

MARIAL CENTER WELCOMES EIGHT NEW FELLOWS

The MARIAL Center welcomes eight new fellows this year doing research in sociology, linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and religion. Two are postdocs, four are graduate students, and two are undergraduates. Each will pursue an independent research project.

“We are very fortunate to have recruited such a wealth of new academic talent,” said MARIAL Center Director Bradd Shore. “Our success in recruiting has added to our already rich palette some fascinating new perspectives on family myth and ritual.”

The new postdoctoral fellows are Cynthia Gordon, who has a doctorate in sociolinguistics, and Stephanie Byrd, who has a doctorate in sociology.

Gordon comes to MARIAL from Georgetown University, where she did research on the discourse of dual-income families with Deborah Tannen and Shari Kendall. Like the MARIAL Center, this research was funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. At MARIAL, Gordon will study the reproduction of family culture through ritual. In the families she studied at Georgetown, each had its own culture, its own language to create the culture, and its own everyday rituals (such as bedtime and naptime routines). At Emory, she will examine how habitual ways of speaking, acting, and interacting work together toward recreating a family culture.

Byrd comes to MARIAL from New York University, where her dissertation was on how men and women, aged twenty-eight to thirty-five, make work and family decisions based on their notions of autonomy and commitment. At MARIAL, Byrd hopes to expand this research with a more focused study on how autonomy is managed by young adults with children. As the number of dual-earner families continues to rise, further exploration is increasingly important into how individuals resolve needs for autonomy with family commitments.

Two of the new graduate fellows—Kelly Marin and Amber Lazarus—study psychology and work with MARIAL faculty fellows Marshall Duke and Robyn Fivush on their Family Narratives Project. Indeed, Marin and Lazarus already have coauthored MARIAL working papers with Duke and Fivush.

Marin’s MARIAL research will focus on how parents and adolescents negotiate the balance between independence and closeness. Through interviews with adolescents and their mothers, Marin will investigate how adolescents develop a sense of self as distinct from and related to their family, and to what extent boys and girls differ.

Lazarus will study family locus of control and its links to resilience in children. Her main objective is to examine relations between adolescents’ narratives of their own and their families’ history, along with measures of family functioning, adolescent identity, and well-being. She will recruit 200 adolescents and their parents for the study. The first half will be entering

“Our success in recruiting has added to our already rich palette some fascinating new perspectives on family myth and ritual.”

Bradd Shore

or in eighth grade, and the remainder will be entering or in tenth grade. Half of each group will be female.

The other new graduate fellows are Jennifer Thompson, who studies religion, and Ashby Walker, who is studying sociology. Thompson’s MARIAL project is “Creating Myth and Ritual in Interfaith Families.” She will investigate how middle-class parents resolve questions about religious identity, how families perform their religious practices, and how institutions such as churches, synagogues, and religious family life centers help and hinder these processes.

Walker will examine the social and symbolic meaning of food by doing a content analysis of food advertising in three magazines (*Ladies Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Time*) at three points in time, from the early 1900s to 2000.

The new undergraduate fellows are Tage Rai, a psychology major whose project is titled “Family History and Psychological Resilience,” and Robert Shore, an anthropology major whose project is titled “Film Representation of Family Dysfunction.” ■



Jennifer Thompson



Amber Lazarus



Stephanie Byrd



Robert Shore



Ashby Walker



Kelly Marin



Tage Rai



Cynthia Gordon