

# **HIGH/LOW**

## **CULTURE, CLASS, TECHNOLOGY**

**MARCH 31 - APRIL 1, 2000**

**University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, CA**



**Third Annual Undergraduate Research Conference  
Thematic Option Program**



# HIGH

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# LOW

Culture, Class, Technology

# Background and Purpose

The purpose of this event is to give undergraduate students an opportunity to experience a conference setting and to emphasize the importance of public presentation of scholarly ideas and academic work. In response to a general call for papers, Thematic Option students developed one-page proposals summarizing the topic and argument of a paper to be presented on a panel. Students submitted proposals under the following topic areas: 1) Culture, 2) Class, and 3) Technology. Each panel is made up of three to five students with a faculty member or a Thematic Option writing instructor serving as the chair and discussant.

## High/Low: Culture, Class, Technology

*Like to take a cement fix  
Be a standing cinema  
Dress my friends up just for show  
See them as they really are  
Put a peephole in my brain  
Two New Pence to have a go  
I'd like to be a gallery  
Put you all inside my show*

—"Andy Warhol," Hunky Dory, David Bowie (1971)

Is there a fundamental gap between high and low culture? Who decides which works, practices, activities, technologies, etc. are high and which are low? Is today's low destined to become tomorrow's high? Low culture is characterized as the "popular" or unofficial culture—that which society's arbiters of taste despise, cultural pages of newspapers ignore and senators deign to debate. However, this culture overwhelms quantitatively the high culture, the "serious" culture which textbooks and historical presentations uphold as our "cultural heritage." High culture receives money from national departments of cultural affairs; its originators sit in academies and societies and are awarded with stipends and Nobel Prizes. Although a minority, high culture is important, as it is associated with the group that by its cultural position wields power over official taste. The guardians of the spiritual and moral high ground seek to protect youth from what is perceived to be the threat from the low. When debates arise, the line between high and low is shifted, but nonetheless continues to exist even though there are signs that it is becoming less entrenched because of the rapidity of cultural changes taking place within our postmodern, media frantic society.

# Conference Schedule

## Friday, March 31, 2000

4:00 p.m. Welcome and Introduction  
Taper Hall of Humanities 101

Eileen Kohan, Executive Director, Career Planning & Placement Center  
Associate Dean, Student Affairs

Keynote Address  
Taper Hall of Humanities 101

***Blank Culture***  
Jeffrey Sconce, Professor, Division of Critical Studies,  
School of Cinema-Television

5:30 p.m. Reception

## Saturday, April 1, 2000

8:30 a.m. Check-in and Breakfast  
Mudd Hall of Philosophy Courtyard

9:00 a.m. Panel Discussions

10:30 a.m. Panel Discussions

12:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00 p.m. Panel Discussions

3:30 p.m. Panel Discussions

9:00-10:30

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*Blinding Me with Science: Possibilities for a New Future—MHP B7B*

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Modifying Instinct through Animal Domestication

Heidi McWhorter

There is a fine line between regarding the domestication of animals as pets as a rape of natural instinct versus an evolutionary inevitability. This project shall show that the latter is correct. The principles of Darwinian evolution state that a species will naturally adapt to best fit its environment; in domestication, humans and pets follow this law through a clearly symbiotic relationship that displays emotional and physical benefits for both. In domestication, humans modify a pet's instinct while inducing the development of modernized physical adaptations. These adaptations, along with other results of domestication, mutually benefit both parties, showing symbiosis between the two. Since symbiosis is indicative of the inevitable process of evolution, domestication can be viewed as a natural, beneficial, and generally good process.

East Meets West: Accepting the "Alternative" Therapies of Dr. Andrew Weil

Suchitra Ananthnarayan

Two cloves of garlic treat a cold—a typical, so-called "alternative" therapy suggested by Dr. Andrew Weil on his popular website. Although Time named him one of the 25 most influential Americans, conventional physicians consider him a quack. The article "Alternative Medicine Man: Why So Many Doctors Hate Andrew Weil," in the August 1999 issue of Discover discusses the association of conventional therapies with modern medicine and alternative therapies with folklore. Is this distinction fair? In his essay "Orientalism," critic Edward Said suggests that historically the West has dominated the East. By examining this relationship between East and West as the origin of the current tension between alternative and conventional therapies, one can consider that "modern" medicine could include both therapies.

Technology Changing the Meaning of Antarctica

Paul Tillberg

In the beginning of the 20th century, people traveled to Antarctica to feel life at its most brutal. This physical hardship gave them a profound sense of meaning but now the struggle is taken over by technology. Where early explorers struggled for their very lives every day, modern Antarctic inhabitants can always get help by radio. The result is a shift from heroic meaning to one of either science or beauty. Antarctica still has a strong feel of heroic meaning but people who go there seeking that kind of adventure must import it. The meanings which Antarctica is now in a stance to provide are more abstract than the old life struggle. This phenomenon fits perfectly into the theme of modern technology taking the work of survival farther away from people and thus eliminating a very tangible form of meaning from life.

### Real vs. Fictive Kinship: Are Internet and E-mail Relationships Real or Virtual?

Kathleen B. Custodio

With the World Wide Web and e-mail access at our fingertips, kinships, or connections, with people of our choosing are not only quite easy, but also quite convenient to maintain. In essence, the Internet allows us to maintain relationships through a computer screen with people we may never meet and is redefining society's conception of "real" relationships. One must question the nature of Internet and e-mail relationships: are such relationships veritable examples of kinship or are they simply examples of "virtual" relationships founded on nothing but words exchanged over a computer interface? This presentation will explore several options of defining kinship and how to apply such definitions to Internet and e-mail relationships.

### Hi-tech and Low Culture: Is Our Future Trapped in Multi-User Dungeons?

Solveig C. Ströer

MUDs and chat rooms are very popular with adolescents. Why is that? My research, which includes a survey on teenagers' chat experiences, focuses on the self-discovery that takes place during adolescence, and on the advantages of the Internet during this time. In virtual communities, there is a strange sense of belonging and intimacy that possibly stems from a fear to open up to others in real life. The computer provides a safety-wall, a veil, which does not expose insecure adolescents searching for their "selves." Chat rooms and MUDs are exciting, but not always safe, playgrounds for repressed sexuality, fetishes, and wildness, as well as sources of relationships - considered real or not - that provide contact, comfort, and joy.

Moderated by Professor Alexander Moore, Department of Anthropology

## *Dealing with Adolescence—MHP 101*

### Generation Sextacy: A Postmodern Nightmare of America

Kevin Reynard

Postmodernism, a term used widely and differently, constructs the philosophy of Jameson's view of our present state of 'late capitalism.' Through an analysis of Nowhere, thematically, his principles of this "periodizing" movement become somewhat more clear. The film in its formal qualities also represents what is considered to be a postmodern ideal of representation. Consisting of what Jameson calls schizophrenia and pastiche, these formal considerations further the effect of the film as a work of political art that depicts "a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world." This new dominant nature of American culture, and the deletion of the previous one, embodied in the film as an Alien, engenders the feeling of "high tech paranoia" that completes Nowhere's identity as an initial movement of postmodern political art rather than just entertainment for the masses.

### Unraveling the Adolescent Misfit

Rebecca Katz

"You don't know what it's like—junior high", says Dawn quivering, her hulking glasses clouding up a bit so that her buck-teeth and billiard-ball hair-band seem more prominent. Dawn has reason to complain. Each day she faces demeaning harassment from peers who strive to bolster their own popularity by putting her down. In my presentation, I examine the construction of adolescent subculture in suburban-middle-class junior highs and high schools and the roles of "high class" popular teenagers and "low class" loners within it.

I will call on the films Welcome to the Dollhouse and Carrie to explore the female misfit's predicament. She lacks social skills, which pertain to knowledge of the social rules and physical attractiveness, in whichever way it is defined within an adolescent community. Because of her social deficiency, the misfit cannot learn how to change her social status. She cannot obtain friends who can teach her how to improve her appearance or abide by the social rules. Therefore, while in school, the misfit is trapped in an inescapable cycle of rejection.

### The Wail of the Banshees

Nick Lovell

*Not since the coming of the Sex Pistols has a band incurred such hatred as  
Siouxsie and the Banshees.*

—Sounds Magazine, June 25, 1977.

From wearing swastika armbands and being branded "fascists" by record companies, to donning Star-of-David t-shirts in response to belligerent Nazis at concerts, Siouxsie and the Banshees bemused and confused more than a few music fans in their day. While being branded the underground forerunners of the "Goth" movement, the band refused to accept any labels, conventions, or rules imposed upon them by the record industry in their day. In today's discussion, the band will serve as an example of how mainstream popularity may inversely relate to the so-called "value" of music on the spectrum of "High" and "Low" art.

Don't let all the black get you down. No, wait. Yes, let all the black get you down: Gothic subculture and the art of depression

J. Rick Castaneda

What could make a teenager wear a black overcoat, leather boots, and black jeans on a hot summer day? Being Goth. "Many people lead unhappy, unachieved lives. And that's sad. Goth makes depression and angst a lifestyle choice, and that's art." Are Goths dangerous? Are Goths suicidal? Are Goths unhealthy? I intend to shine the spotlight on the dark Goth culture, where they fit both as a group, and as individuals within that group. What is the difference between the hardcore Goth who lives as a starving artist and the Goth who buys gothic wear from Yahoo! Shopping? Is there a difference?

### Just a Couple of Young Punks: The lasting role of punk rock youth culture

Brian Longtin

James Merendino, director of the film SLC Punk, said, "I began listening to punk music because it appealed to me, and becoming a punk gave me the identity I was looking for." That search for identity is the focus of this paper. The punk subculture, as presented by this film and by other sources, was and is not solely about being different and destructive and rebellious as popularly believed after the 70's punk movement. In fact, the remaining punk world goes further to provide a culture through which young adults gain a sense of belonging, learn to harness their young energy, challenge accepted standards, and make their own rules in order find a place in the world that's right for them.

Moderated by Mary Beth Tegan, Department of English

## *Culture Clash: Race, Ethnicity and Identity—MHP 105*

### Passing and African American-American Visibility

Brian Johnson

Passing, by Nella Larsen, is a novella depicting how blacks in the earlier half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century survived by relying on their light complexions and "passing" for white. Without the stigma of being black, a person who was passing could frequent restaurants, hotels, and other places blacks could not enter. Changing one's racial identity was a way to survive, and many African-Americans found their lives to be much easier if they lived them as white.

Today, there are laws that prevent employers from discriminating based on race, ethnicity, and religion. Supposedly, blacks are able to maintain their identity without being victims of racism and prejudice. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Society still looks down upon "blackness" and in order for African-Americans to succeed in the world, we must pass—*socially*. This does not necessarily mean blacks must become "white," but rather a majority of African-Americans becomes "blacker" at home than at school or work. What is blackness? Black is very difficult to define because one must experience it to understand it, and one definition is not valid for everyone. However, in my research paper I will attempt to explain how being black means living as two different people in two completely different worlds. These different identities eventually must come together to form one individual, but in the end one still asks, "Who am I?" and more importantly, "Am I being true to myself?"

I plan to answer these questions, in order to come to a resolution about the shattered self that exists for the African-American, and how social passing contributes to the shattered self.



Unveiling the Invisible Voice: The Identity Crisis of Biracial and Multiracial Children in Popular Culture

Marcey Lynn Hirata

In today's society, many young children of mixed race have begun to express a lack of identity and a perception of not being accepted. It is not until they are older that multiracial children come to terms with the amazing gift that they have been given: the gift of true diversity. Those that have reached an understanding of their identity as a multiracial person have recently begun to tell their stories to the world through the use of different "popular" mediums in hopes of further educating society about their uniqueness and helping others in similar situations. From movies, to talk shows, to magazines and books, the multiracial generation has found their voice and are determined to have it heard.

The Ones Who Are Torn Apart

Joshua Hsieh

The demographics of the University of Southern California's student population are an appropriate field from which to sample the interaction between Asian Americans and interracial Asian-Americans. It is in California, at the edge of Western civilization, that the east meets the west, as the great influx of Asian immigration of the last thirty years has shown. Despite the Asian American community's growth, it has not yet reconciled itself to the increasing number of interracial marriages that take place among Asian Americans. Interracial Asian-Americans are a phenomenon unlike no other that the Asian American community has faced, and challenges the notion of what it is to be an Asian American. As this study shows, the social behavior of many Asian-Americans at USC creates a definition of "Asian Americana" that excludes interracial Asian-Americans. The unfortunate consequence of this exclusion is that it prevents many interracial Asian Americans from reconciling themselves with their Asian-American identity.

Destructive Lessons: The United States Civilizes the Philippines

Ann Domyancic

Not only did the United States take over the Philippine Islands supposedly in order to help it after the Spanish-American War, but the government then put its efforts on display at the World Fair in 1904. The American government wished to show that its attempts to civilize a savage culture were effective. The World Fair exhibit will be my narrative. The United States government officials could be considered the "experienced" parties to this affair, while the Filipino tribes on exhibition at the Fair are the "innocent" ones. What does that say about innocence and experience? Experience encroaches on the existence of the innocent, perhaps? Also, the American public: innocent or experienced? To analyze these questions, I will use post-colonial theory, records by the American government, and contemporary reviews of the 1904 World's Fair.

The Media Scandal Behind the Wen Ho Lee Case: "Owing Mr. Lee an Apology"

Vicki Chan

*After serving almost five years in the Clinton Administration, I've learned a number of things about Washington—and one of them is how innuendo can ruin a reputation in no time.*

—Hoyt Zia, Chief Counsel for Export Administration in the Commerce Department

When Los Alamos National Laboratory scientist Wen Ho Lee was charged with espionage against the United States for China in 1999, the media exploded with headlines including: "Spies Are Always With Us" (New York Times 12/14/99) and "The Spies Who Robbed Me" (Time Magazine 06/7/00). Media plays a dominant role in what information the public receives. Newspapers and journals have the power to paint stories and sway the opinions of readers.

Indeed, the media possesses great influence, as seen in the case of Wen Ho Lee. A picture of the typical foreign spy was portrayed before any concrete evidence could be gathered, before anything certain could be proven. Despite this lack of evidence, the American people were already forming opinions and reacting to these publications. However, now that truths are slowly coming out and many allegations are now known to be false, are retractions and admissions such as "Wen Ho Lee: Scapegoat or Spy?" (CBS News 02/19/00) enough? Despite what the government uncovers or exposes, the damage already caused by the media to Lee and his reputation is irrecoverable.

Moderated by Molly Engelhardt, Department of English

### *The Electronic Frontier: New Technology and Old Institutions—MHP 106*

#### Etiology of a Cyborgasm

Megan A. Taupier

Sex has been around since the beginning of time, and is the literal cause of our very existence. Yet with new technology, the sex act has also evolved. From phone sex to cybersex and now to interactive computer sex, we have begun to separate the physical and the emotional elements of intercourse even further. In my essay, I will evaluate the merging of the most basic human function (sexuality) with the most advanced human technology (the Internet.) With the ever-widening distance between emotional and physical, what is considered "sex"? With the addition of electronic and technologic supplements, is it even humanistic? I will draw on theories presented by Donna Haraway in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," investigations into the phone- and cybersex realms, and ultimately conclude whether these phenomena will positively express sexuality in exciting new ways, or brutally mutilate the sacred act of love.

#### The Explosion of Electronic Communication and Its Effects on the Family

Brandon Guerrero

What has made e-mail, instant messaging, and chat rooms more popular than any other form of communication used today? As the Founder and C.E.O. of a web-based business, my ongoing experiences with Internet communication have led me to a conclusion regarding its popularity. It is free, instant, and relatively easy to learn, if not self-explanatory. Electronic communication makes it simple and convenient to contact an employer, make new friends or keep in touch with one's family. But are there any downfalls to this intelligent mode of communication? Putting viruses, stalkers, and hackers aside, I will present potential problems with what most find to be the benefit of Internet communication. Specifically, how familial relations are affected by this simple, instant, and free medium of communication.

## Annihilation Benjamin Berry

Click. Drag. Drop. Open. Windows. Linux. Hyperlink. Gif, javascript, c++, cgi, inform@tion\$uperhighwayf!beropticu/timatereality if, then, else, else what? This is the age of the infinite connectivity of computers, data, people, and dissemination of I(i)nformation, a thing masquerading as knowledge, at the speed of light through a gossamer web of glass strand. We drown under a mountain of high-tech jargon and ten-minute buzzwords that materialize and dematerialize with the sickening speed of Moore's Law obsolescence. The internet is heralded as the ultimate tool for long held concepts of American culture with the e-token pasted on; e-commerce, e-education, e-religion, e-news, and e-family will revolutionize (a word the digerati love) the way we think, work, live, and believe. A less addressed question is: How do these technologies effect the production, dissemination, and interpretation of art?

"We are actively seeking the world's premier digital fine artists for exclusive representation. If you are a digital artist who is prepared to sell your work in a limited edition format then we are interested in speaking with you. DigitalPrint.com—Embrace the New Aesthetic." This is posted on the typically brand-new web site of a company attempting to sell high-quality, low-production prints of digital art work—images created through mouse clicks, PhotoShop filters, processor cycles, and of course varying degrees of creativity. The application of the digital logic computer to what was once the realm of oil paint, canvas, marble, and steel profoundly has been forever altered by the postmodern pastiche of digital artwork and the changing/diminishing(?) role of the artist.

The fact that infinite reproducibility requires precise definition of artwork in the symbologies of html and java and endless strings of 1's and 0's raises interesting new questions about the 'crisis of representation.' How can electrons smashing into a glass screen recreate the subtlety of a Monet brushstroke or the texture of a Rodin sculpture? How can an artist question the modern world and its technological underpinnings with one of its crowning achievements? How can artists avoid (or accelerate) the separation of sign and signified thereby abandoning simple reality? Where does imitation and modification end and plagiarism begin in a copy and paste medium?

The previous questions and many others will be addressed in this paper. I will examine the widely varying but strangely unified efforts of artists acting alone and in concert to push the eclectic/complex/energetic/sterile mixture of technology and art embodied in web installations. We will be ever aware of the information-capitalism these images and programs manifest themselves in and the countercultural trends they represent. I hope to arrive at a theoretical basis for criticism of these works that emulates the structures of their medium—web-like, scalable, and diverse—and to understand better the vector, that is, a direction and magnitude, of future development.

## Identity through Discourse Michelle Cheung

Why do we *need* to discuss controversy, when it has very little to do with us? What about controversy makes it so attractive for adolescents to talk about? Why do these controversies happen on the T. O. listserv? By attempting to answer these questions, I hope to describe briefly the tumultuous presence of society in adolescent growth. Adolescence is a time when our "identities" are being discovered and shaped, and controversy, along with the T. O. listserv, helps

that development by creating a "pool" of our own peers who, through discussion of a wide variety of issues, allow us to mold ourselves into a more "stable" identity.

#### When Hackers Attack: How Safe Is Your Private Data?

Jonathan Barsook

The Internet has revolutionized the way the world utilizes data. In today's information age, companies collect an increasingly large amount of consumer data. This rapidly growing trend raises several important questions about the data consumers provide companies, especially online. Although most companies assure consumers that personal data is guaranteed to remain private, a growing trend of hacking into private company systems has emerged. For example, CD Universe was recently a victim of a European hacker who stole close to 350,000 credit cards and then posted them on his web site after CD Universe refused to pay him for not putting them online. The incident that occurred at CD Universe is not an isolated one. In the past few months, numerous large companies' databases have been broken into and stolen for illegal purposes. This growing phenomenon is beginning to challenge the way consumers do business online and offline.

Moderated by Heather Osborne, Division of Critical Studies

10:30–12:00

#### ***Identities in Question: Conflicts of Class, Gender, and Sexuality—MHP B7B***

Identity as an Interplay between Personality and Prejudice in *Breakfast with Blassie*  
Wilson F. Engel IV

*identity—5) the sense of self, providing sameness and continuity in personality over time.*

—Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language

Until recently, the definition of identity has been kept separate but closely allied to the definition of personality. Still the relation of the two relied upon unchanging assumptions about action which did not take into account past experience. The film *Breakfast with Blassie* questions this commonly accepted view of identity. I found this film to be one of the most outstanding examples of the work of Andy Kaufmann who, after his death, was written off in the critical world as a weirdo, a jerk, or a genius for the masses without further examination or analysis.

In this presentation I will explain how the short film *Breakfast with Blassie*, Andy Kaufmann's final film, defines identity as a plastic, malleable and dynamic interplay of two essential characteristics, personality, and prejudice. This film shows how these two factors relate to one another in the main characters Andy Kaufmann and Fred Blassie.



The Artist formerly known as a Man  
Julie Moffitt

When meeting a person on the street, one of the first distinctions we are accustomed to making is "male" or "female." When this distinction cannot be easily made, we are forced to recognize that the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity do not always apply and that occasionally we must agree to accept androgyny into the mix. Through a look back at musicians throughout history, since music is a major instrument of both influence and reflection on society, androgyny will be explored and discussed not just as sexuality, but as a cultural statement.

Re-examining the Anti-hero  
Kyla Westphal

In the West, there is broad acceptance of a monotheistic god. With John Milton's characterization of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, we see the emergence of the distinctly western notion of the 'anti-hero'. In the form of true traditional western rational thought, Milton was, "justifying the ways of God to man". As a means of justification, Milton creates the 'anti-hero' Satan in order to satisfy the three postulates of theodicy: 1) God is all-powerful, 2) God is good, and 3) evil is real. The Miltonian advent of the anti-hero coincides with the philosophical trends of Milton's time: categorization, etc. Without the malevolent anti-hero, can one really comprehend the righteousness of the hero? Also inherent in this western paradigm of thought is the patriarchal structure of society. Men and women are categorized along sharply defined lines, almost as sharp as those that define good and evil. Gender in the Miltonian realm, however does not align with the binaries that permeate modern western thought. If God is male, as Milton unquestioningly accepts, then, following in accordance with the oppositional/categorical binaries of western thought, can Satan be female?

Portrait of an Artist as a Young Woman  
Nicole Payne

Class plays a huge role in art, and the larger the gap between the haves and the have-nots the grander the differentiation between the views on art. One such medium that strictly adheres to this is literature. One man's great work is another man's pulp fiction. In such a culture as Ireland during the nineteenth century, class was based on wealth as well as education and one's English or Irish heritage. My paper, using this time period, will address the roles women played in the society as well as in the literature of Ireland according to their class. I will uncover which portrayal of women was the more favored: the upper class intellectual or the lower class working woman. I will examine Irish authors both male and female, focusing with the greatest intent on Joyce and his collection of short stories entitled *Dubliners*. I will look at the historical aspect of Irish culture and compare the women themselves to their literary counterparts. I will also look at whether or not either class took the portrayal of the other seriously or viewed it as low art. Joyce by our contemporary society standards is high art. I will show that by Joyce's contemporaries, he was not highly liked, and this could have a lot to do with how he wrote the Irish people. He showed them as simple-minded bumpkins trapped in their own national pride, which Joyce felt was confining. Joyce claimed to be like the Irish people he looked down upon, but he wanted to be the quintessential Irishman and above him at the same time. He left Ireland feeling that he wanted more of life than Ireland had to offer and he went out to "forge a consciousness for his race."

Moderated by Professor Phiroze Vasunia, Department of Classics

## *I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing: Popular Taste and Music—MHP 101*

### Beethoven's Fury: The Creation of Romantic Fervor

Sarah Heitman

*Beethoven was one of the great disruptive forces in the history of music. After him, nothing could ever be the same again; he had opened the gateway to a new world.*

This paper investigates the similarities between Beethoven's life and his symphonies, and how they changed the course of art music between 1800 and 1809. Which, in turn, led to the introduction of Romanticism to high culture, for Beethoven's work has long been heralded as the bridge between the Classic and the Romantic periods of music. The values of Beethoven's heroic style have become the values of cultured art music. It seems that Beethoven has had an incredible influence on Romanticism according to his peers and contemporaries. During his lifetime, Beethoven resolved to "grapple with fate. It shall not overcome me." Indeed, Beethoven succeeded in creating a destiny for the new century with the beginnings of Romanticism.

### Ragtime: Surpassing the Boundary between Low and High Culture

Karen Schrock

Ragtime, a music that represents the identity of black Americans at the turn of the century, is now hailed as an important contribution to the music world as well as one of the few truly American art forms. However, at its inception, ragtime was considered vulgar and tasteless. As society elevated ragtime from low to high art, advances were also made in racial relations between blacks and whites.

### Follow the Fairy Trail: The Evolution of Fairy Tales in Music

Benjamin Schor

Over the course of the last century, the treatment of traditional Fairy Tales in music has evolved with its audience. Classical composers such as Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky wrote music that was intended to provide a clear representation of the innocence and the fantasy behind the tales themselves. But, especially in the last two decades in popular music, the genre of Fairy Tales in music has changed drastically. Now, the genre is inclusive of the social commentary that is lacking in the earlier classical works. After this evolution, has the genre itself become more sophisticated, or has its presence in popular music come to trivialize the original classical pieces? Is the representation of Fairy Tales in popular music one of high or low art?

### From Britney Spears to Arnold Schoenberg: The Validity of 20th Century Music

Sara Pelosi

During the Jazz Age, vernacular (popular) music and cultivated (classical) music merged when renowned composers implemented jazz techniques into their pieces. However, with the rise of atonality, vernacular and cultivated music split, perhaps irreparably. Unfortunately, there is much animosity between composers of the two genres with both sides questioning the validity of the other type of music. Does the validity of a piece of music come from its ability to make musical advancements or its ability to reach a large audience? Is it more important for a piece to be

ground-breaking but no one listens to it, or for it to be melodically and harmonically simple but it reaches an audience of hundreds of thousands?

Does Classical Mean Dead?

Andrew Bulbrook

Classical music is viewed as one of the cornerstones of Western culture. However, this vaunted art form has its roots in traditional folk melodies of Europe and, more recently, the native music of the United States. These melodies would never be played on their own in the major concert halls of the world, yet when used in classical music they make some of the most popular pieces.

In this paper, I will explore phenomena like the popularity of composers like Gershwin, Brahms, and Bartok and the popularity of pops concerts, and prove that classical music is most popular when it is rooted in the popular culture of the time. The current distancing of classical music from the popular music of today is not only historically unparalleled but also the quickest way for classical music, both traditional and contemporary, to cease to be a living part of our culture and become a relic.

Moderated by Frank Mabee, Department of English

***Pen and Mirror: Writing the Self—MHP 105***

The New Autobiography(?): The Issue of Authorship in the Real World

Jennifer Christensen

The success achieved by MTV's The Real World, the real-life soap opera of "seven strangers, picked to live in a house, and have their lives taped," is one of many examples of popular culture's intense fascination with the emotional lives of ordinary people. In this presentation, the issue of authorship will be examined as it relates to this highly-technological medium of self-representation, to expose the difference between resemblance and autobiographical identity, which ultimately calls into question the autobiographical merit of the television show. To place this analysis of authorship in a larger framework, The Real World will be presented as a case study of popular culture's technology-induced emphasis of the empirical over the theoretical in issues of self-representation.

Fact or Figment? Reality and Cultural Worth in Autobiography

Jesse Vigil

What value do we place on the life of a person? What value do we place in comparison on the "life" of a fictional character? What if it became difficult to tell the two apart?

In modern culture, the intellectual distinction placed on "true" stories is now being bestowed upon fictional characters. Indeed, the story of the made-up Bridget Jones has received more attention than the true confessions of Monica Lewinsky or O. J. Simpson. Conventional wisdom holds that the imitation should fall well short of the original, and that the fictitious characters, in their

inferiority, should find a lesser value than those who actually lived should. But in the 21st century, are we finding more worth in the life of a figment than the life of someone flesh and blood?

From Douglas Coupland and Helen Fielding, the figments of imagination wrestle for a place among the facts.

#### Carnage Sells: The Overnight Success of Mick Foley

Laura Butt

Twenty-two weeks ago, the WWF capitalized on a wrestler at the height of his career by producing his autobiography, which debuted at number one on the New York Times' best seller list and still remains in the top ten. The timing was perfect: just as one of the WWF's most popular figures was "fired" in a stunt match, his autobiography was printed and ready on the shelves within the week. Where does this appeal of a wrestler known for his utter viciousness and carnage that he unleashes on his opponents inside and outside the ring come from? Using the autobiography Have A Nice Day: A Tale of Blood and Sweatsocks, composed by Mick Foley (a.k.a. Mankind), I will attempt to explain the appeal behind such an obvious form of capitalist exploitation and the decaying genre of autobiography as a true source of literary culturalism.

#### From Kathie Lee Gifford to Isaac Mizrahi: High and Low Fashion through Autobiography

Dawn Alley

We are what we wear, and the fashions we choose certainly reflect our specific classes and cultures. Fashion designers' autobiographies present this cultural divide in an especially unique way. By comparing Isaac Mizrahi's film and Kathie Lee Gifford's book, I will demonstrate how fashion and culture are related through autobiography, and discuss the unique issues surrounding an autobiographer marketing his or her designs. A writer's story is in many ways shaped by the expected audience, and Mizrahi and Lee deal with very different customer bases. The audience affects both how they characterize themselves and how they structure their storytelling.

#### Writing for Presidency: Constructing Authority within 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Culture

Sarah Schellpfeffer

Everyday the President of the United States must address conflicts of interest within the American public and culture. Which problems does he address while upholding [or not] the integrity of the office? A writer, particularly one of historical—presidential narrative, wrestles with a similar question. How does she construct a narrative true to history and the struggles of a president, but also true to the experiences of her life *begun* outside the political arena? Doris Kearns Goodwin writes in the context of everyday life and leisure to convey the stories behind two great icons of political America while simultaneously showing their lives inextricably intertwined with the American people surviving great adversity.

Moderated by Elizabeth Binggeli, Department of English



## *Tales to Grow by: Literature for or about Children—MHP 106*

### Cinderella: A Cultural Anthem

Tasha Martinez

My presentation explores the idea and themes of "Cinderella." Through analysis of different versions of "Cinderella" from Egypt, Korea, France, etc., I will show how the culture of the society "Cinderella" is placed in affects the way the story is told. In some versions, Cinderella is seen as helpless, relying on fairy godmothers to help her. In other versions, she is strong-willed and through her own genius, changes her fate. The attitude of Cinderella follows the culture of the society in the era it was written. For example, most modern day versions, like the movies Pretty Woman and Ever After, give a more determined woman. Gender also changes the plot of the story. In most female versions, she needs an outside crutch to help her find wealth. In most male versions, he is self-sufficient and relies on his own cunning.

Because of the universal appeal of "Cinderella," it is a good illustration of how a cultural need for stories that represent life, can change even a classic story to fit the needs of the particular society. Today, many people see "Cinderella" as an anthem for "low culture." They see it as just a fantastical children's story that doesn't apply to their own lives. What these people don't see is that the theme of "Cinderella" has become so ingrained in society today, in our movies, books, and hopes. It is no longer reserved for "low culture," but for everyone who has ever dreamed of living a different life than his or her own.

### The Adolescent and the Abstract Art of Animation

Nick Barclift

Animation is, in many ways, the purest form of imaginatively expressive entertainment. Different than television and motion pictures, there are no physical limitations to the expression of the creator's vision. My presentation will probe into the elements of the American psyche that discard this powerful tool for purely mental creation as a comical or childish art form, and the elements of the Japanese psyche that favor and respect the most fantastic creations of individual fantasy over the tumultuously "real" physicality of American cinema or sitcoms. I believe that a part of this schism in the understanding of the animated art form is the view of the adolescent in both American and Japanese culture. Adolescents are strangely absent from most American cartoons, while they seem to be the focus of Japanese anime. I will examine why the Japanese view of the adolescent makes adolescents prevalent as heroes and as sexual objects in the highly regarded animated art form, and why that although the American view of both the cartoon and the adolescent tends to center around the bawdy and the comical, there are few US cartoons about or for adolescents.

### Innocence Experienced in Narnia

Seth Revels

After recently reading C. S. Lewis' Narnia Chronicles again, this time in a more critical light than in my childhood, I was inspired by the deeper levels of reading that he incorporates into the seemingly

child-oriented fantasy-tales. By seeing his tales through the lens of a mature, experienced college student, rather than that of an innocent child, I found much deeper metaphors that were created, and much larger issues than the adventures of some children in a magical land.

Having these stories so fresh in my mind, and the obvious connections between children from an upper-class British society and their journey from innocence to experience and back into innocence in a pastoral, enchanted setting, led me to pick the *Chronicles of Narnia* as the topic of my research paper. The issues that come to mind that I will investigate further and begin to focus my research with are:

- The movement from innocence to experience in a world where children can be treated as adults.
- The effect of returning from a life of responsibility and experience to one of carefree childish innocence.
- How that is influenced by the setting (i.e. early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain vs. the more medieval pastoral land of Narnia).
- The role of fantasy tales shaping children's minds.

I am undecided as to whether I will focus on one book, several books, or the entire series right now. I may also utilize other Lewis works to better understand his commentaries through different genres of his writing that simply his fiction and fantasy. Besides those, I will make use of other books and articles that I have and will find among USC'S extensive resources, regarding Lewis, fantasy, social commentaries, and children. I expect to find a new understanding to Lewis' tales, and my favorite stories that I have taken for granted up to this point as meaningless and trivial.

Dancing about Architecture  
Lindy Parker

Some things in life seem almost impossible to put into words. Love, grief, loss, death, life. However, this seemingly impossible task is precisely the job of every author that picks up a pen, and every director that points a camera. These writers and filmmakers spend each day exploring the thoughts, feelings, insecurities, joys, humor, and terror of everyday life. Their ability to describe the "indescribable" allows them to connect to the audience and elicit a response. Novelist Madeleine L'Engle and Writer/Director Willard Carroll use a poignant tool to make this connection possible: the power of perspective. Using a diverse ensemble of characters connected by a common thread, these artists succeed in describing for the viewer those things that seem impossible to put into words.

The Magic Stigma: The Tradition of Magic and the Modern Opposition to its Use  
Paul Whitfield

Is Harry Potter a detriment to society? J. K. Rowling's stories of witchcraft have enchanted audiences both old and young, but the use of a non-Christian theme has drawn criticism and fear from many parents and educators. Central to the cause of this concern is the intended purpose of the books: is magic meant to be expressed as a world view and a reflection on morality, or is Harry Potter just "light" literature that is meant to entertain? Tradition helps to define the difference, for Harry Potter is a direct descendant of a magical literary history that includes the original Fairy Tales and Tolkien. But if Rowling really does continue this tradition of moral instruction, then is there a danger in allowing the instruction to come from a magical, non-Christian source?

Moderated by Ned Schantz, Department of English

12:00–2:00—LUNCH

2:00–3:30

*Inside Hollywood, or Not: The Power of Contemporary Film and Television—MHP 101*

The Return of a New Hope: Star Wars as a Postmodern High Culture Myth/Fairy Tale  
Richard Edinger

Can the #2 highest grossing movie of all time be considered high culture? As a moneymaking merchandising machine of the masses, often Star Wars is assumed low culture. And yet, does popularity have to imply low culture? In reality, do all these people who love the movie really know what Star Wars is about beyond what they see on screen. Although so many enjoy the film and it appeals to a wide and diverse audience, the deep language of the film, the embedded mythic and fairy tales, speaks to an elite who are aware of the mythic and fairy tale determinants. Furthermore, high culture is sometimes seen as the protector of heritage, especially cultural heritage; George Lucas seeks to re-introduce us to our cultural heritage by invoking classic myths and fairy tales with Star Wars. So, even if Star Wars has become part of the popular culture, its classification as postmodern connects it with popular culture, and its mass appeal associates it with low culture. Does its intent of bringing back myths and fairy tales to the modern cynical world give it the right credit to join high culture?

Coppola's The Godfather: Can the Rich Be Low Class Or Do the Powerful Define What Class Is?  
Alison Veneto

Poor immigrants flocking to the United States often carry with them a dream to be higher class. They try to acquire money and power, which they see as the ideals of high class, yet is it possible to gain these things and still be low class? This question surrounds Coppola's film The Godfather. The paradox lies in the fact that criminals and therefore the Mafia, are considered low class especially when their money, power and celebrity are gained through violent and immoral means. Another question that arises is that if the victor is the one who writes the history could one assume that the person with the most influence is capable of defining the class structure? What about the hierarchical class structure among Mafia members? Does the criminal's intention make a difference in how he is perceived? The Godfather II further emphasizes these themes and the juxtaposition of the stories of young Vito Corleone and aging Michael Corleone emphasizes as John Hess says "the search for bourgeois security." The Godfather figurehead is rich and influential which would be considered high class. Yet he received and retains this status through violence and criminal acts which is characteristic of low class. Therefore, is it possible to be rich low class?

Damned Waters  
Gilberto Martinez

John Waters is renowned for his ability to shock audiences and ridicule main stream society with his unique brand of filmmaking. His early films are cult classics, yet over the past ten years he has

made movies with Hollywood stars like Johnny Depp in apparent attempts at bursting onto the pop culture scene. While John Waters does admit that he would love to sell out, he is still not accepted by a money-minded Hollywood. I will argue that Waters is being kept out of the mainstream not because he is disgusting or because his movies do not make enough money, but because Hollywood does not believe that the anti-establishment views Waters presents could be presented to the mass culture without causing more harm than benefits.

Reexamining the Revolution: The True Story behind the Film Generation and Hollywood  
Sean Santiago

The theater darkens. A hush befalls the crowd. Silence . . . then those blue-stenciled letters cut through the black: "A Long Time Ago in a Galaxy Far, Far Away." The whirlwind film that follows soars from exhilarating highs to gut wrenching drama. Nothing could be better . . . right? This is the supreme cinematic experience, right? Is this even what George Lucas wanted to make? Perhaps not. As part of the Film Generation, Lucas and his contemporaries had dreams of revolutionizing filmmaking. And under the care of Francis Ford Coppola, they did just that. But what they had not anticipated was how Hollywood would change them. This presentation focuses on the theory of auteurism and Coppola's influence on the Film Generation, using George Lucas as one "Film Brat" who exemplifies how this modern wave of filmmakers changed the world—and in the process were changed themselves.

The Gangster Next Door  
Harry C. Fornwalt III

You could be living next door to a gangster. That is what HBO's series The Sopranos is saying. Thanks to cable television, filmmakers are now much freer to experiment. Gangster films of the past safely tried to appeal to the masses with a common-man hero who achieved greatness through questionable means. Today, filmmakers are using the gangster genre to push the limits of the medium and to make statements that they previously could not make. The Sopranos depicts a complicated gangster who is an uncomfortable reflection of the best and worst of the middle class. While this formula still seems to appeal to the middle and lower classes, it is also a favorite of intellectuals and critics. In a time when television and film are becoming one, the gangster genre exemplifies an unmistakable trend in art today—traditional distinctions between high and low art are disappearing into the past.

Moderated by Professor Dana Polan, Division of Critical Studies

### ***What's Expected?: Sexuality and Femininity—MHP 102***

Freedom of Expression vs. Freedom from Oppression: The Media's Attack on Modern Motherhood  
Rebecca Zak

The television and film media are working against mainstream feminism in a feeble attempt to preserve and idealize the traditional 1950's stay-at-home mother, and, in doing so, these media are attacking the feminist conception of modern motherhood. An analysis of several feature films and



television programs, including Pleasantville and Dawson's Creek (both aimed primarily at an impressionable teenage audience), will demonstrate how these media are propagating the anti-female supposition that the public sphere corrupts women and leads to their sexual immorality, while they are bolstering the archaic argument that the proper place for a woman is in the home, caring for her herd of children. By connecting the inherent gender prejudices subtly present within audio-visual media, I will propose that these media are hindering the progress of gender and sexual equality within our society by circulating the same biases that functioned to oppress women nearly 100 years ago.

#### The Dystopic View of Girlhood as Mental Illness in Modern American Pop-Culture Whitney Henschel

The female transition from sheltered childhood to independent adulthood is depicted prevalently in pop-culture as mental illness. Adolescent girls are understandably uncertain about their place in society, but from the time of Freud's Dora, this confusion has been interpreted often as mental instability. Alarming, accounts of mental instability in young women have recently become a new staple of popular books and films. Books such as Mary Pipher's Reviving Ophelia focus American society's attention on the susceptibility of young girls to depression. Building off society's interest, Hollywood has adopted the troubled girl as its new blockbuster star with films such as Girl, Interrupted and The Virgin Suicides. Hollywood's romanticizing of the mentally ill female may lead young girls to accept and even expect that hospital stays and suicide attempts are a natural part of becoming a woman.

#### No Woman Needs to Exhale: Redefining Women's Sexuality in Waiting to Exhale Marilyn Rager

"My body needs this," Savannah says with a half smirk as she glances over at the man brushing his teeth in her bathroom. Savannah is a beautiful, sexually liberated character in Waiting to Exhale. She is no man's inferior. Not only is this lifestyle a new form of "high" female sexuality, it is just as confining as traditional notions of the sexually submissive housewife. This leveling of the sexual playing field between men and women originates from the feminist minimization tendency or the belief that men and women are fundamentally the same. Savannah's saucy attitude is envied and her confidence is no doubt a step forward in the realm of female sexuality. However, no social construct is sufficient enough to define any woman's sexual identity.

#### Successful, Smart, Sexy and Slender: Media Perceptions of the Modern Woman Jennifer Ruckman

The media, which plays such a prominent part in the modern world, provides an excellent source for noting the changed perceptions regarding gender roles. While women in television and print have successfully crossed career boundaries, the media continues to portray women as both dependent on physical attractiveness for success and primarily concerned with relationships and emotional themes. How does such a dual portrayal effect women today, especially concerning gender definitions as they influence an understanding of identity? Self-perception today is certainly affected by the media; a look at television and magazine trends helps provide an awareness of the modern struggle to reconcile multiple ideas of identity.

Moderated by Cindy Sarver, Department of English

## *Space and Place: Architecture and Environment - MHP 105*

### The Landscape of William Saroyan

Jennifer Campbell

The idea of a distinguishable line between high and low literary culture is challenged in the collected works of William Saroyan: a local color writer in Fresno, California who details the lives of recent immigrants and the working poor. In a lifetime of short stories, Saroyan creates a landscape that is grounded in historical Fresno, but which transcends the physicality of the town on a spiritual and intellectual level. How does one reconcile the simple faith that the low culture of a farming region places in their prose laureate with the preservation of his landscape on a high cultural level?

### L. A. and the Figueroa Corridor: Redevelopment in a Postmodern City

Paul Payne

As a postmodern city, Los Angeles has grown up without a true central core or history. Current visionaries and real estate speculators foresee a vibrant new downtown for LA, one which includes the new sports arena, thriving financial district, an urban village, and (for some) one that bends as far south to include USC and Exposition Park. The current plans for redeveloping Figueroa Avenue, made at the request of—and paid by—the property owners, include a variety of safety and clean-up projects, as well as a marketing plan to give the corridor a sense of identity and community. Envisioning a revitalized corridor, the plans fall short by ignoring the disjointed reality of the global city—with distinctive local venues—and authoritatively gloss over true issues in South Central with a seemingly benign form of gentrification.

### Conservation vs. Capitalism: Can there be two Winners?

Alexander Richter

The Bolsa Chica Wetlands located in Huntington Beach will be discussed. There has been a debate over the land usage of this area for nearly 30 years. Primarily the history of this debate will be discussed but some attention will be given to the current plans for the future of the wetlands.

### My Private Earth

Ellen Chen

Modern Architecture changed forever the way in which people perceive the space around them. In homes, the Modern era in architecture heralded the arrival of the utilitarianism of the New International Style as well as the integration of the outside environment into the inside space of living. The stark, minimal space of utilitarianism makes private housing affordable to the masses, thus increasing its stylistic consumption into the populace. Although a staple of the common culture, Modern Architecture achieves the rank of high art in that it challenges the self-perception of every person it contact with it. Through the spatial design and aesthetic of Modern Art, we have grown to perceive our bodies and our movement or stasis through space through the filter of the buildings of the Modern era.

Moderated by Professor Viet Nguyen, Department of English

## *I Want My MTV: The Construction of Taste Cultures—MHP 106*

### In Front of the Music?

Kari Minor

Unlike other biographical programs such as A&E's Biography, Behind the Music, a product of VH1, is specifically aimed at one particular sector of celebrity talent. In doing this, VH1 not only tailors the premise to its own needs as a station, but also attempts to lend validity to its subject, supposedly enlightening viewers about the actual life experiences of their favorite musicians. It would seem that the show is declaring itself as an element of refined or "high" culture, although it certainly caters to a less than refined audience, and nevertheless is confined to the small screen which many would argue marks it as "low" culture immediately. Beyond this question of high and low, though, is a discussion of whether the gossip-like stories about scandal, drug-abuse, etc. actually help the viewer better understand the true identity of the artist and therefore understand more about the origins of the artist's music, or does the program simply aid in placing the scandalous issues, "In Front of the Music?"

### Parenting the Public: American Culture and the MPAA

Caitlin Price

American society has come to depend on and embrace the formalized judgment of cultural products as being "acceptable" or "inappropriate" for specific audiences. Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), defines the mission of his organization: "We [...] see our primary task as giving advance cautionary warnings to parents so that parents could make the decision about the movie-going of their young children"; meanwhile, at least 85% of American movie theaters not only accept MPAA ratings, but also actually use the organization's judgment of what is and is not appropriate for children's viewing to determine when minors will be denied entrance into particular films. This organization has appointed itself as a surrogate parent to the country in its attempt to dictate to millions of moviegoers what is acceptable to watch. This essay aims to examine the how society is shaped by it's "parenting" from the MPAA, and how the MPAA affects the art of film.

### The Act of Becoming: Madonna, Kristeva, and Gender Identity

Dustin Friedman

Once again, Madonna, perennial arbiter of taste culture and world-renowned uber-celebrity has undergone a radical image transformation. She is now using a combination of spirituality and maternity to portray herself as being the quintessential New Age "earth mother." Though one may dismiss this change as just another superficial makeover to convince the consumer to buy more Madonna products, I presume that there is much more to this new image than crass commercialism. The fact that this new "mother" image is the first time Madonna has assumed a non-sexually explicit public persona is revealing—it shows that Madonna has worked through the imposed tropes of feminine sexuality that have characterized her past work. The persona that Madonna now embraces is one that acts as the realization of Julia Kristeva's notion of woman being "the very space and possibility of representation."

From Red Paint to Blood; From Gold Dust to Dung: The Shifting of Art from High Class to Low  
Jonathan Hearn

*NO DEAD PIGS IN MY MUSEUM!*

—Jessica Reaves, "Rudy's Rant," Time Sept. 23 1999.

Has man totally reinvented art since its conception? No progression had been more stigmatized by changing class relations than that of art. We will examine art's overall descending trend as we note its shifting, in authorship, ownership and focus, from the Nobility and Clergy, to the bourgeoisie, to the commoner, and finally to the impoverished. Based upon these elements we will construct a definition of art in society. We can then interrogate the validity of including such works as Ofili's dung smeared Virgin Mary, and sub-culture/avant-garde innovations like Ron Athey's mutilation-ridden performance art under the umbrella of art. Or more simply put . . . should we have dead pigs in our museums?

Moderated by Chris Peterson, Department of Comparative Literature

3:30-5:00

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*Fantasies of Power: Women and High/Low—MHP 101*

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The Powerpuff Girls: The Postmodern Muse-Daughters of Evening Cartoons  
Scott Wu

*Sugar. Spice. And everything nice. These were the ingredients chosen to create the perfect little girls, but Professor Utonium accidentally added an extra ingredient to the concoction: Chemical X!! Thus, the Powerpuff Girls were born. Using their ultra super powers, Blossom, Bubbles, and Buttercup, have dedicated their lives to fighting crime and the forces of evil!!!*

—Craig McCracken, Cartoon Network's The Powerpuff Girls, Introduction

The pursuit of the feminine muse-child reaches through all of civilized history. Despite her youth, she hopes and tries to be the elusive "lady" of feminist Emily Putnam, constantly redefining her bounds. This study examines The Powerpuff Girls as the latest incarnations of the muse-daughter, holding as a mirror to her radiance one of her precursors: Lewis Carroll's dream-child Alice

A Batman with Breasts: Catwoman and the Pursuit of Female Iconography in American Comic Books  
Ariel Elizabeth Lawrence

The genesis of Catwoman and her reinterpretations over the years demonstrate visually the rapid, and yet sometimes confused evolution of society's thoughts on women. Somewhere between "Lois Lane: Superman's Girlfriend", Batgirl the Dominoed Dare-Doll, and Wonder Woman, American comic books have grown up. More importantly, their ideas about women have grown up too. This is what I call the Batman with breasts phenomenon. Women are strong, powerful, and independent in their own right. Yet there is still the problematic issue of skintight costumes and physically impossible, well-endowed figures. But perhaps comic books have only grown up because, like other forms of



mass media, they find that sex sells. However, it is still unclear whether the increased popularity of the Batman with breasts phenomenon is due to the new, improved empowerment of these women or the continued and greater exploitation of their sex appeal.

#### Nobody's Darling: The Riot Grrrls Meet the Media

Becca Klaver

In the early nineties, women were on the move—on the move to the mosh pit, that is. Their flesh graffitied in black magic marker with words like “slut” and “rape,” a ferocious but loosely linked new wave of feminists was out to assert its rightful place at punk rock concerts and in society. “They’re called Riot Grrrls and they’re coming for your daughters,” Rolling Stone warned in 1993. Although the Riot Grrrl movement attracted enough media attention to bring about an article in Rolling Stone, as well as several in The Washington Post, Newsweek, and Seventeen, it is fair to say that the majority of Americans have never heard of this group. In the few years since its decline (often blamed on the media involvement that exploited the true intentions of the young women), the image of nineties “girl power” that the Riot Grrrls introduced has degenerated into the use of those same words as a fashion logo and hollow chant of the Spice Girls.

Riot Grrrl subculture’s influence on our conception of feminism and “girl power” was growing stronger by the early 1990s. But when high culture showed up in the form of major magazines, the group claimed it could not survive the disparity of representation between these high-culture articles and the Riot Grrrls’ e-zines and websites. It is true that their status as the media’s newest darlings was exactly the kind of attention they did not want, but whether or not it truly counteracted their power is debatable. We must also consider the group’s loose structure and the wide discrepancy about what being a Riot Grrrl means. Furthermore, we must examine what this says about cultural expectations, if these neo-feminists feel that they must have an unwavering stance on the definition of an empowered modern woman. Why don’t we demand such a precise definition of cultural identity from men? Finally, we should ask ourselves what exactly the Riot Grrrl movement accomplished, and to what extent is its influence still very much alive today.

#### More Than Just Girl Power: The Spice Girls’ Appeal and Influence upon America’s Adolescent Females

Suzanne Ogden

The Spice Girls, an all-female pop group, overwhelmed American pop culture with their catchy songs and bouncy image. Their target audience of pre-adolescent and adolescent females was the driving force behind the Girls’ success, as evidenced through top record, merchandise and concert sales. As the first all-female band to attract an originally male-focused target audience, the Spice Girls contained certain aspects that coincided with the development of the adolescent female. I will discuss how and why the Girls appealed to and attracted the young women in America’s recent popular culture, particularly through their messages and image.

#### Dark Angels: The Adolescent Females’ Obsession with Vampires

Shannon McHugh

Among adolescents, especially females, the vampire has emerged as a romantic and erotic fascination. Through novels, cinema and television, the undead have invaded young blood. The fixation persists even through the scorn of adult “high” culture, which finds it disturbing since youth is supposed to be a time of simple innocence. But, at this metamorphic stage of life, young

women are finally beginning to explore their complexities, and through the dark love and longing of vampires they may better understand their own sexual and romantic confusion. I hope to reveal the connection between the ambivalent desires of romance and evil, and to explain the adolescent females' own inherent nature as dark angels. My analysis will include the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Anne Rice's novel Interview with the Vampire, and its movie adaptation.

Moderated by Holly Willis, Division of Critical Studies

### *Policing Children: Training Children to be "Good" Adults—MHP 102*

#### The Photography of Lewis Carroll in a Pre- and Post-Freudian Context

Danielle Ilyana Ben-Veniste

Lewis Carroll, best known as the author of children's books, is famous in the art world for his photographs of young girls. In the 20th century, Freudian theories of childhood and infantile sexuality gave new meaning to Carroll's sexualized subjects. Seeing Carroll's photographs through distinctly post-Freudian eyes, contemporary critiques of Carroll's work are dominated by the question of whether or not Carroll was sexually involved with his precociously posed young models. Though visually stunning, Carroll's work is often dismissed by modern society as purely pornographic. How can we reconcile the apparent contradiction of irrefutably masterful technique and alarmingly taboo—even illegal—content? What implications does a greater understanding of child sexuality have on the art world and on photography in particular?

#### Calling Criminals by Their First Names

Bryant Davis

While most people find the atmosphere of community to be comforting, there are certain others for whom it is stressful. Most people living in a given society thank the laws and customs for helping them lead a happy life. Yet, there are others who believe a certain law or convention hinders their pursuit of happiness, and so, as they follow their self-interest, they are set apart from their community. We call these people, "others," and "Dislocated Identities." We classify them according to the crimes they commit; though we understand them little, and ask, "Why can't they be like the rest of us?" Russian authors Dostoevsky and Nabokov investigate these types of "others." By comparing the authors' works, we can understand the "other" mentality.

#### Parents, Children and the Question of Culture

Lauren Brown

It was once strongly believed that "children should be seen and not heard." Today, however, America's youth have an increasingly powerful voice in determining popular culture. With a recent report that the median teenager's allowance is \$50, it is clear that youth consumerism has a vast influence on both industry and society. Yet, is it still possible to encourage "high culture" activities in the face of such blatant youth empowerment? Parents, who are expected to guide children

towards high culture, are ironically the key enablers in allowing kids to make decisions independently. I propose that the growing lack of parental authority over the absorption of culture, combined with industry's eager assumption of "parental" control over the wallets of children, has resulted in an increasing ambiguity surrounding what differentiates "high" and "low" culture.

A Separate Peace: An examination of the identity crisis suffered by the Nisei during WWII  
Lola Ogunmefun

After several years of discrimination and suspicion, and the very unfortunate Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the first generation Japanese, or Issei and the second-generation, or Nisei were herded and thrown into internment camps. With war tension continuously mounting in the United States, the Nisei found themselves torn between their traditional Japanese community and mainstream, white American society. The Nisei found that they could never quite fit into either category of their hyphenated title. They were either too "American" to be traditional Japanese or too "Japanese" to be accepted as American. In the end, they were forced to redefine their identity based only on their own personal beliefs and feelings.

Juveniles in the Adult Justice System of America  
David Birnbaum

I wish to do my research on minors who are tried and convicted as adults. I believe this topic is rich in its relation to culture and class, innocence and experience, etc. and will allow for a greater understanding of our criminal justice system. I will provide some background information on the number of youths in this situation and how they typically get there, focusing on youths from the Washington State area, particularly those at Clallam Bay Corrections Center. I will also be discussing their art and poetry, as a way of understanding their psychology and reconsidering whether or not their location is the most appropriate for their age. Is it fair for children to be tried under the same laws as adults? Are they experienced enough to truly understand the implications of their actions the same way an adult would? Is it practical to put a minor into prison, then let him out when he's middle-aged, and expect him to be able to function in society? Is it valid to consider the class and culture of these children when deciding whether or not to try them as adults, and does it already happen?

Moderated by Professor Anthony Kemp, Department of English

***Selling Identity: Advertising and Journalism—MHP 105***

Murdoch and Turner: Vomiting in News Media Waters  
Edward Tinsley IV

The American opinion is more lucrative and more sought after now than ever before. We must consider from where we draw the "facts" that form these valuable opinions. My answer is the media elite—Turner, Murdoch, Eisner, Viacom (MTV). They each control incalculable facets of

American media and see their job as an infinite one. They eternally will ask themselves: how can people best be controlled? How can the public's opinion work for our billion dollar media projects? The answer lies in the television news mass media, the most popular information outlet. This news sadly falls victim to the influence of the media mogul and his desires to entertain the customer. We have been fooled into defining our world by "infotainment."

Mixed Messages: Dualism in American Advertising  
Judith Hong

This paper is a study of the dualistic nature of advertising, where different techniques of selling products send contradictory messages. The confusion allows advertisements to manipulate a wider range of people. By sending out mixed messages, advertisers make people uncertain of what exactly they desire; instead, people learn to follow whatever the advertisements claim should be desired. My focus will be mostly on populism and elitism. Since even the American Dream itself juxtaposes equality and individuality, advertisements can capitalize on both mentalities. Part of advertising emphasizes the idea of fitting in with your social groove, while another part encourages individual success and achievement. The duality of advertising is especially acute when it appeals to adolescent identity. Some commercials and advertisements appeal to the part of adolescents that wants to be independent and unique, while others target the adolescent need for peer acceptance. Thus, the dualism gives advertising tremendous power to persuade people into purchasing products.

Advertising: How Companies Buy Your Identity  
Krista DeRose

Have you ever paused to think about why you purchase the particular products you use? Are you brand loyal to a particular type of clothing, food or even cleaning agent? Like it or not, the impact of advertising plays a profound role in our buying behavior as consumers. Each year, the number of new products on the market climbs toward 50,000 and by age 16, a typical American has seen almost 6 million ads. We are bombarded daily by promotions in newspapers and magazines, on billboards and the sides of busses, and of course, on television. So how exactly do ads selling identity work with (or against!) our psyches to create personal images of conformity or individuality?

Moderated by Elizabeth Archer, Department of English

### *I Wanna See You Sweat: Cultural Impact of Dance—MHP 106*

Saturday Nights at the Satin Ballroom: Swing Dancing, Teenage Rebellion, and The New Subculture  
Marcelo Tesón

Swing dancing is back in style, and in a big way. But far from being just another fad, this growing movement has managed to upend our society's concept of rebellion altogether by emphasizing the preservation of old customs as opposed to their rejection. In this presentation I will analyze swing in the 1940's and demonstrate how the dancing was indicative of the rejection of established customs, and then transport this analysis to the modern day nihilism of punk rock and mainstream



music, in order to see how today's swingers are reinventing the way in which rebellion is viewed in our society. By looking at this movement as a new type of rebellion, we will see just *why* swing has turned everything old into something new.

#### Exploring the Boy Band Closet

Daren Kwok

"Tell me why. Ain't nothing but a heart-ache. Tell me why. Ain't nothing but a mistake." Tell me why many college students love boy bands and are ashamed to admit it. Indeed, it is this group that makes up the population of the boy band closet. Yet, why does this closet exist? Well, for many college students, these popular culture icons represent an obstacle to achieving adulthood by being synonymous with the with female adolescent audience base to which it is marketed. Yet boy bands' similarities to "quality" musicians like Boyz II Men continue to draw covert fans despite these social stigmas. In the end, it may only be through parody that the dynamite is provided to explode the boy band closet.

#### The Changing Social Role of Adolescent Dance: Transitions between High and Low Culture

Joseph Lajos

Think about the last dance you attended as a teenager, perhaps your senior prom, a wedding or a party held in a friend's basement. Remember the music that was playing, the way you moved to it and the warm touch of your partner. How did you feel at that last adolescent dance; and what did you think about while you were dancing? Many people your age might answer these questions similarly to you. But, someone ten years younger or forty years older than you would probably have a different response, since the social role of dance in youth culture is continually changing. This presentation details the varying social roles dance has played in youth culture in the past two hundred years as represented in popular literature and film.

#### How to be a Swinger

Brian Chiong

This presentation will analyze the emergence of the neo-swing culture and its portrayal by the entertainment industry. With a focus on Doug Liman's Swingers and Hugh Wilson's Blast from the Past, the reality and portrayals of neo-swing will be compared and analyzed. From the beginnings of neo-swing by musicians coming from punk and ska to the influence of neo-swing beyond the concert hall and dance floor, swing has followed a long path through high and low. First born as a low culture movement, then reborn as a high culture movement, it has finally settled nicely in between as a bridge for both.

Moderated by Jinny Huh, Department of English

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