations that emerges in films, such as *The Boys Are Back* (2009) and *Bounce* (2001). This work will rest on a thematic analysis and frame analysis of the films that intersect with children playing after the death of a parent to examine the immersive child-parent cocoon of the home and the critiques of this newly reconstituted sense of the family and the desires of others to regulate.

Biographical Statement: Anne F. MacLennan is an Associate Professor, Department of Communication and Media Studies, York University and co-author of *Seeing, Selling, and Situating Radio in Canada, 1922-1956* and published in *Media and Communication, Journal of Radio & Audio Media, Women's Studies, Radio Journal, Relations Industrielles, Urban History Review*, and edited collections. She researches popular culture, identities, widows, radio history, community radio, podcasting, poverty, women, and research methods as well as SSHRC grants on poverty and entertainment media and Interrogating Canadian Identities.

Remya Ann Mathew

University of Delhi

Blurred Boundaries of Play in Children's Internet Usage (*Online*)

Abstract: This paper will look at the various social media practices that middle class children in the age group of 12 to 15 from Delhi, India engage in. I will be particularly looking at content generation on various platforms such as YouTube and Wattpad which caters to this age group. These practices will reveal that they are more global than local in nature although the physical space is as important to them. The practices are heterogeneous and point us towards individualization thesis proposed by Gernsheim and Ulrich Beck. These also reveal the changing nature of play as it is no longer spontaneous or having a set pattern but rather depends on a lot of work done by the child and becomes something that the child has to explore on her own. I will be arguing that social media practices of play blur the boundaries between play and work. I will also look at how during the COVID pandemic and increasingly now, all work and play is intermingled within the space of the internet. These practices also point us towards the enmeshing of the online and the offline spaces. By breaking boundaries and having porous boundaries, I will argue that childhood itself is changing and needs to be understood through the social practices it is confronted with.

In this paper, I use the sociological theories of late modernity by Ulrich and Gernsheim Beck. I have used qualitative research methods. I have conducted interviews with around 30 children in the age group of 12 to 15 from Delhi through the online platform of zoom as part of my doctoral research. This paper will be an important contribution to the theme 'Playing with Borders' as it examines social media practices that border on play and work.

Biographical Statement: Remya Ann Mathew is a PhD student at the department of Sociology, University of Delhi, India. Her work focuses on the internet usage among children. She is interested in Childhood studies.

Melody Minhorst, Lindsay C. Sheppard, and Rebecca Raby

Brock University

"I don't wanna, like, ask my mom for everything": Teens' Perspectives on Money, Responsibility and Early Work

Abstract: Exploring young peoples' experiences and thoughts about money, our paper complicates the common narrative of teens as frivolous consumers. Lindsay C. Sheppard, Rebecca Raby, I will challenge this media and literature portrayal of teens by examining young workers' perspectives surrounding their spending habits, responsibilities, and peer influences. Drawing on approaches to childhood studies which emphasize young people's voices, capabilities, relational embeddedness, and navigation of social inequalities (see Spyrou, 2018; Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandeveld, 2009; Lee 2001), our paper illustrates the importance of young people's relational viewpoints and experiences with respect to money.

Our analysis works with data from a SSHRC-funded study on earliest work experiences. Drawing on 41 interviews with young workers under sixteen and 14 focus groups with grade nine students (some with work experience), we complicate three assumptions about teens and money. First, we challenge the idea of teens as frivolous consumers. Young workers demonstrated that they do have consumer power, and that they are also conscious consumers with social awareness influencing their purchases. Second, we challenge the portrayal of teens as lacking financial literacy, highlighting how many young workers have careful strategies for managing their money and have strong financial goals. Finally, we explore the blurred boundaries of influence between young people, peers, and family with regards to money management habits. Many young workers in our study discuss ideas about responsibility and independence that are intertwined with their current or future work, their role in family finances, and their peer connections.

Biographical Statement: Melody is a PhD student in Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. She completed her Master of Education at York University and holds a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and Bachelor of Arts - Psychology from the University of Guelph. Melody has a background in transdisciplinary approaches and an interest in exploring children's voices and experiences of space/place and learning. Melody is currently working with Dr. Rebecca Raby and Lindsay C. Sheppard on a project about teens' early work experiences.

Biographical Statement: Rebecca Raby is a sociologist in the Department of Child and Youth Studies, Brock University, Canada. She studies constructions of childhood and youth, intersecting inequalities in young lives, qualitative approaches, and theories of participation and agency. Her recent publications include the edited collection *The Sociology of Childhood and Youth in Canada* (2018, CSP, with Xiaobei Chen and Patrizia Albanese). Her current research projects focus on young people's experiences of 1) very early work and 2) living in a housing shelter.

Biographical Statement: Lindsay C. Sheppard is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology, York University. She holds a BA and MA in Child and Youth Studies from Brock University. Lindsay has worked on projects about youth's early work (with Rebecca Raby), children's experiences of COVID-19 (with Rebecca Raby), and parenting with technology during COVID-19 (with Natalie Coulter). Using a feminist posthuman framework, Lindsay's dissertation will explore girls' feminism on Instagram to understand questions of gender, age, technology, and collective feminist identity.

Emily Mohabir

University of Calgary

Tropes, Training, and Transmedia: North American Youth Participatory Transmedia Engagement with South Korean Webtoons

Abstract: Webtoons—a form of serialized, web-based digital comics, that feature various visual, interactive, and sensory effects—are popular media forms in their native South Korea, with webtoons even being “one of the most significant youth cultures” in their country of origin (Jin 2019, p. 2216). However, they have also become increasingly popular in North America in recent years, including the most popular webtoon platform in South Korea, WEBTOON, merging with the North American-based storytelling platform, Wattpad (Goldsmith, 2021). Given both the content form's emergence in North America, as well as the WEBTOON platform's increased North American presence and branding, it is valuable to consider how the webtoon is consumed by—as well as how WEBTOON has branded content for—a North American audience. As a form of participatory culture (typically online groups—official or unofficial, structured or unstructured—that center around production or engaged consumption, have low barriers for entry, and have a sense of mentorship and camaraderie between members), webtoons also offer a multifaceted exploration of how audiences engage and play with multisensory and multimodal media creation, and how this interplay functions within a transmedia network.

In this presentation, I use textual and media industry analysis drawn from walkthrough research (Light et al., 2018) of the WEBTOON platform; case studies of the webtoons, "True Beauty" and "Lore Olympus;" and examples from my interviews with youth webtoon fans to unpack the North American consumption and production of webtoons. In particular, I focus on youth fans who are also producers of webtoons and webtoon-related artwork to examine the significance of the media form to the creative practice of young people and its implications for the development of participatory (trans)media in North America.

Biographical Statement: Emily is a PhD Candidate at the University of Calgary. Her research interests include child and youth media cultures, transmedia texts and industries, South Korean texts and their global consumption, and cultural studies. Her dissertation research focuses on North American youth transmedia engagement with South Korean webtoons and dramas, with particular focus on youth creativity and transcultural identity, as well as how webtoons and dramas shape a discursive transmedia ecosystem within South Korean and North American media industries.

Madison Moore

Trent University

“I Wanted to Share That With My Parents”: An Exploration of How Youth Are Reframing Family Photographs on Social Media

Abstract: Family photography became accessible to the masses with the introduction of the “Kodak” camera in 1888, integrating the camera into everyday life. Its slogan, "You push the button, we do the rest," implied that anyone, even those without photography skills, could now use the technology (Hirsch, 1997; Sontag, 1977). This led families to capture their loved ones and their experiences, a practice that continues today on social media. Family photos are more than just a representation of the family unit; they exhibit socially embedded customs of what it means to be a family, both in terms of how the family sees themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others (Hirsch, 1997). While past trends of family photographs have perpetuated visual signifiers of a happy nuclear family (Ahmed, 2010; Hirsch, 1997), youth (aged 16-21) are challenging the way families are framed in photographs in their online social media images. Lutrell (2020) argues that youth can refuse the “adult gaze” that has been placed upon them by creating their own images of self through “countervisuality” where youth reconstruct their identity by producing their own images. This research is based on thirty-four in-depth qualitative interviews with youth residing in Canada. The participants were asked to submit three images that they captured and posted on their social media from 2020-2022. Photography-based techniques such as photovoice and photo elicitation were employed to engage in critical conversations about the youth’s photographs. This presentation will address how youth have used the evolving product of the camera, which is now integrated across multiple technologies (cell phones/social media applications), to both connect with their families and challenge how the idea of the family is framed in an image.

Biographical Statement: Madison Moore is a multifaceted educator and researcher with a dedication to understanding and empowering children and youth. Madison holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies (May 2024) from Trent University, where she studied how creating and posting images in online spaces are emotionally and socially complex for youth. She is currently an instructor in the Children and Youth Studies program at Trent University Durham.

Samantha Morris Mastai

University of Toronto and York University

Playing “Themselves”: Performance and Character Rights in Reality Television

Abstract: She was sixteen, pregnant, and newly homeless when MTV paid her \$5,000 for her name, likeness, and life story. In 2011, Kailyn Lowry became one of the stars of MTV’s hit reality franchise *Teen Mom*, an unscripted soap opera that mines the precarity of teenage parenthood to find its dramatic storylines. Lowry is the only cast member to complete a university degree, later establishing a successful product line and podcasting business. However, Lowry is not only a real person but also a *character* owned by the network, a legal grey zone where performers do not fully control their own identity and can be exploited financially for a share of future earnings attached to that character.

Although there is a growing body of research focusing on the frequently toxic working environment of reality television and problematic labour conditions for both cast and crew, the legal impact of a performing career in reality television has not been fully addressed. Existing research tends to focus on adult contestants of reality game shows who participate for one season, often as part of a large cast, (Blair, 2010; Ruchlicke, 2020; Nussbaum, 2024) rather than the young performers of long-running documentary dramas who continually navigate the hazy line between self and character. As real people engaging in a heightened form of everyday self-performance (Goffman, 1973), and also actors playing characters in narratives that have been shaped by producers, directors, writers, and editors, it is crucial to interrogate the legal ownership and control of their creative work, and the impact on performers both in the present and in the long term.

The aim of this research is to deconstruct the ownership of character and performance in reality television, focusing specifically on young female performers. Using a feminist production studies lens, I argue for a more equitable legal structure that does not financially or legally exploit reality performers, emphasizes informed consent, and offers greater control over character rights. My methodology includes analysis of reality performer contracts, labour agreements, industry reports, entertainment news sources, and peer-reviewed literature. By probing the boundaries that young reality television participants must navigate between self and performance, my research contributes to this year’s conference theme *Playing with Borders*.

Biographical Statement: Samantha Morris Mastai is a PhD student in the joint graduate program in Communication and Culture at York University and Toronto Metropolitan University. She is a critical feminist researcher focusing on creative work and authorship in media production industries. Samantha is also a producer and creative executive with twenty years of experience in the development and production of successful films and scripted television series.

Parastoo Mazaheri

University of Toronto and York University

The Impact of Sustainable Marketing and Advertising on Youth Consumption Behavior: Recommendations on Navigating the Way for a Sustainable Future for Youth and Children

Abstract: The significance of marketing and advertising towards creating green consumption behaviors amongst the youth and kids cannot be overemphasized. In our ever-evolving world, the concerns regarding the impact of human activities on the planet have remained unsolved. This paper explores the intricate path of contemporary sustainable marketing strategies and their impact on youth and children's consumption patterns to shed light on the marketing and advertising approaches toward a greener environment. The key objective is to emphasize how advertising and marketing tactics can be communicated to promote and influence sustainable consumption, which resonates with new generations' beliefs and opinions.

This research will be grounded on consumer behavioral theories such as "The Motivation-Need Theory" and "The Psychoanalytic Theory," as well as intellects from environmental sociology, behavioral psychology, and marketing communication, which include but are not limited to examining sustainability transitions, the new ecological paradigm, youth culture and subcultures and social influence theories.

The study will employ a structured literature review approach and aims to systematically gather the current debates surrounding the sentiment of the impact of sustainable marketing and advertising on youth behavior and attitudes towards consumption. By integrating the structured literature review findings, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of sustainable marketing approaches that resonate with youth consumption behavior and attitudes in the Canadian landscape. This study highlights the role of sustainable marketing in shaping youth consumption behavior, addressing themes like branding, consumer culture, and environmental sustainability. It aligns with the conference by exploring how marketing influences young people's attitudes toward sustainability, contributing to discussions on children's rights, climate change, and digital literacies.

Biographical Statement: I am a first-year PhD student in the Joint Program in Communication and Culture at York University, Toronto, Ontario. I also hold a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's (from York University) in Management and Marketing. I have over 20 years of professional experience in different industries, such as Finance, Customer Service, and Information Technology. One of my research interests focuses on the intersection of sustainable marketing and youth consumption behaviors, particularly how advertising and marketing strategies can promote green consumption among young people. This aligns with my interest in contributing to discussions on environmental sustainability, consumer culture, and the role of marketing in shaping youth attitudes and behaviors toward a sustainable future.

Stephanie O'Donohoe

University of Edinburgh

Grandchild-Grandparent-Consumption Relations in Children's Picture-Books

Abstract: Intertwining words and images, picture-books are a rich source of play, pleasure and meaning for young children. Often engaged with repeatedly alongside family members, nursery staff or teachers, they constitute “a significant instrument of socialisation...a key means of apprenticeship into literacy, literature and social values” (Painter et al, 2014: 1). Thus, picture-books are not only objects of consumer culture in their own right; they also suggest how children might relate to the people – and often, to consumer goods and services – in their lives.

One key area of socialisation concerns intergenerational relationships. In Western cultures, perhaps reflecting the growing importance of grandparents in children's lives (Marhánková 2015), many picture-books also venture beyond two-generational families to depict grandparent/grandchild relationships. A growing interdisciplinary body of research examines the presence of grandparents in children's picture-books. Much of this work focuses on ageism, noting that grandparents tend to be depicted as old, often grey-haired and wearing glasses (Crawford & Bhattacharya, 2014). With few exceptions (eg Fenwick & Morrison, 2001; Sako and Falcus 2022), little attention has been paid to depictions of grandparent-child relationships or how interactions with grandparents shape children's development. Even less is known about the role of consumer goods or consumption practices in these interactions.

Our study, then, examines 20 popular picture-books featuring grandparent-grandchild relationship. Recognising the different sociocultural contexts shaping grandparent-grandchild relationships, these books are drawn from Danish and British shelves. Unlike much prior research privileging content analyses of grandparent images, we draw on Painter et al's (2014) multimodal discourse analysis to explore grandparent-grandchild-consumption relationships in a more holistic way. Our ongoing analysis suggests that these books show and tell readers (both adults and children) how interactions with grandparents, often involving consumer goods and services, open up fresh horizons for children, help them navigate new experiences or understand family history or relationships.

Co-authors, who may not be able to attend the conference, are Malene Gram, Associate Dean for Education, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Professor at Aalborg University Business School, Denmark; Benedetta Cappellini: Professor of Marketing at Durham University; and Vicki Harman: Associate Professor (sociology) at the University of Surrey.

Biographical Statement: Stephanie O'Donohoe is the Professor of Advertising and Consumer Culture at the University of Edinburgh. An interpretive consumer researcher, her work focuses on the role of consumption in family life, including grandchild-grandparent relationships. She also examines books as a lens on family relationships during difficult transitions.

Ololade Olaniyan

York University

The Commercialization of Cuteness: Exploring the Sharenting Practices of Nigerian Mothers in North America

Abstract: From the earliest days of photography, family snapshots have held a cherished place in our homes, capturing moments of joy and sentimentality. Mothers, often the primary documenters of these moments, would share these images with relatives and friends, maintaining connections across distances. This practice, rooted in tradition, has evolved dramatically with the advent of digital technology. Digital photography, smartphones, and social media platforms have amplified this behavior, enabling parents to share images of their children more frequently and with a much wider audience (Leaver, 2015).

Sharenting is defined as the practice of parents sharing information about themselves and their children online (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). The emerging literature indicate that sharenting has become normalized and has given rise to concerns regarding the wellbeing (Archer, 2019), privacy (Ågren, 2023, p. 10) and expansion of children's digital footprint (Ong et al., 2022).

While studies have examined sharenting practices in various cultural contexts, there is an absent of research focusing specifically on immigrant Nigerian mothers living in the United States and Canada. To fill this gap, I examined four Nigerian mum bloggers on how they navigate sharenting practices in the diaspora and its connection to social mobility and economic opportunities.

Using a content analysis of sharenting posts on Instagram. My study examines the types of content shared by Immigrant Nigerian mothers. Data was gathered from four Instagram accounts managed by these mothers, focusing on the kinds of personal information that is revealed about the child(ren), their anti sharenting practices, the engagement metrics associated with different types of sharenting content and references to economic opportunities.

This study aligns with the theme, "Playing with Borders" by exploring how immigrant Nigerian mothers use Instagram to navigate and push the boundaries between parental rights and children's privacy. It reveals how social media blurs the public and private spheres, merging consumer culture with digital and media practices.

Biographical Statement: Ololade Olaniyan is a second-year master's student at York University, specializing in Media and Culture. She earned her bachelor's degree in Communication and Language Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Ololade's research focuses on the intersection of children, digital technology, and surveillance capitalism. Throughout her academic career, Ololade has engaged in various projects and presentations that explore the influence of broadcast and digital media. Her current research examines how parenting is performed on social media, particularly its connection to

economic opportunities. Ololade is deeply interested in children's rights in the digital world and aims to influence policy through her research.

Artemis Papailia

Democritus University of Thrace

LGBTQ+ Parenting and Gender Identities in Children's Picture-Books (*Online*)

Abstract: In order to promote inclusivity and empathy from an early age, it is vital to examine the portrayal of diverse family dynamics in children's picturebooks, particularly those featuring LGBTQ+ parents. This research delves into how same-sex parenting is depicted in a selection of picturebooks, with the aim of analyzing the intricacies of representation when it comes to rainbow families. Through a thorough content analysis, we explore the depiction of family structures, relationships, and the portrayal of LGBTQ+ parents' characteristics, behaviors, and societal roles. The ultimate goal is to shed light on how these books shape perceptions of gender and contribute to larger discussions of diversity among young readers.

Beginning with a concise overview of gender studies and the dynamic development of the queer movement, this paper seamlessly shifts into an exploration of the tumultuous representation of LGBTQ+ characters in picturebooks. From there, the research framework is clearly presented, outlining the guiding inquiry and the analytical approach utilized, including a carefully crafted coding system tailored to this particular study. Ultimately, the culmination of this research yields compelling discoveries that not only shed light on the present state of LGBTQ+ inclusion in children's picturebooks, but also ignite thought-provoking conversations about the impact of literature in educating and enlightening young minds about diverse familial dynamics.

This article brings a fresh and insightful viewpoint to the discussion surrounding children's literature and its impact on diversity and inclusion. By highlighting the significance of diverse family identities, it adds to the larger conversation on the importance of representation. This in-depth analysis aims to increase awareness and promote the creation of a more diverse literary world for children, reflecting the ever-changing dynamics of family in our modern society.

Biographical Statement: Artemis Papailia earned her PhD in Children's Literature in 2022 from Democritus University of Thrace, where she continues her scholarly journey as a post-doctoral researcher. Presently serving as an Adjunct Lecturer of Children's Literature at the same institution in Greece, and her academic exploration is meticulously carved around theoretical frameworks in Children's Literature. Her research keenly delves into the intricacies of meaning-making strategies, wordless books and philosophy with picturebooks.

Glinco Piyus

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research

Playing with the Prevalent: Children, Adolescents and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Kerala (*Online*)

Abstract: In his work, “All the world’s a stage: Childhood and the play of being”, John Wall calls for discussing play by prioritising children’s voices in play and making sense of them in their ontologies and epistemologies. Accordingly, this paper attempts to locate play in the complex intersections of caste, class, gender and consumer culture in children and young people’s lives in Kerala, India. Play, which these young people engage in, has the potential to subvert adult rules by being in a constant state of flux, which blurs the borders and boundaries between what is considered normative and conventional. Consequently, children and young people confirm and reject accepted notions of play to exercise their agency. Moreover, this becomes more significant with the consumer culture that enables children and young to participate in the larger power structures.

In the light of the above, the paper addresses the following questions. Firstly, in terms of consumer culture, how do the global and local intersect through children in a postcolonial space like Kerala? Secondly, how does the blurring of the boundaries between global and local enable children to enact agency? Finally, how does this category reproduce the hierarchies of dominance through their engagement with the consumer culture? For the same, the paper would engage in the close and contextual reading of the selected contemporary literary and cultural texts against the backdrop of postcolonial theories and childhood studies. In conclusion, the paper endeavours to put forth a postcolonial approach to children and teen consumption.

Biographical Statement: Glinco Piyus is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Humanities and Social Science at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, India. Her research focus is on the field of childhood studies in relation to postcolonial theories, caste and gender studies. She is currently working in the politics of representation of children and childhood in Kerala at various intersections.

Janne Poikolainen

University of Helsinki

At the Intersection of Consumption and Play: Perspectives on Play as an Element of Children’s Music Fandom in Finland

Abstract: As a phenomenon, popular music fandom has traditionally been associated with young people and youth culture (Laughey, 2009). Recently, however, both researchers and the media have become increasingly conscious of a fundamental change in this age-related linkage: music fandom has started to lose its former character as a distinctively youth cultural phenomenon, expanding into the realms of adulthood and childhood. However, previous research on the changing age structure of fan audiences has focused mostly on ageing fans, ignoring the fact that music fandom has become an important part of the contemporary children’s culture, as well

– in Finland, for example, 31 percent of 7–9-year-old children identify themselves as music fans (Poikolainen 2021).

In this paper, I approach children’s music fandom from the perspective of play, focusing on the blurred boundary between media consumption and play culture. My aim is to shed light on the ways in which child fans adopt and appropriate elements from fandom-related media environments, turning them into content of their play. The study is based on qualitative interviews of 15 Finnish music fans aged from 7 to 11. The primary results indicate that children’s music fandom manifests itself in multiple contexts and forms of play, such as object play, dramatic play, and imaginative play (see Marsh et al., 2016). Thus, the findings support prior notions on the creative, ludic, and agentic nature of children’s consumption. Furthermore, the results open up novel insights into children’s fandom as a rather unique form of popular music culture, characterized by constant crossings of boundaries between media consumption and play.

Biographical Statement: Janne Poikolainen, PhD, is currently working as a lecturer in Home Economics at University of Helsinki, Finland. His research and teaching focus on consumer studies and consumer education. Poikolainen’s recent research topics include children's fandom and music consumption; practices and pedagogy of consumer education; sustainable clothing consumption; and young people as second-home dwellers. Poikolainen has also worked as a postdoctoral researcher at Finnish Youth Research Society.

LaTiana Ridgell

Rutgers University—Camden

Just for Me!: The Visibility of Black Girls as Valuable Consumers

Abstract: The ongoing discourse about the valuation of Black children in consumer culture reinforces their marginalization. Scholars focusing exclusively on industries that prioritize white child consumers often fail to recognize the hair care industry’s efforts to appeal to Black girls. Thus, my project turns to the hair care industry as an overlooked site for Black girl’s engagement with consumer culture. In the 1990s, hair care corporations adorned hair relaxer product boxes with images of Black girls. These corporations purchased full-page advertisements in Black-owned magazines, such as *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Essence*. The hair care industry’s desire to capture Black girls’ attention as imagined consumers of their products and marketing ploys brings to light questions about their ability to appeal to Black girls. Hair care products are typically sold to adults. By creating child versions of products, the hair care industry could double its profits by encouraging parents to purchase adult and child versions of products of similar nature. This presentation explores the following questions: How did the hair care industry’s marketing to Black girls shape and contribute to children’s consumer culture? How did children’s hair advertisements appeal to Black girls? Through archival research, I examine the 1990s marketing and advertising strategies the hair care industry employed to appeal to Black girls as children. My ongoing study is about the visibility of Black girls as desired consumers in the hair care industry.

Biographical Statement: LaTiana Ridgell is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University, Camden. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Nursing from California State University, Chico, and a Master's degree in Public Health from Drexel University. Her research interests include visual and material culture, children's consumer culture, and Black girlhood. Specifically, her work examines the hair care industry's marketing strategies targeting Black girls and Black mothers through children's hair relaxer advertisements.

Aleesha Rodriguez

Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, QUT

Playing with the Future: Children's Imaginaries of Future Digital Technologies

Abstract: This paper reports on the findings from Stage 1 of a project titled: Speculating about my digital future: (Co)creating design fiction with children and practitioners. The project aims to operationalise General Comment No. 25 (2021) by running speculative design fiction workshops (Dunne & Raby, 2013) with children (Stage 1) and media and technology practitioners (Stage 2); and speculate a future where practitioners "involve all children, listen to their needs and give due weight to their views" when considering the development of digital technologies (OHCHR, 2021, para. 17). Stage 1 involved running five 90-minute long workshops with 42 children aged between 4 and 10 years old. Through a series of playful activities, we asked the children to first list or draw as many "current digital technologies" as they could think of on post-it notes, before proceeding to discuss what is a digital technology. This yielded discussions led by the children about electricity, connectivity (such as WiFi), and technologies with screens. We then had discussions with the children about when the future is, before playfully "transporting" them into the future (i.e., for some workshops children wore "special hats" that allowed them to think about the future and for other workshops, children stepped into the future through a "portal"). We then asked the children to engage with their imaginaries (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015) and draw a future digital technology. Specifically, we asked the children to consider: what will this technology look like, what it is made of, when it will be available in the future, why do they want it, and why do they think other children will like it. By coding and analysing the children's drawings and reflections, some key themes include that children speculate that future digital technologies will be playful, convenient, have endless power, will be intuitive, and accessible.

Biographical Statement: Dr Aleesha Rodriguez is a tech-sociologist who explores the ways in which people and technology shape each other. Their background is in digital media communication and Science and Technology Studies (STS), and they are currently a Research Fellow at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child at Queensland University of Technology QUT. Aleesha's runs speculative design fiction workshops with children and adults to help elicit their imaginaries about future digital technologies.

Katayoon (Kat) Salehi

York University and Toronto Metropolitan University

Unveiling the Alchemy of Privacy Policy Agreements

Abstract: This paper explores the multi-dimensional affectual existence of privacy policy agreements within digital platforms used by children and teens, focusing on how these agreements influence their play and interaction within digital spaces. By analyzing the design and language of Roblox’s privacy policy agreement, this study highlights the subtle mechanisms through which user emotions and behaviours are manipulated to ensure compliance and data sharing. Although children and teens typically may not read privacy policies, the design and presentation of these agreements still significantly impact their digital experiences by shaping the platform’s environment, data collection practices, and the overall conditions under which they play and interact.

The research is grounded in affect theory, drawing on the works of Grant Bollmer (2023), Ticineto Clough (2012), and other affect scholars to conceptualize privacy policy agreements as “affect labs.” These labs operate by subtly shaping the emotional landscape of users through design and language, even if the users are not consciously aware of them. A qualitative content analysis of Roblox’s privacy policy agreement is conducted, focusing on its design, language, and presentation. The study includes a close reading of the policy text, design, and presentation supported by affect theory to uncover the emotional and cognitive responses elicited indirectly in young users through their interactions on the platform.

This research aligns with the theme “Playing with Borders” by examining how privacy policy agreements shape the digital play spaces and experiences of children and teens. It explores the boundaries between user agency and corporate control, by investigating how privacy policies subtly influence the digital environments where children and teens engage. This study contributes to understanding the complex interactions and negotiations that young people navigate in their mediated worlds. The analysis of Roblox’s privacy policy provides insights into how these agreements affect the ways in which children and teens play, negotiate, and resist within digitized spaces.

Biographical Statement: Katayoon (Kat) is a Master’s student in the Communication and Culture program at York and Toronto Metropolitan Universities. Her research focuses on studying the ontology and sociopolitical economy of the metaverse, through infrastructural analysis across the tech industry. Her research interests include digital capitalism, affordances, user behaviour and affect theory. She aims to contribute to the development of ethical digital practices that enhance trust, regulations and user awareness.

Victoria Sands

Toronto Metropolitan University

"I Reached by Peak at Seven": Exploring Girlhood as Cosplay at the Eras Tour

Abstract: Over the last few years, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has cultivated an unprecedented global spectacle surrounding her celebrity, most visibly in the record-breaking “Eras” Tour, which has found Swift performing to sold-out stadiums around the world. These concerts showcase her extensive back catalogue, presented as aforementioned “Eras” complete with iconography, costumes, and changing set-pieces. The tour, still ongoing, has also been released as a successful concert film.

It is through these events that audiences have engaged in not just spectatorship, but what might be seen as a specific kind of *play*, and one that draws on aesthetics and signifiers of ‘girlhood’. For example, fans, (who include both young children, tweens, teens, young adults, and adults), ritually exchange child-like friendship bracelets, dress in costumes, adorn themselves with glitter, and form dance circles and singalongs both at the shows, outside of venues, and even in indoor movie theatres.

Arguing that Swift has emerged as a kind of ‘meme’ in a current postfeminist culture, my presentation will interrogate how her celebrity compels and invites this kind of discursive connection to both childhood and girlhood. I will explore how these performances, activities, and self-categorizations are valued and shared on today’s social media platforms.

I will focus particularly closely on the possibility that Swift’s audiences—in particular those seen as ‘Eras’--are engaged in a gendered kind of ‘cosplay,’ of both Swift’s work and of youth and girlhood itself, a phenomenon that invites new scholarly consideration. In doing so, I aim to illuminate how Swift has strategically encouraged, and herself modelled, this practice, while strategically tapping into valuable age demographics that seemingly invest in the appealing liminality of girlhood in a post-pandemic media culture.

Biographical Statement: Victoria Sands is a PhD Candidate in the Communication and Culture program at Toronto Metropolitan University.

Ingvild Kvale Sørenssen

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Tweens, on the Border Between Young Children and Teenagers

Abstract: Being a tween can be understood as getting ready to cross the border from being a child, to becoming a teenager. This paper explores how girls in Norway in the 7th grade in 2023 talked about being the oldest at school and what they anticipated for the 8th grade, when they start middle school. To understand this boundary crossing, in regards to schools and grades as well as age, I use the concept age-shifting. Age shifting is the possibility to shift

between engaging in childhood and teenager repertoires depending on the situational and relational contexts. Age-shifting acknowledges tweens, as both being children and becoming teenagers, offering a more nuanced perspective that moves beyond the traditional boundary of an either/or dichotomy. Age-shifting allows us to view age as a social strategy but also as flexible and contextually and relationally dependent. The paper is situated in childhood studies and a sociomaterial perspective drawing on actor-network theory and relational ontology which can reveal how tweens can be understood not as singular but rather as multiple. In an attempt to move beyond the boundaries of the being/becoming dichotomy I make both a theoretical and empirical argument of moving beyond an either/or, and rather focus on the theoretical and empirical implications of opening the field by using the concept age shifting. The notion of age shifting allows us to view age as both a social strategy but also as flexible and contextually and relationally dependent. It is not a free zone where one can draw on different age doings at will as there are limits and restrictions operating in different networks in relation to available age performances.

Biographical Statement: Ingvild Kvale Sørenssen is an associate professor in childhood studies and education at the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning (IPL), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Her research interests revolve around children's age identity, socialization, and meaning making in the interplay of popular culture, friendships, and family life. Her theoretical focus is on the relationality of human and nonhuman actors in different sociomaterial assemblages.

Yiva Ågren* and Anna Sparrman^

University of Gothenburg* and Linköping University^

Influencers Paid Collaborations: Playing with the Sexual Gaze and the Gangster Look

Abstract: What we call, professional child influencers, spend time and create content on social media. The more followers the content attract the more interesting children and young people become to commercial companies. The companies want children to launch and sell their branded products to other children, their followers. When children take on selling branded products a paid collaboration is established between children and companies. In this presentation we investigate how two male influencers use gaze and looks to sell products on Instagram (Marquéz et al 2022). The two boys, today in their teens, have been influencers for many years and earn money through their Instagram accounts. One of the boys has over the years developed a gangster look for selling branded clothing. He has also created an own brand selling, among other things, second hand clothes. The second boy is a musician. He has no paid collaborations but has instead created merchs in limited editions, for example professionalised photographs of himself with a sexy gaze. It requires knowledge, a visual vocabulary, and determination to succeed.

Theoretically and methodologically, we combine visual cultural analyses and Science and Technology Studies (STS) (Mirzoeff 2023, Rose 2023, Sturken and Cartwright 2018) to analyse the boy's gazes; how do they use their gazes to promote commodities, and themselves as products? How do they use the technology? And are different visual vocabularies used when promoting paid collaborations and the boys own branding of products (cf. Bandelj et al 2017).

To attract collaborations and earn money the boys' cross multiple borders and boundaries while playing with the technology and cultural visual norms. The analyses show that social media is a place where, over time, young people develop their visual tools to become professional in their influencer practice.

Biographical Statement: Ylva Ågren, Senior Lecturer in Child and Youth Studies at the Department of Education, Communication and Learning at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Ågren and Sparrman are both currently working with the research project "Children as professional Influencers and Internet Celebrities".

Biographical Statement: Anna Sparrman, Professor in Child Studies at the interdisciplinary Department of Thematic Studies, Linköping University, Sweden. She is also Visiting Professor in child culture at the Faculty of Education, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Ylva Ågren* and Anna Sparrman^

University of Gothenburg* and Linköping University^

Get Ready with Me! Child Influencers Make-Up Tutorials

Abstract: Get ready with me (GRWM)- videos are about preparing both physically and emotionally for an ordinary day, a special event, or even bedtime, in front of the camera. The format has become a huge phenomenon on TikTok and, at the time of writing, the hashtag #GRWM has more than 183,4 billion views on TikTok (TikTok 240122). The most common content in GRWM-videos is makeup tutorials, that is, demonstrations of different product and of how to apply make-up while talking about your daily life at the same time (García-Rapp 2016). Content about makeup is also one of the most popular and lucrative areas on social media (Sweeney-Romero, 2022).

Intimacy and being perceived as authentic are among the cornerstones of the influencer market (Maares et al., 2021). Turning your everyday make-up or hair routine into content and inviting your followers to have an intimate chitchatting in front of the mirror, can thus become a way to break through on social media. Succeeding requires a balancing act between appearing professional and amateurish to appeal to both the market and the followers (Riboni, 2017). This presentation follows a GRWM account created by a 13-year-old Swedish girl. In just a few months, the account has gained over 200,000 followers and transformed into professional digital business. How, we ask, does the girl balance and play with the borders between being personal and professional? How does she use the GRWM to create intimacy and trust to get followers?

The analyses of the GRWM-videos focus on the entanglement between how she talks, what she says, how she uses the camera while launching the make-up products to the followers. Theoretically and methodologically, we draw on Science and Technology Studies (STS) and situated consumption (Sparrman, Sandin and Sjöberg 2012) to investigate how this is done in practice. We explore the ways in which technology, verbal accounts and make up products create professionalism.

Biographical Statement: Ylva Ågren, Senior Lecturer in Child and Youth Studies at the Department of Education, Communication and Learning at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Ågren and Sparrman are both currently working with the research project “Children as professional Influencers and Internet Celebrities”.

Biographical Statement: Anna Sparrman, Professor in Child Studies at the interdisciplinary Department of Thematic Studies, Linköping University, Sweden. She is also Visiting Professor in child culture at the Faculty of Education, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah and Desiree de Jesus

York University

Ruptured Rhythms: Racialized Girlhoods and Temporalities during COVID-19

Abstract:

“I’m not really ready for anything at this point:”

“I don’t feel like the future is going to be good, but I don’t feel like it’s going to be shit, either.”

Time informs how children come to understand their lives (Yakovlyeva, 2020), and themselves (Tesar, 2020). Time becomes particularly important when studying children because they are often seen as a repository for the future. Time has been central to the construction of western ideas of childhood and a disciplinary force, as evidenced by the pressures to meet developmental milestones, the segregation of children in education spaces by ages, and clothing that is demarcated by age. The Covid-19 pandemic provided a unique opportunity to examine what happens when western conceptualization of time as linear gets disrupted, and the implications of these ruptures on young people. This paper draws on the concept of rhythm analysis as developed by Henri Lefebvre (2004) to examine racialized young girls’ navigation of time and space during the Covid-19 pandemic. For Lefebvre (2004) rhythm is the combination of space, time and energy. Rhythm analysis argues that social control is done through the taming of time (Lefebvre 2004). This paper also draws on critical theorists and feminist extensions of rhythm analysis (Reid-Musson 2018; Thorpe et. Al. 2023) to examine politics of everyday life among marginalized populations. Grounded in these works, this paper explores how racialized young girls experienced what Lyon and Coleman (2023, pg. 31) call a “rhythmic rupture” during the pandemic that we argue changed their sense of time and futurity. This rupture is captured through the work of two, week long stop motion short film workshops that resulted in the production of original works by the participants. According to rhythm analysis any changes to “normal life” allows us to re-evaluate hegemonic ideas (O’Connor and Fotakopoulou, pg. 28) of time. Albeit, other studies of the pandemic have examined time (Nash, 2023), and children and time during the pandemic (O’Connor and Fotakopoulou, 2023), studies examining the experiences of racialized girls and time have not been explored.

Biographical Statement: Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, Ph.D, is an assistant professor in the Children, Childhood, and Youth program in the Humanities Department at York University in Toronto, Canada. Her research interests include girlhood, space, race, and youth activism. She recently authored “Re-

imagin(in)g Neighbourhood and Belonging through Photo-Voice: An Exercise in Citizenship in *Reconstructions of Canadian Identity*, edited by Maria Joao Dodman and Vander Tavares. Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press.

Biographical Statement: Desiree de Jesus, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in Communication and Media Studies at York University in Toronto Canada. She is also a video essayist and moving images curator. Her research and teaching explore the intersections of race, gender, aesthetics, and technology in narrative film and media through traditional, creative/curatorial, and maker methodologies.

Bengi Sullu

Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Reassured Steps into a Future That is Full of Competition: Socio-Spatial Reproduction of Psychological Knowledge around Child Development in the New Geographies of Play in Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract: Scholars have explored the deepening socio-economic inequalities in Turkey in the aftermath of the implementation of neoliberal economic policies (Adaman, Akbulut, Arsel 2017). Owing to the urban policy that paved the way for a construction sector-led urban development, inequalities manifested as spatial phenomena (Isik 2021) through the proliferation of geographies of middle-to-upper-class residential, educational and leisure communities that offer commodities and services that are available to those who can afford to pay while sustaining a continued sense of membership and privilege through social and spatial segregation (Candan and Kolluoglu 2008; Atac 2017). These developments have important implications for the delineation of spaces and activities of childhood by social class in the urban context of Turkey. Emerging literature explores the impact of urban transformation on creating classed geographies of childhood across the city space (Severcan 2018; Sullu 2018).

In this presentation, I focus on a children's play center operating as a private space situated in a shopping mall in Istanbul, the largest city in Turkey, as a distinct class-based geography of children's play. The broader area surrounding the shopping mall has experienced rapid urban development since 2010, resulting in high-end residences, commercial centers, and the establishment of a shopping mall, following the removal of the area's designation as an earthquake emergency public gathering area. Departing from this macro-spatial context, I move on to examining the play center in relation to the socio-economically and culturally situated way in which it embodies the enactment of conceptions and discourses of risks and possibilities around child development. I use visitors' reviews obtained through online research in conjunction with the analysis of documents about the center to unpack the strategic assimilation of socio-dramatic play (Tagg and Wang 2016) into strategies parents and teachers use to further children's advantageous class position in the unequal society. I argue that this class-based geography of childhood unveils a particular mechanism for the reproduction of socio-spatial inequalities in the Turkish society.

Biographical Statement: Bengi's research delves into the convergence of social change and human development, with a focus on children's play, family leisure, education policy, and social inclusion. Prior to joining Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York as a lecturer of social sciences, she held graduate research and teaching fellowships and taught introductory, developmental and environmental psychology courses.

Kristen Tollan

York University

What a Tangled (World Wide) Web We Weave: Unraveling the Boundaries and Perceptions of Online and Offline Friendships

Abstract: There has been a profound transformation in the way adolescents and young adults engage with their peers in this digital age. Today, as the boundaries between online and offline friendships blur, previously existing barriers such as geographical distance dissolve and allow individuals to connect across physical borders. Virtual interactions enable the formation of bonds based on shared interests, beliefs, and experiences, while never setting foot beyond one's front door. However, this type of friendship commonly faces scrutiny from others, often adults, due to a perceived lack of face-to-face interaction, the potential for anonymity, as well as the traditional stereotype that online friendships are less personal and intimate. Offline friendships, typically rooted in physical proximity, are considered more safe and stable. Yet, the line between online and offline friendships is unclear as technology facilitates seamless transitions between the two. Drawing on a variety of scholars from the field of digital youth cultures (Boyd, 2014; Eichhorn, 2019; Gardner & Davis, 2013), this paper presentation will be broken into 4 sections: I will review the existing literature on benefits and risks of online friendships, discuss trends in the way youth use social media for developing friendships, explore various perspectives of online friendships through a brief social media content analysis and finally, posit future directions for research into online friendships for young people. My proposed paper fits within the theme of the conference as it explores the "messy and in flux" borders of young people's online worlds and their relationships with the people they meet there. This concept is something that is frequently met with resist from adults, but ultimately, the boundaries are up to teens to play with and explore on their own terms.

Biographical Statement: Kristen Tollan (she/her) is a doctoral candidate in the Communication and Culture program at York University. Her dissertation research focuses on the use of social media by disabled youth for fostering friendships. She also explores topics in fan studies, queer experience and media representations of marginalized communities. Kristen is a teaching and research assistant at York and TMU and is fuelled by delivery Starbucks. She lives in the Greater Toronto Area with her study buddies, Smudge, Rory and Sailor.

Olivia Trono

Toronto Metropolitan University and York University

Beyond Make-Believe: Theorizing the Impacts of Magic and Fantasy on Children and Teens

Abstract: The fervent childhood urge to have or *be* magic (at a time of relative disempowerment) is continually reinforced by popular culture goliaths like *Harry Potter*, Marvel and Disney Media, and thousands of works in magic, fantasy and fairy tale media industries. Stories centering magic and magical powers have become a dominant force in young people's popular media: how might the pervasiveness of this media impact the lives, identities and worldviews of children and teens? In this paper, I will discuss emergent themes in my PhD research on magic as a popular culture phenomenon.

In stories, magic is often used as a vehicle for empowerment, and can inspire a form of imagined autonomy in audiences, particularly for children and youth (Zipes, 2015; Thomas, 2019). However, stories about magic are *also* often imbued with Western exceptionalism and colonial ideologies (ex. The Chosen One; nature as an infinite resource be wielded). Stories about magic may provide children and teens with a skewed view of what it means to be autonomous and have a purpose, give them an outsized sense of responsibility, and distort their sense of enchantment. In reference to the CTC Conference theme, magic is often a central component of imaginative play from an early age—while my paper will acknowledge that this play is beneficial, this play is also not entirely innocent, and perhaps not always positive.

My paper will draw on a range of interdisciplinary texts, primarily in the fields of magic, fairy tale, fantasy, and children's media studies. I will analyze and identify themes in popular magic media texts primarily marketed toward younger audiences (such as *The Owl House* and *Winx Club*); my methodological approach will also involve some autoethnography, as my analyses are informed by my experiences engaging with magic media (and their fandoms) throughout childhood and today.

Biographical Statement: Olivia Trono is a PhD Candidate in the Communication and Culture program, joint between Toronto Metropolitan & York Universities. Her PhD research focuses on representations of magic in contemporary popular media, and her MA thesis was a podcast about the podcasting medium.

Amber-Lee Varadi

York University

"I'll take a picture and be like, 'I want to post this, but I can't'"; Through the looking glass of teens' online identities and "being yourself" on social media

Abstract: Drawing on Cooley's (1902/2017) theory of the looking glass self, this research examines how teens think about and use social media for identity expression and self-presentation. The looking glass self suggests that self-concept is not individually created but, rather, co-constructed by the individual and others around them: following one's initial self-perception, a process of imagining how another person might perceive, judge, and react to the individual's appearance and apparent disposition ensues. Cooley's theory has significant relevance for understanding how today's youth – who simultaneously "rule the Internet" yet are at risk of addiction to Internet-connected technologies (Adorjan & Ricciardelli, 2021; Kennedy, 2020) – approach social media when sharing themselves online (see Jones, 2015).

This presentation utilizes interview data from a sample of Ontario-based teens (age 14-18) to reveal the various ways that youth's online identities and self-presentations "blur boundaries between presence and absence... control and freedom, personal and mass communication, private and public, and virtual and real" (Baym & boyd, 2012, p. 320). Indeed, while youth can be present on social media by virtue of posting, liking, and commenting, their personality or "real" self may be absent. All participants noted that the mediated identities youth compose and publish online are never a completely accurate or honest reflection of an individual user but, rather, meticulously edited to both fit in with real and imagined audiences and protect one's well-being. Participants further underscored how mediated identities blur boundaries between control/freedom and virtual/real: while youth seemingly have the freedom to "be themselves" online, they must manage their virtual acts of self-expression in a way that aligns with youth cultural norms and contemporary virtues. Narratives about online acts of self-expression are framed as strategic and carefully made moves in a larger game of social media navigation that most teens are expected to "play" and participate in.

Biographical Statement: Amber-Lee Varadi is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at York University, Canada. She holds an MA in Critical Sociology from Brock University and a BSc (Hons) from the University of Toronto. Her current research interests focus on the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and class in young people's online and offline experiences, regulation and discourse studies, qualitative methods, and research ethics. She resides in Toronto with her wife-to-be, Sofia, and two cats, Serafina and Leona.

Tharini Viswanath[^] and Nithya Sivashankar*

University of South Carolina[^] and Texas State University*

Bending Borders and Augmenting Realities: Ideology, Adolescence, and Marketing in Netflix's *Mismatched* (*Online*)

Abstract: Set in contemporary Jaipur, *Mismatched* features teenagers Dimple Ahuja and Rishi Singh Shekhawat who, over the span of two seasons, deal with familial and peer pressures, and experience attraction, while also being on track to pursue their ambitions. With Netflix going global in the recent past, the series has gained popularity among young transnational audiences. The show challenges borders and boundaries regarding nationality, identity, and characterization with particular regard to context and production; in fact, *Mismatched* is a show that has been adapted from Sandhya Menon's Indian American YA novel, *When Dimple Met Rishi* about Indian Americans to a distinctly Indian setting featuring Indian characters. While the show discusses a number of important issues that reflect the lived experiences of South Asian adolescents and their families, *Mismatched* relies on a number of romance and Bollywood tropes to make the series marketable.

This paper draws on theories of transnationalism, participatory fan culture, and Gopal and Moortis' understanding of "Global Bollywood" to better understand how diasporic television comedy drama series employ marketing techniques related to love, cinema, and gaming to discuss deeper issues related to identity, gender and sexuality, class, disability, mental health, and age. Using *Mismatched* as a case study, this paper identifies and examines techniques that are employed subtly and/or overtly in order to either reaffirm or subvert ideologies relating to romance that are uniquely Indian. The approaches the paper identifies are sometimes intrinsic to the plot such as references to Bollywood and gaming. At other times, they take paratextual forms including publicity stunts on social media, dance challenges, and music videos that arguably bend borders and augment viewers' realities. Ultimately, we contend that regardless of the form(s) these marketing techniques take, they influence ideologies pertaining to adolescence and love imparted by these narratives.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Tharini Viswanath is an Assistant Professor of Children's and Young Adult Literature at The University of South Carolina. Her work has been published in a number of journals including *Papers*, *Jeunesse*, *The ALAN Review*, and *South Asia*. Viswanath is currently working on a book project on the voice, choice, and material agency of feminine characters in young adult literature.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Nithya Sivashankar is an Assistant Professor at Texas State University. Her research on South Asian, Asian American, African and African American children's and young adult literature has been published in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles in *Children's Literature in Education*, *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*, *The ALAN Review* and *Journal of Children's Literature*, and several edited collections.

Rebekah Willet

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Constructing Children's Transmedia Digital Play: A Typology of Discourse from Researchers, KidTech, and Popular Press

Abstract: Children's play often involves seamless movement across borders of digital and non-digital play, highly commercial and child-created products, for entertainment and educational purposes. Indeed, theorists have long commented on the ambiguity of play and the specific challenges of defining children's play (Eberle, 2014; Sutton-Smith, 1997). Further, researchers have analyzed children's play with digital technologies and with popular culture artefacts and texts, documenting children's 'converged play' and creative practices (Edwards, 2013; Marsh et al., 2020). Yet children are often framed as consuming digital and commercial content through play in limited ways, with critics arguing that play with consumer texts and digital technologies limit children's imagination and creative development (Singer & Singer, 2005; Smirnova, 2011). Importantly, these critiques can act as lightning rods for anxieties about the commercialization of childhood and decreases in children's imaginative play.

This paper explores the conference theme by analyzing ways the borders listed above that children often negotiate with ease are constructed in discourse about children's transmedia digital play. The definition of transmedia digital play draws on Kinder's (1991) analysis of transmedia entertainment which considers ways children's media industries employ narrative and non-narrative media elements across multiple platforms. The paper uses discourse analysis to explore data from several sources: recent research on children's digital play, commercial websites from major KidTech companies such as Roblox, and popular press. The paper identifies key discourses and their functions and establishes a typology of discourses of children's transmedia digital play. Further, the paper indicates how these discourses work across these different sources, framing children's play in particular ways for particular purposes. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these discursive framings for how children's transmedia digital play is understood, supported, and regulated.

Biographical Statement: Dr Rebekah Willett is a Professor in the Information School at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the United States. She has conducted research on children's media cultures, focusing on issues of play, literacy, identity, and learning. Her publications include work on makerspaces, playground games, amateur camcorder cultures, families' screen media practices, and children's story writing. She has published in journals in the fields of education, childhood studies, media studies, and library and information science.

David Woodger, Naomi Thompson, and Leo Freund-Williams

Goldsmiths University London

Negotiating Digital Borders and Cultures - Young Black and Racially Minoritized People's Experiences on Social Media in the UK

Abstract: In an independent study funded by Meta, we have researched young black and racially minoritized (BRM) people's experiences of racialized content on social media. The research emphasises the fluidity of digital borders in young people's social media practice and cultures.

O'Connor (2015) draws on the work of Beck and Giddens to outline how young people are living in a 'risk society' where insecurity is the norm and structural inequalities often obscured. Young people's everyday lives are increasingly impacted by global issues and they negotiate challenges with a focus on their own individual agency. In Canadian research, O'Connor (2015) found differences in the intersections of class, gender and race determine whether young people recognise how structural factors shape their lives. This necessitates an intersectional understanding of young people's everyday experiences of racism.

There is a lack of UK-specific research about race and social media. International research highlights the trauma of repeated exposure to racial violence online and the impact of this on mental health (Tynes et al, 2019), the use of social media for activism (Ince et al, 2017), and that graphic video content in particular has become a voyeuristic spectacle rather than a prompt to action (Mowatt, 2018). Social media can be a site of both oppression and expression (Miller et al, 2021).

Our research involved interviews and focus groups with over 100 BRM young people around the UK and a survey of over 800 BRM young people. Key findings relate to young people's experiences/observations of: performative activism and voyeurism; polarisation of online debate; overwhelm, disengagement and subversion; hyper-scrutiny of black women; activism on/offline; impact on their offline lives including mental health, feeling (un)safe, and relationships with authority. Young people also framed implications for social media platforms and their desire for autonomy through user-controlled content.

Biographical Statement: David Woodger is Senior Lecturer in Community Studies in the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies (STaCS) at Goldsmiths University London. His research focuses on institutional racism in a range of contexts. Naomi Thompson is Head of Department and Reader in Youth and Community Work in STaCS. Her research focuses on issues of inclusion and exclusion experienced by young people and communities. Leo Freund-Williams is a research assistant in STaCS with research interests in online communities and digital spaces.

Xiyuan Zhou

Hong Kong Baptists University

The Impact and Birthplace Differences (Urban/Rural) of Social Media Use Pathways on Adolescent Mental Health in Central China

Abstract: In the digital age, the widespread use of social media has raised significant concerns about its impact on adolescent mental health. This study aims to investigate how social media use affects adolescent mental health through mediating variables such as social comparison, social support, and psychological resilience, with a particular focus on whether birthplace differences (urban/rural) influence the overall model. A total of 697 questionnaires were collected, with the majority of participants from the central region of mainland China. The

results indicate that social media use significantly and positively influences social comparison and social support, which in turn affect mental health. Additionally, birthplace differences have a significant direct impact on adolescent mental health but do not significantly moderate the effects of social media use on psychological resilience, social support, and social comparison. These findings highlight the importance of social media use in promoting adolescent mental health by increasing social support, while also emphasizing the need to consider birthplace differences in mental health research. In today's advanced social media landscape, adolescents from different birthplaces have equal access to information, yet such disparities still exist. Understanding the reasons behind these disparities warrants deeper investigation.

Biographical Statement: Xiyuan Zhou, a Ph.D. Candidate at Hong Kong Baptist University focuses on Health Communication, Mental health, and Visual Communication.

Panel: *Mobilizing Participatory Visual Research with Young People*

This panel takes up the theme “new methodologies in children and consumption.” We work with creative approaches (multimodal storytelling, cellphilmimg [films made by and for cellphones], collage production) that emphasize fluid and reflexive techniques for engaging with participants’ realities. Drawing on our respective work with racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, and newcomer young people we think through how the processes of participatory visual methodologies can be sites for the emergence of young people’s critical practice. We use the conceptual frame of “childism” (Deszcz-Tryhubczak & García-González, 2023; Wall, 2019) to look at how these methodologies can be engaged to generate more age-inclusive research strategies. This lens positions young people as a diverse group who respond to the world in myriad ways with valid insights as social actors. We take up childism as a productive starting point to think about new social imaginings and ways to deepen intergenerational collaboration in research.

The success of participatory research rests on built-in systems of learning and great sensitivity and adaptability to variations in context. We approach our work using the resistive, disruptive, and artful practice of participatory visual research (Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane, 2017). Through this methodology, the co-production of visual texts—in our case, collages, cellphilms, and multimodal stories—are used to confront, interrupt, and then subvert the status quo to form new models of understanding and representing (Mitchell & De Lange, 2013). With this in mind, we are attuned to contextual factors such as local and global inequality, histories, political systems, and the nature of social interactions. Each paper recounts our explorations with young people and probes at both the tensions and joys that arose as a result of our attempts to create for and with participants. While the borders that mark differences in age and social positioning remain visible, connections were built through participatory visual research production.

April Mandrona

Nova Scotia College of Art & Design University

Multimodal Storytelling for and By Newcomer Young People

Abstract: What are the possibilities of multimodal storytelling (picturebooks, podcasts, textiles, drawing, mapping) for communicating newcomer young people's unique experiences, perspectives, and creative insights? The SSHRC-funded project Storying Transnational Knowledges: Connection through Narrative brings together newcomer young people (aged 8-25) and adult collaborators in Halifax, Montreal, Darwin, and Adelaide (Australia) through the making and sharing of original narratives. We test ways of networking across borders (geographical, sociopolitical) through the sharing of ideas and resources using community-oriented technologies (Wegner, 2001). We seek to create and refine approaches to storytelling as research and mobilize artistic and narrative information and technologies for access by newcomer communities and the organizations that serve them. Foregrounding young people's unique artistic and narrative voices can disrupt dominant conventions by re-conceptualizing generational difference and power, and by prioritizing and providing a witnessing space for historically excluded knowledge and cultural productions.

Biographical Statement: Dr. April Mandrona (she/her) is an Associate Professor and director of the Institute for Art, Community, and Transdisciplinary Studies at NSCAD University. Her expertise includes Art Education as related to young peoples' visual culture, rurality, ethics, participatory visual research, and curriculum design. Her current research looks at creative methodologies as pathways to solidarity and social connection with young refugees.

Casey Burkholder and Melissa Keehn

University of New Brunswick

Accessing Queer and Trans Joy in New Brunswick, Canada with 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth

Abstract: How do queer and trans youth access queer joy amidst escalating educational and political hostilities (including the amended Policy 713)? Queer joy is a resistive strategy that gestures away from the deficit—the suffering queer—and toward the productive, the joyful (Shuster & Westbrook, 2022; Wright, 2023). We have centered queer and trans joy in four participatory collage-production (Martin et al., 2018) workshops with 250 students (aged 14-18) in New Brunswick: joy that seeks out pleasure, and dreams about more livable futures (Ghaziani, 2024). Through collage-production, we prompted youth participants to think about queer and trans joy in schooling and community spaces. By imagining and depicting queer joy as productive, radical, and embodied (Duran & Coloma, 2023; Tristano Jr., 2022), we learned that queer and trans youth mobilize queer joy as a felt, lived, and embodied emotion and strategy of resistance (see Figure 1) against harmful educational policies and homophobic and transphobic school practices.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Casey Burkholder (she/her) is an Associate Professor at the University of New Brunswick, interested in critical teacher-education, and participatory visual research. In choosing a research path at the intersection of resistance&activism, gender, sexuality, DIY media-making, art production and participatory archiving, Casey engages in research for social change through participatory visual approaches to local issues

with queer & trans youth, adults, elders, and pre-service teachers. She is the co-founder of the Fredericton Feminist Film Collective, and PI of Pride/Swell+.

Biographical Statement: Melissa Keehn (she/her) is a SSHRC-funded PhD student in Education at the University of New Brunswick. Her doctoral work includes researching the intersections of participatory visual research, gender, sexuality, and sexuality education.

Katie MacEntee

University of Toronto

Get Ready With Me and other viral genres in cellphilms about hidden homelessness amongst 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Ontario

Abstract: The Pathways Interrupted project used cellphilms method to learn about the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth who are falling through the cracks in the Ontario homelessness response. Twelve youth participants (ages 16-29 years) from three sites in Ontario created cellphilms about the intersecting challenges of hidden homelessness and housing precarity for young people. Using popular cellphone video genres, like Tik Tok Get Ready With Me (GRWM) videos, the young people demonstrate their social media skills by creating short 1-2 min cellphilms about a highly politicized and complex topic. Building on Rose (2013) and Mandrona's (2016) discussions of participatory visual research as visual culture, I interpret the Pathways cellphilms in a social media moment alongside a persistent moral panic of young queer and trans youth and cellphone use. I further assess the limitations and potential of the work to sway change-makers to address the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Katie MacEntee is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. Her scholarship includes working with children, youth, and adults internationally, most often through the use of participatory visual methodologies, to explore intersecting issues associated with access to education and healthcare.

Panel: *Child and Youth on Play and Leisure: Small-Scale Projects in the Field*

The increase in the use of technology among children and youth has redefined their play spaces. This panel will discuss recent, small-scale, child- and youth- centered research projects that explore different ways young people playfully engage with technology. With a focus on play and leisure, this panel presents three child- and youth-centered research projects that explore how children and young people engage with video games, social media, cell phones, and media entertainment as 'digital playgrounds' (Grimes, 2021). As emerging scholars in the field of critical child and youth studies, the aim of our small-scale projects is to examine how children and youth define and negotiate what play means to them, highlighting their own experiences and perspectives. The panel includes discussions of child and youth participatory research, exploring young people's perspectives on various topics, using qualitative, participatory, and arts-based methods. The first presentation will focus on a participatory

research project exploring young people's understandings of play, this panel will discuss how youth engage with video games, social media, cell phones and media entertainment as forms of play. The second presentation will discuss a project focusing on children's perspectives on, and experiences of playing video games. The third presentation explores a project examining youth perspectives of TikTok, including how digital spaces as alternatives to public play spaces. In the absence of welcoming public spaces, increasingly digital spaces have become playgrounds for young people to socialize, compete and engage with each other. In doing so, they are redefining what we think of as playgrounds through agentively claiming their play spaces. This panel directly connects to this year's CTC conference theme, as it examines how young people experience, negotiate and define their own experiences of play and leisure.

Jessica Campbell

York University

Exploring Youth Perspectives of 'Play': A Participatory Study

Abstract: This presentation aims to address the gap in the scholarship about youth play cultures by exploring the research question; What does 'play' mean to youth ages 16-18 in the GTA? Although childhood scholars widely accept the value of play, a review of recent literature revealed gaps concerning youth perspectives on play. This youth-centered study is underpinned by the 'new' sociology of childhood and focuses on research with young participants (Berman & MacNevin, 2017). In doing so, I took a constructivist, participatory approach, and co-constructed meaning with the youth participants (Greig et al., 2013). This study employed participatory methodologies including semi-structured interviews, photovoice, drawing, and focus groups (Horgan, 2017; Kitzinger, 1995; Mitchell et al., 2011). The findings revealed that technology usage was predominant in many forms of play. For the participants, digital worlds such as online communities and social media were important spaces that youth claim for their play.

Biographical Statement: Jessica L. Campbell is a student and research assistant at York University where she has won several academic awards. Jessica brings to her studies insights to young people's play cultures from her experience working with children in early learning centers. Recently, she completed a work-placement at Right to Play where she gained valuable knowledge about play and play-based methodologies. Her research interests include participatory methodologies, children's rights, play, and young people's digital spaces.

Shaney Fullwood

York University

Exploring Young Children's Perspectives of Video Games as Play

Abstract: This presentation explores children's opinions, experiences, and perspectives, in examining the question, "How do children ages nine to twelve in the Greater Toronto area describe their experience playing video games?" While we acknowledge that video games are now a major part of the way young people spend their time, some scholars would argue that it is not considered play as not much physical activity is required to play most video games (Goldberg, 2015). This project offers new insight, as research focusing on children's experiences playing video games is very limited in the Canadian context. For this research, I took a qualitative child-centered

approach, exploring the relationship between digital media, video games, and play. The study explored a variety of methodologies which included focus group interviews, presentations, interviews, and arts-based activities (Horgan, 2017; Kitzinger, 1995; Mitchell et al., 2011).

Biographical Statement: Shaney A. Fullwood is a student at York University. Shaney brings to her research valuable insights gleaned from her experience working with children in the Toronto District School Board. She is an active volunteer in her community and school-based environments. Her many roles have deepened her understanding of children's physical and digital play cultures making significant contributions to her research approach. Recently, she worked as a member of the organizing committee for the Children, Youth, and Performance Conference of 2023.

Thepa Thusiyanthathas

York University

Exploring Teens Perspective of TikTok

Abstract: This presentation explores the research question: How do teens (ages 15 to 16) living in the GTA describe their experiences using the TikTok app? This presentation aims to provide insight on some of the current research ideas surrounding teens and TikTok as well as findings from the research conducted with teens in the Greater Toronto Area. This research was conducted using participatory, qualitative methods of research including collage making, focus group discussion and video-creation (Horgan, 2017; Kitzinger, 1995; Khlaif, 2021), and data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The presentation will discuss two key themes that emerged from the research, based on the youth participants' views, including experiences of TikTok as an 'accepting environment' and discussions of a 'generational disconnect', both of which challenge prevalent adult perspectives on social media use.

Biographical Statement: Thepa Thusiyanthathas is a student and research assistant at York University. Thepa's experience working in various after school programs, community centres and classrooms brings insights to her studies and research pertaining to young people's cultures. She is a member of the organizing committee for the Children, Youth, and Performance Conference as well as a board member for the not-for-profit organization, Tamil Woman in Academia. Her research interests include children's rights, educational policy, young people's digital cultures and art-based research methods.

Roundtable: Reflecting on the Field of Child and Teen Consumption Studies

Kara Chan, Valérie-Inés de La Ville, Patricia Núñez Gómez, Stephanie O'Donohoe, and Stephen Kline

Moderator: Natalie Coulter (York University)

2024 marks twenty years since the first CTC conference took place in Angoulême, France. Since this time, the field of Child and Teen consumption studies has grown exponentially. New research related to this field is regularly published in academic journals such as *The Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Consumption and Society*, and the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. Since 2004, an international conference has been hosted every two years at different universities around the world to discuss the field of child and teen consumption studies from a particular theme or perspective.

This roundtable welcomes global leaders in the field of child and teen consumption studies and organizers of past CTC conferences to discuss the state of the field, reflect on how it's evolved in the past twenty years, and identify pressing issues scholars of child and teen consumption studies may be forced to confront in the coming years.

Biographical Statement: Dr. Kara Chan research on areas of advertising and cross-cultural consumer studies. She was a Fulbright Scholar at Bradley University. She was the Finalist for the 2020 University Grants Committee Teaching Award, and a recipient of President's Award of Outstanding Performance in Research Supervision, Outstanding Performance in Scholarly Work. She was named World's Top 2% Scientists in the Economics and Business subject field in 2022 and 2023.

Biographical Statement: Valérie-Inés de La Ville has a PhD in strategic management from Lyon III University. Full Professor at the Business Administration Department (IAE) of the University of Poitiers (France) where I run a master's degree in "Digital Youth Marketing" based in Angoulême. My research is carried out at the European Center for Children's Products (CEPE) and deals with the economic socialisation of young consumers, the innovation processes in industries targeting families and children, as well as the corporate social responsibility of companies operating in children's markets.

Biographical Statement: Patricia Núñez Gómez is the Head of Applied Communication Science Department in Complutense University, Spain. Director of Excellence Complutense Chair of digital Communication for kids and teens. She is also the Spanish Chair of Unesco Unitwin (University Network) in Gender, Media and ICT, the Vice-Chair in IAMCR (Section Gender and Media). Member of the ECREA Executive Board. She is leading the European project Safe Internet for kids and Branded Content project funded by UK. She is the Head of Advertising Section in AE-IC and the Headmaster of the Complutense Research Group Socmedia: (Socio-communication competences and digital Natives).

Biographical Statement: Stephanie O'Donohoe is the Professor of Advertising and Consumer Culture at the University of Edinburgh. An interpretive consumer researcher, her work focuses on the role of consumption in family life, including grandchild-grandparent relationships. She also examines books as a lens on family relationships during difficult transitions.

Biographical Statement: After graduating with a BA in Psychology from U of T, Stephen Kline completed his PhD entitled "*Structure and characteristics of television news broadcasting: their effects upon opinion change*" at the London School of Economics, UK. In 1975 he returned to Canada and taught Environmental Communication and Media Studies at York University, Toronto, until 1989. In 1990 he joined the School of Communications at Simon

Fraser University, Burnaby, where as Professor and Director of the Media Analysis Laboratory he taught and researched advertising and promotional communication, applied media analysis and audience research, and children's media cultures and play. Having overseen and collaborated on many interdisciplinary research projects Stephen has written numerous essays on children's media and play culture, news and promotional communication, environmentalism and public health and authored five books: *Social Communication in Advertising* (1986), *Out of the Garden* (1993), *Digital Play* (2003), *Researching Audiences* (2005) and *Globesity: Food Marketing and Family Lifestyles* (2011). He became Professor Emeritus in 2018 upon retirement.

Industry Panel: *AI and the Future of Kids Entertainment*

Ricardo Curtis, Jasmine Irwin, Sharon Shahrokhi Tehrani, and Ryan Tuchow

Moderator: Kim Wilson (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Digital technology is increasingly shaping children's experiences, so understanding the boundaries and borders of media motivated by artificial intelligence (AI) for youth is imperative. From interactive learning experiences to personalized content on social media applications, AI's influence on youth consumption patterns is increasingly becoming more profound and multifaceted, particularly when considering branded content. This panel of Toronto-based experts explores how AI is reshaping the children's entertainment industry. Speakers will discuss a web of intersecting issues relevant to AI and its role in children's entertainment including branding and marketing, regulatory challenges, socio-behavioral dynamics and ethical considerations. This panel endeavors to equip various stakeholders, including policymakers, industry practitioners, scholars, and educators, with information to help navigate the ever-evolving landscape of children's consumption of AI-influenced media. This session is an important step for forging valuable connections between industry and academic professionals in the fields of marketing, media studies, and children's studies.

Biographical Statement: Ricardo Curtis, a Jamaican-born and Toronto-raised animation professional, has contributed to over 20 feature animated films with top studios like Pixar, DreamWorks, Fox, and Warner Bros. A graduate of Sheridan College's Classical Animation Program, Curtis worked on notable projects such as The Incredibles and The Iron Giant. In 2004, he co-founded House of Cool, the industry's preeminent preproduction studio, later acquired by WildBrain. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Biographical Statement: Jasmine Irwin is a Manager at Springboard Policy, a public policy consulting firm that helps organizations to use their expertise to shape important policy conversations. Jasmine has spearheaded projects ranging from mapping the infrastructure gap in Canada's North, to developing policy strategies for national non-profits, to exploring career guidance as a policy tool for those with barriers to work. She has also co-authored a research paper examining the role of artificial intelligence technologies on children's privacy rights. Before Springboard, Jasmine worked as a Policy Advisor and Press Secretary to Ontario's Deputy Premier.

Biographical Statement: Sharon Shahrokhi Tehrani is a distinguished product leader with a proven track record in leveraging big data, machine learning, and AI to drive product development and enhance business capabilities. In her role as a Product Manager at CBC, Sharon leads the development of a cutting-edge data, ML, and AI platform. This platform empowers content teams to make data-driven decisions, ensuring the delivery of relevant, diverse, and personalized content to audiences. Recognized as one of Canada's Top 25 Women in AI, Sharon is also a key advocate for bridging academia and industry to foster innovative solutions.

Biographical Statement: Ryan Tuchow is senior reporter at KidScreen, the top trade publication covering the global kids entertainment industry. Ryan oversees content for the magazine as well as the Daily newspaper, which is read by industry professionals around the world every day.

Community Roundtable: *Youth Reflections on Consumption*

Moderator: Silja Mitange and Zavia Forrest (Toronto Metropolitan University)

This roundtable of **5 Black youth presenters** from **The Power to Be** (PTB), a Black-led organization that collaborates with **BIPOC** youth to create spaces for community programs and activities that encourage youth engagement on themes surrounding media, popular culture, and critical thinking. During the panel, the 5 youth presenters will reflect upon themes from Dr. Gray's keynote to their engagements with contemporary media, consumption practices, and popular culture.