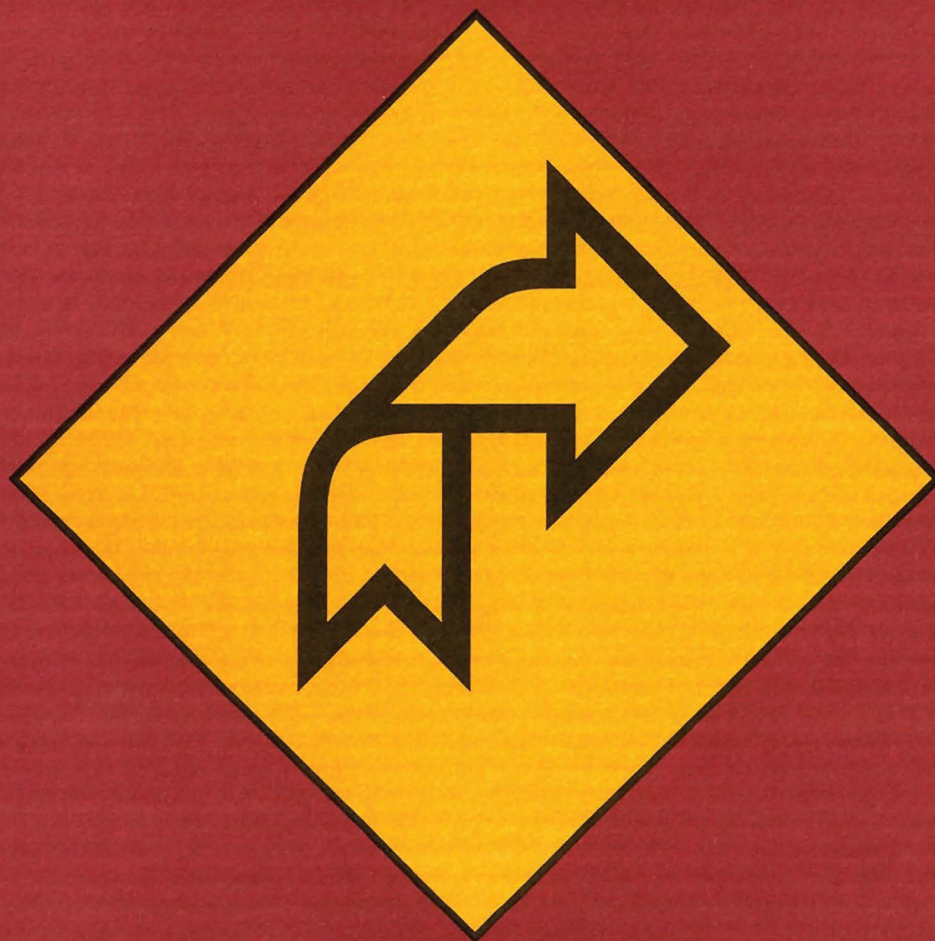


THE MEANING OF THE MILLENNIUM

April 9-10, 1999

University of Southern California

Los Angeles, CA



Second Annual Undergraduate Conference

sponsored by

The Thematic Option Program

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) Technology, 2) Boundaries, and 3) Self. Each panel is made up of four to five students with a faculty member or a Thematic Option writing instructor serving as the chair and discussant.

WHY THE MILLENNIUM?

The myth of the millennium is as strong as its “reality.” With world-wide media attention focused on this moment—from the metropolitan centers advertising the grandest New Year’s Eve Party to South Sea islands providing prime spots to watch the sunrise on the dawning of a new age—millennial fever has taken hold. Does this anxiety suggest a cultural need to define our position in an ever-changing world: a world whose rate of change appears to be quickening? What does this moment and its mythic constitution mean? Does it express a *fin-de-siècle* desire for a better future, a reminder that every end carries with it the possibility of new beginnings? Through conjectures and prophecies, millennial visions of promise and foreboding frequently draw on the traditions from a past that has experienced the anxieties of the waning of the old and the waxing of the new. Millennial myths help us deal with the unknown, whether the unknown is represented as a recovered, edenic paradise or an apocalyptic, technological nightmare.

How do we survive the brutalities, the inanities, the freedom of our own time?
What makes the question of the meaning of the millennium so important?

9.3

LOCATION

THH 112 CYBORGS: MAN AND MACHINE AT THE MILLENNIUM

Oral Entry Optional: Attack of the Five Foot Six Silicon Woman – Eva Anderson
Cyborg Visual Aesthetics and the New Millennium: Portrayal of the Cyborg-Hero Image in Popular Media – Melissa Bee
Human as the Present-Day Cyborg in 2001: A Space Odyssey – Joy Davis
Sex: The Inevitable End to Humanity – Amber Lancaster

Moderated by Elizabeth Archer, Department of English

THH 116 MILLENNIAL FEMINISM: GODDESSES, NYMPHETS, PROSTITUTES AND HANDMAIDS

“Paradise of Virginity” Regained: The Rebirth of the Goddess – Cecilia Mo
From Lolita to Lolita XXX Sites: Has the Internet Sullied Pedophilia? – May-Lin Wilgus
Will Bring Deception, Meaning and Prostitution: A Dialogue of Gogol and Dostoevsky – Susan Mackie
Hurting Towards Gilead: A Look at Dystopia in Margaret Atwood’s A Handmaid’s Tale at the Dawning of the New Millennium – Vivien Nguyen

Moderated by Professor Thomas Habinek, Classics Department

THH 119 RETHINKING URBAN SPACES

Written on the Subway Walls: Art and Modernity Beneath the City Streets – Dawn Sueoka
Iubilaeum 2000: Jerusalem in the New Millennium – Nicole Meline
Cairo and the Millennium: History and Culture Collide – Beth Armey

Moderated by Professor Anthony Kemp, Department of English

THH 121 CONSUMING CULTURE/CULTURE CONSUMING

Radical Rebounder – Joseph Graff
The Consumer Age: Brand-Name Humanity – James Nussbaumer
Falsifying the American Dream: Pseudo-Utopias in America’s Planned Communities – Greer Rabiega
How Real is the Real World? – Valerie Sun

Moderated by Elizabeth Binggeli, Department of English

11.0

LOCATION

THH 112 GENETIC REVOLUTIONS

Gate to Gattaca: The Scientific Revolution of the Coming Millennium and the Great Human Compromise – Brian Nguyen

Medicine in the New Millennium: Redefining Madness? – Jake Richard

The Threat of Biomedical Artillery and Eugenics Resurgence – Brittney Kaufman

Self-Destruction through Self-Preservation – M. YiShaun Chen

Moderated by David Kammerman, Comparative Literature Department

THH 116 THE CONSTRUCTION OF CELEBRITY FEMININITY FROM MARILYN MONROE TO ALLY McBEAL

The Tragedy of Glamour: The Construction of Marilyn Monroe in Biography – Barbara Duffey

Madonna: Boundaries Crossed and Created – Julia Verseman

The More Nervous I Get, the Shorter My Hemlines Become: The Construction of Gender in Ally McBeal – Lacy Zobel

Moderated by Professor Andrea Frisch, Department of French and Italian

THH 119 UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA: THE QUESTION OF PROGRESS

Postponement of the Apocalypse: A Study of the Literary Tangent – Andrew Fitzgerald

The Common Man in Relation to Utopic Vision – Kirk Reynolds

Negative Utopia – Ivy Matthews

Ghosts of History and the Myth of Progress – Maryanna Abdo

Moderated by Professor Viet Nguyen, Department of English

THH 121 SOCIETY AND SURVEILLANCE: DEFINING THE MILLENNIAL SELF

The Musical Rent and Surveillance at the Millennium – Rebecca Lorimer

Gazing Upon The Conversation and Enemy of the State – Gloria Lily Chen

Ghosts of the Millennium: Analyzing the Role of the Socially Dead – Jessica Roberts

The Various Effects of Millennial Apocalypse upon the Boundaries between Society and the Individual – Thomas Brownback

10,000 Megalomaniacs – Simon Howard

Moderated by Professor Barry Glassner, Department of Sociology

2.0

LOCATION

THH 112 VIRTUAL LOVE AND IDENTITY

Romancing the Modem: Cyber Romance and the Online Dating Trend – Cernel Heckel
Reality's Invasion of Fantasy – Devon Gallegos
Road to Androgyny – Katherine Duree
Our Monsters, Our Selves: Role-Playing our Way to A New Millennium – Emily Dewey

Moderated by Molly Engelhardt, Department of English

THH 116 MULTICULTURAL WOMEN

The Post-Millennial Future of Spanish-language Television in Los Angeles – Katherine FitzSimons
Clarise Lispector: Reluctant Feminism, Magic Realism, and a Post-Modern Outlook upon Approaching the 21st Century – Allison Hector
Misconceptions of the Geisha: Oriental "Females" in Miss Saigon and M. Butterfly – Emi Minezaki
Hee-Sun Kim: Reflecting the Color of Korea's Culture – Ann Lee

Moderated by Associate Dean H. Eric Schockman, Student Affairs

THH 119 REPRESENTING THE WORLD

Freudian Support for a Contextual Reality: A Millennial Perspective – Matt Vinson
The Meaning of the Millennium – Robert Ziff
Meaningless Millennium: Andrei Bjely's Petersburg – Rob Salgado
The Implications of a Confession: Atonement as the Gateway to the Millennium – Francesa Cimino
The Overdetermination of Self – Marshall Shepardson

Moderated by Michael Blackie, Department of English

THH 121 MILLENNIAL AESTHETICS: FILM, VIDEO AND ART

Beauty and Its Reflection in Contemporary Art – Shahbano Nawaz
The Camera's Eye: The Link between Rodney King and Civil Unrest – Jeanne Klein
The Delusion of the Individual in Millennium Movie Making – Ryan Jackson-Healy
The New Auteur: Filmmaking – Ethan Shaftel

Moderated by Sue Scheibler, Division of Critical Studies

3.3

LOCATION

THH 112 NEW TECHNOLOGIES OF BODY AND MIND

How the Nature of Modern Technology Forces Us to Redefine the Individual – Andrew Escobar
Culture Shock – Peter Petro
I Ain't Got No Body: Singing the Multimedia Millennium Blues – Eileen Kowalski

Moderated by Professor Douglas Thomas, School of Communication

THH 116 MILLENNIAL COUNTER-CULTURES

Moontribe, Rave Culture, and the Return to the Primitive – Colleen Lester
Cult Consciousness in the Age of Aquarius – Suzanne Welcome
And Ya Don't Stop: Hip-hop's Obsession with the Year 2000 – Ryan Pearson
A Culture of Drugs: Psilcybin and Amanita through History – Jonathan Tung
. . . he that winnith souls is wise – Travis Flournoy

Moderated by Peter Stokes, Department of English

THH 119 2000 AND WHAT? EUROCENTRISM AND THE MILLENNIUM

Why 2K? – Jimmy Fusil
Hurting toward the Millennium: The Hype of Eurocentric Time – John Wasilczyk
Magical Realism in Latin-American Writing: The Reincarnation of the Millennium by Carlos Fuentes –
Viet-Huong Nguyen

Moderated by Professor Phiroze Vasunia, Classics Department

THH 121 NOSTALGIA AND TRAUMA: READING AT THE CLOSE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Coffee Spoons: The Toll and Comfort of Banality – Michael Choi
Apocalyptic Shakespeare, Hamlet's Millennial Metaphor – Ben Gaines
Fade Out: The Search for Closure as the End of the Millennium – Kyle Buchanan
The Reality of Gone with the Wind – Dominique Sopko
*American's Facing the Millennium: Driving toward the Year 2000 with Eyes Fixed in the
Rear-View Mirror* – Nicholas Burger

Moderated by Chris Peterson, Comparative Literature Department

Conference Schedule

Friday, April 9

- 4:00 p.m. Welcome and Introduction @ Taper Hall of Humanities 301
Joseph Hellige, Vice Provost, Academic Programs
Keynote Address @ Taper Hall of Humanities 301
Millennial Anxieties, Or, Is the Truth Really Out There?
Tara McPherson, Professor, Division of Critical Studies
- 5:30 p.m. Reception and “Poetry Slam” @ Senior Commons Room at North College
Co-hosted with Palavar, USC’s Student Literary Journal

Saturday, April 10 (Taper Hall of Humanities, First Floor)

- 8:45 a.m. Check-in and Breakfast @ Taper Hall of Humanities 114
- 9:30 a.m. Panel Discussions
- 11:00 a.m. Panel Discussions
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch @ Common Dining Room at North College
- 2:00 p.m. Panel Discussions
- 3:30 p.m. Panel Discussions
- 5:00 p.m. Wrap-up @ Taper Hall of Humanities 114

ABSTRACTS

Cyborgs: Man and Machine at the Millennium

NO RISK OF DISEASE, NONTXIC

Eva Anderson

Abyss Creations has just released a product "for an era in which reality and fantasy constantly overlap." This revolutionary, end-of-the-millennium wonder is, in fact, a woman made entirely of silicone and steel. Her parts have been molded from life casts. She weighs as much as a real woman. She comes fitting your specifications for hair color, eyeliner, breast size, etc. She costs five thousand dollars, and has two holes for your personal use. She is the Real Doll.

The very thought of this pose able woman has shocked and horrified people across the country. Howard Stern, the self-professed king of schlock had serious reservations about "trying one out." At the same time, it is causing a national sensation. Just last Saturday night, HBO ran a special on them, "RealDoll user clubs" are all over the Internet and there has been enough demand that Abyss has begun manufacturing a male and a she-male counterpart. So what is it about the RealDoll that is so strange? What makes us shiver when we see the photos of Celine (model #3), in all her various positions?

One could say that the RealDoll is a new low in the objectifying of women. But, if that were true, why would Abyss be making a male doll? It is true that the doll is chauvinistic, but it is also important to note that it is cold and dead. It is possible. It does not talk or blink. It is successful not in spite of, but because of these reasons. Maybe it is too easy to call this doll a sexist endeavor. Maybe the RealDoll represents a universal perversity, a kind of sexual desperation that is difficult to identify and hard to come to terms with. As the millennium approaches, are our tastes becoming increasingly necrophiliac? Are we nostalgic for the traditional sex of our Victorian forefathers? Are we terrified of real person-to-person contact? At any rate, the RealDoll is real, and it is really selling, and it is really, really scary. Check out <http://www.realdoll.com>.

I have an interview set up with the people at Abyss. They want to answer any questions I have. I have many, many questions.

HUMAN AS THE PRESENT-DAY CYBORG IN *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY*

Joy Davis

Today, the boundary between human and machine bends and twists beyond recognition. With the onslaught of human identities created and harvested online, the human and the machine now meld together in a way that definitely blurs the line between artificial and natural intelligence. In Stanley Kubrick's film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the main computer HAL 9000 is an example of a computer that exhibits traits that lend themselves to a personality, a quality that is almost exclusively human. In contrast to this, the astronauts in the film show

how mechanical humans can be, such as the way that they maintain their physiques as though they are oiling a machine.

I will also explore the blurring of boundaries between human and machine by examining the book, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, by Arthur C. Clarke, to more concretely outline the differences, similarities, and clarifications about the human and machine conflict. Donna Haraway's "The Cyborg Manifesto" (1991) gives me the terms I will use to address this issue. For example, Haraway discusses the aspect of cyborgs' struggle for language as one of the primary goals in their existences. I will discuss how HAL uses language to create an identity for himself that blurs the boundary between the human/machine dualism. Dualisms like this one are also discussed in the Haraway essay. I will use a critical study of the film itself to investigate what others have said about the relationship between HAL and Dave, and in machine and human, more generally. One such source is the book, *Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze*, by Thomas Allen Nelson. Finally, I will explore what is gained by an examination of the human/machine binary and why this pairing, according to *2001*, is an important one.

Millennial Feminism: Goddesses, Nymphets, Prostitutes and Handmaids

SEX: THE INEVITABLE END TO HUMANITY

Amber Lancaster

A scene from Michael Crichton's *Terminal Man* played over and over in my mind for many months after I read the book. Two detectives enter a strip joint and notice the U-shaped scar on a woman's breast resulting from cosmetic surgery. They then go into a robotics lab where various machines are talking using the latest artificial intelligence research. One officer remarks to the other about how very shortly, technology would allow the stripper at the club to have sex with a robot. That image of an augmented human making love to a supplemented robot has jarring effects on our definition of self.

As humans become more synthetic and technology becomes more lifelike, the boundary between man and manmade is essentially eradicated. We will no longer be capable of separate biological and technological production, and if reproduction proves accessible, the line between them will forever be blurred. Humans and robots will no longer be autonomous individuals, but part of a mixed cyborg breed. As the glaring differences become merely subtle discrepancies, our definitions of self will be completely altered.

In my paper, I hope to explore the narrowing gap between humans and technology and its repercussions on identity. Specifically, I will be discussing the reverberations of human and robot sex and offspring. For example, what steps will be taken to prevent this new species from happening and how will our society adapt to it if it is allowed to exist? This is just one question I hope to investigate en route to a more thorough examination of the consequences of this event.

"PARADISE OF VIRGINITY" REGAINED: THE REBIRTH OF THE GODDESS

Cecilia Mo

God...He...Him...Western Civilization's central religion—Judeo-Christianity—is characteristically patriarchal. In the Bible, God the creator is male and makes the first human in his own image, with Eve being created from Adam's rib as an afterthought. The woman is thus portrayed as secondary and inferior to the man. This doctrine, which places men in control and women in subjugation, is central to Judeo-Christian religion and has had a profound effect on attitudes to sex and sexuality.

However, patriarchy has not been the timeless basis of society. From the start of the Paleolithic era until the Minoan civilization of the Bronze Age of 3000 BC, the prevailing myth was that the world was a creation of a divine woman, the Great Mother, who was the universe itself. The goddess represented the sacredness of natural life, including sexuality. It has been noted that the change from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal society appeared around the fourth millennium BC. The Hebrew culture was one of the cultures that eradicated the goddess-worship. As seen in the Book of Genesis and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the feminine became identified with the serpent, the temptations of the flesh. Sexuality was transformed into something evil, to be feared and at all costs kept under control lest it lead a man astray and make him a sinner. Eve had

disobeyed the word of God and women must henceforth atone for her transgression. Eve's curse neatly disposes of goddess worship, sacred sexual practices and female equality with men. Nancy Qualls-Corbett, writes in *The Sacred Prostitute* of this occurrence: "There came a time when the goddess was no longer worshipped; then the physical and spiritual aspects of the feminine were declared evil." Focusing on the ideas of Christianity, I wish to explore this idea of the fallen goddess and its correlation with sex as a taboo. Taking it a step further I want to show how such goddess mythologies have worked to constitute the female identity.

After showing the relationship between the Christian mythologies and female identity and its connection with how sexuality is perceived, I want to note a very powerful phenomenon that is occurring today: the movement towards the revival of the goddess. As we approach the next millennium, society is feeling a need for a change in the basis of our society. It is becoming more and more evident that patriarchy does not meet the needs of individuals. The need for a goddess has surfaced, and it is growing more and more powerful. This movement can be seen in today's pop culture with powerful movies like *Elizabeth* and the growing popularity of female music artists—this year women swept the Grammys and women music tours, like Lilith Faire, suddenly became extremely popular. It can also be seen in the political arena. The citizens of the United States are now searching for possible women candidates for the most powerful position in the US—the presidency. Furthermore, women are holding some of the most influential positions. Women currently hold the position of Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Surgeon General.

Lastly, I want to note the striking relationship between sexuality and these new goddess images. These powerful women are choosing to be like the Virgin Mary. In *Elizabeth*, the queen cries to the statue of the Virgin Mary asking why she is so loved. After this moving scene she decides to marry the nation. In a sense these women are escaping the stigma of the woman's body. They are choosing not to be constrained by their sexuality, which Christian mythology, amongst others, has done. As the next millennium approaches, society is fighting against the omnipotent MALE God. Society is battling the confining myths and making them a thing of the past. The goddess is being reborn.

FROM *LOLITA* TO *LOLITA XXX* SITES: HAS THE INTERNET SULLIED PEDOPHILIA?

May-Lin Wilgus

With the introduction of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* to America in 1958, readers were allowed into the mind of a poetic man irrevocably seduced by transient innocence and beauty. Humbert Humbert, the notorious pedophile, granted infinite love to his pet, Lolita, in exchange for her apathy and eventual disgust. As controversial as the character's actions may be, there is no doubt that Nabokov's rendering of Humbert was that of a man enslaved to his passions, yet completely reverent towards the objects of his idolatry. He sought the indefinable combination of features that indicated the allure of a nymphet, yet did not consummate his adoration until he met the openly playful flirt who initiated the disastrous tryst.

Today nymphets are a computer away, and those that seek them—the modern pedophiles—are portrayed by the media as dirty kiddie-porn addicts that inevitably progress from masturbation to child molestation. As we approach the new millennium, access to titillating material is becoming easier, despite conservative efforts.

Society's concept of the pedophile has also changed: he was once a quiet man who skulked through playgrounds; today he actively pursues gratification through the World Wide Web. Has the true pedophile changed along with society's description of him? Does the Internet promote greater activity in this deviant population, as many news reports would lead one to believe? Was the pedophile always a dirty child molester, and Nabokov merely romanticized him? Or perhaps Humbert Humbert was the true evocation of child-love, and the only thing pedophiles have ever desired was a Lolita for themselves.

For the conference, I intend to explore the questions posed above, although I believe that the only result of inquiry will be a greater slew of questions. I would also like to touch on what I view as the endless cycle of frustration for the pedophile, who seeks to cleanse his soiled mind with the innocence of children, yet ironically only feels dirty because he wants them.

WILL BRING DECEPTION, MEANING AND PROSTITUTION: A DIALOGUE OF GOGOL AND DOSTOEVSKY

Susan Mackie

For the Bishop Conference, I would like to present a paper that examines an inter-textual connection between Gogol and Dostoevsky. Although much has been written on the nature of their "relationship," the issue continues to generate a lively debate as we approach a new millennium. The question that still divides critics today is whether Gogol served as a possible model for Dostoevsky, one that he imitated and admired, or just the opposite—an object of parody. I hope to contribute to this critical discussion by examining one specific "dialogue" between Gogol and Dostoevsky on the topic of St. Petersburg, and even more specifically, on prostitution in St. Petersburg.

Although I will look at a number of their St. Petersburg works: Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Poor People*, and *White Nights* as well as Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*, *The Overcoat*, and *The Nose*, I will concentrate on just two: *Notes from Underground* and *Nevsky Prospect*. These two works share identical plot scenarios dealing with city-prostitution. Dostoevsky's Underground Man and Gogol's Pishkarev both encounter, amidst the low life of the city, a prostitute. They each parody the Romantic idea of "saving" this woman from her condition, but, in both cases, the men themselves are quite more in need of being saved than are the women. In *Notes from Underground*, Liza is means for the manifestation of the Underground Man's internal conflict between sentimental love and malicious thought. In *Nevsky Prospect*, the unnamed prostitute serves to exemplify Pishkarev's inability to distinguish between artistic conceptions of beauty and cruel reality. Both novels, then, use the character of the prostitute to demonstrate the psychological torments of the men who encounter them.

Within parallel plot structures, however, Dostoevsky and Gogol present a dialogue representative of a complex relationship. The Underground Man seems to be a less likable, perhaps a parodied, form of Pishkarev. By analyzing the manner in which Dostoevsky reshapes the character and plot found in Gogol, I hope to better understand if Dostoevsky's borrowing functions to mock—or, on the contrary, to pay homage to—Gogol. I will arrive at a discussion of this larger issue of comparative analysis through my examination of

both men's use of the character of the prostitute. I will also consider issues of narrative, genre, and plot-structure. In employing various critical arguments, I hope to demonstrate that inter-textual comparison is a vital mode of engaging literature precisely because it can encompass a variety of other critical approaches. As we approach the millennium, these issues are, to me, and I hope to you as well, all the more exciting and relevant.

HURTLING TOWARDS GILEAD: A LOOK AT DYSTOPIA IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *A HANDMAID'S TALE* AT THE DAWNING OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Vivien Nguyen

While the dystopia presented by Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*, contains elements of the fantastic, it does not distort reality beyond recognition. Rather, it allows certain details of modern society—those little evils often ignored today—to arrive at their logical and disquieting conclusions. The narrative of Atwood's handmaid ushers us into a hall of mirrors in which each pane of glass reflects the terrifying results of trends coursing through society at the time this book was written. Offred's tale emphatically warns that these trends, ranging from the conservative backlash against feminism to the political agenda of the New Right fundamentalists, from censorship to misogyny, mustn't be left unguarded, for the consequences would promise to be gruesome. Through a grim dystopian nightmare, *The Handmaid's Tale* does not resign itself to despair. Indeed, Atwood's handmaid manages to revere our freedoms even while grieving their legacies. As the millennium draws near and our future in this dawning age looms before us, we might look back upon Atwood's work (albeit not from a great distance in any sense of the word) and wonder if we are still hurtling towards Gilead. In many ways, the details of 1980's society accentuated by Atwood persist in the 1990's and may continue well into the millennium. Adhering to the dystopian tradition of such works as Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Orwell's *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale* distrusts the utopian proposals of the state it portrays. And though it delineates the trends in our society that tend toward the creation of such a state, it also reveals our potential for an altogether more promising future. However, if the very suggestion of such an optimistic future is in itself a utopian proposition that is subject to dystopian criticism, where does that leave us? If not in the black and white of either Gilead or a hopeful future, then where? Are we to be left in the grays in between the two? In exploring such questions, I hope to contribute to the greater conversation regarding the meaning of the millennium.

Rethinking Urban Spaces

WRITTEN ON THE SUBWAY WALLS: ART AND MODERNITY BENEATH THE CITY STREETS

Dawn Sueoko

In "Burnt Norton," T. S. Eliot describes the subway as "a place of disaffection." Indeed, Eliot's subway and the "unhealthy souls" who wander perpetually through its tunnels are isolated and empty. The subway then, like many other symbols in Eliot's poetry, becomes a symbol for the ennui and the emptiness of city life. In this paper, I propose to address the question "What is the mythology of the subway and what has it come to represent in modern literature?" In addition, I wish to explore the forces of modernization, which lead to the development of the subway. Such forces I believe will no doubt be relevant as we approach the new millennium.

I begin by examining the very core of the subway's existence—the fact that it is underground. The realm of the underworld both fascinates and frightens us so because in ancient times (and even now), the underground was largely associated with the forces of evil. Descriptions of early subterranean tunnels are rife with allusions to Dante's *Inferno* and the tunnels themselves were seen as audacious human constructions that blatantly ignored the taboo of the underworld and dared to spite the gods. It is from such a sensibility that the subway was born. At this point, I wish to explore the relationship of the subway's physical location to the social and cultural purposes it serves. Are subways a haven for the marginalized? Does behavior differ below ground?

Next, I incorporate a more modern sensibility into my analysis. Here, the forces of modernism and industrialization become apparent. The subterranean network of steel operates with a frightening efficiency: In the early London subway, 25 pounds of coal generated enough electricity to move a 250-ton train one mile. Such unbridled power contributes significantly to the myth of the subway. In addition, the subway possesses a unifying but dissociative power not unlike the streets of writers like Woolf.

Finally, I return to Eliot and examine the meaning of the subway motif in modern literature, poetry and music.

IUBILAEUM 2000: JERUSALEM IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Nicole Melin

This presentation is an examination of the place of Jerusalem in the eschatological imagination and sacred literature of Jews, Christians and Muslims and a consideration of the ways in which an influx of Christian apocalyptic pilgrims into the Holy City in the year 2000 could impact an already highly volatile situation. A manifold millennial interest in Jerusalem is unfolding as the new millennium approaches. Specifically, Jewish, Muslim and Christian interest stems from religious claims on the city and sacred prophetic statements, which are geographically based in Jerusalem. The rest of the world is also taking interest in Jerusalem's millennial role from a social and political standpoint, as is illustrated by recent statements released by the United Nations concerning millennial developments in the city.

This paper will explore the possible results of such a combination of religious zeal and political power and the possible chaos that could result from such a junction in an already turbulent city, brimming with a predicted one billion Christian pilgrims. What are the public policy implications of the possible increase in apocalyptic expectation at the advent and passage of the year 2000, not only among Christians but also among Muslims, Jews and "New Agers"? How might such apocalyptic expectations, sharpening around the year 2000, impact the Jewish community in Jerusalem? From a historical perspective, I will examine the way in which apocalyptic belief allows normally inhibited behavior to surface and provides a justification of the means by the End. Such paranoia was historically present in Jerusalem during the Crusades of the Middle Ages and in the year 1000 AD. I will examine the impact of apocalyptic disappointment on Christian pilgrims and the international implications of religious violence in Jerusalem in the year 2000. Specific topics of consideration include the apocalyptic dimension of the Islamic fundamentalist group, HAMAS, the Jewish "Third Temple" Movement, the biblical basis for Christian, predominantly Catholic, apocalyptic thought, and Jerusalem's biblical role in end-time events.

My presentation will fit well into the millennial category of "Boundaries." As the situation in Jerusalem's Old City currently stands, the neighborhood is divided into four quarters separated by faith, culture and history: Jewish, Arab, Christian and Armenian. As the turn of the millennium rapidly approaches, will this relatively peaceful international city be divided by the unseen boundaries of opposing religious, cultural and political claims?

CAIRO AND THE MILLENNIUM: HISTORY AND CULTURE COLLIDE

Beth Armey

Here we are, the millennium, a stopping point to look back at history. But, just as much of what we could call history lies buried in the sand or in forgotten archives as is preserved in museums. Looking at Cairo, Egypt, it seems that we can learn as much about ourselves by looking at what has been hidden away, what isn't told as a part of history, as what is. For the Bishop conference I want to examine the production of the story in Cairo—specifically, the Cairo museum—to discover what it has to tell about modern Cairo's cultural self-perception.

The telling of history reveals much about the society that tells it. In the Cairo museum mummies lie rotting on shelves and little is stored in climate controlled cases. King Tut is rotting away in a back room somewhere. What determines the choice to preserve some things and let others rot away? To answer this question we turn to a slightly broader scope of information. A look at folklore provides comparison, another representation of history and a clearer view of what the culture values in its history. While the political and economic factors cannot be overlooked, because of time constraints I won't go into that in depth, but economics dictate a strong western influence. Also considerable is the role of the Islamic fundamentalist minority who would like to see pagan relics destroyed and western pagan influence eliminated. The people depend on their history for survival and yet they cannot afford to preserve it and often desire to destroy it.

In the end I hope to show the necessity of studying the museum as a form of Historical discourse because it represents an intricate balance between memory and forgetting; it reflects how we draw lines, lines that mark

traces of the forgotten, lines used to erect the immemorial, and lines that divide time; this is important to understand as we are about to draw a line between one millennium and the next. Perception of reality, of history, is not only based on one's personal and cultural perspective, but is also shaped by what places like museums choose to display. As culture changes it seems almost certain that new ideologies may recreate history in an entirely new way. With modern archaeological discovery and modern museums the history the Cairo has been uncovered by the masses. But almost as quickly as it has come to be understood the history of the city slips away.

Consuming Culture/Culture Consuming

RADICAL REBOUNDER

Joseph Graff

I propose to study the persona of Dennis Rodman the man, as opposed to the act that I hypothesize he puts on. A three time "Defensive Player of the Year" for the back to back championship Pistons, Rodman was still relatively unheard of until he got a new image. His old one simply wasn't newsworthy enough. In listening to his interviews, studying his stats and his game play, I noticed that there is no correlation between his play and the attitude he carries off the court, and even sometimes on it. Rather, I propose to find, both through his book, *Bad as I Wanna Be* and other records of his life history, that he created a new self to gain the media coverage that eluded him as only a good basketball player. I plan to trace him all the way back to high school so that I can find what he was like before he altered this persona to be media friendly. I believe that his play was much like his sisters, and reflected his personal life. However, due to the lack of attention he received as a simple, down to earth, even boring defensive basketball player, he altered his image to become more recognized. Dennis Rodman has always struck me as a bright individual who altered his public perception to suit his needs. To me, Dennis Rodman embodies what seems to be the model of the nineties and postmodern culture, whatever it takes for media coverage and recognition. Heading into the millennium and playing for the Lakers, will he let his true self shine? Or have we already seen it?

THE CONSUMER AGE: BRAND-NAME HUMANITY

James Nussbaumer

The conception of man as "consumer" is quite a recent one, brought about by the industrial age and continually reinforced—if not dictated—by the commercial framework and subtext of communication—information media such as television, radio and print. As we approach the millennium, it is becoming increasingly evident that the commodification of values, dreams and ideals can be achieved with all the precision and vigor as that accorded to the products of consumption. As these ideals are pre-processed, packaged and consumed alongside the corporate merchandise, how is the consumer himself being affected? In this paper, we will examine the extent to which man's cultural space is both homogenized and monopolized by the unseen commercial elite and consider the psycho-sociological effects of consumer ideals upon the individual. We will also examine how corporate hegemony in the information age fulfills many prophetic, dystopic visions in texts such as Orwell's *1984*, and also give some attention to how such influence is currently impacting the development of new communication media such as the Internet. Finally, an analysis of certain critical movements outside the corporate media (e.g. Noam Chomsky, *Adbusters*) and the amount of success being had in the campaign to express dissent within it will perhaps allow us to extrapolate certain modern media trends and make some educated guesses as to the plausibility and future of a truly democratic information state.

FALSIFYING THE AMERICAN DREAM: PSEUDO-UTOPIAS IN AMERICA'S PLANNED COMMUNITIES

Greer Rabiega

In recent years, the face of cities and suburbia has been altered by the emergence of planned communities and subdivisions. These communities are frequently introverted and separated from the larger communities of cities due to walls, security and regulations prohibiting certain types of people from accessing the planned communities' facilities and even entering. Is the presence of this type of community beneficial or damaging to the city it is part of? Specifically, does it encourage a sense of separation that could cause people from outside the communities not want to enter them and people from within to not want to leave? Further, does it create a sense of "us" and "them" which discourages any sort of interaction between the two groups?

Of course, planned communities have clear benefits. Cities today can be dangerous places and many planned communities offer some degree of security. In addition they offer shelter from the "bad" elements of society due to exclusion of non-residents and selection of who may live in the community (besides the relatively obvious social restrictions placed by income levels, many planned communities also have age/children requirements and exclusions). In planned communities, elders can escape the sound of a basketball pounding against the pavement at eight in the morning and the concerned parent can raise her children in a lower crime environment.

In many ways, today's planned communities are small-scale attempts at utopic communities within the non-utopic world. Planned communities often have on-site recreational facilities and some even include small-scale retail, eliminating any absolute need to leave the community. It is unclear, however, whether these communities truly succeed or if they are healthy additions to the larger communities of the cities they are in.

To address my questions, I am examining literary and filmic utopias and current literature on cities, suburbia and planned communities. Specifically, I am also focusing on Paramount Pictures' *The Truman Show* and the planned community of Seaside, Florida, where it was filmed for their visions of the utopic planned community.

HOW REAL IS THE REAL WORLD?

Valerie Sun

"The Real World" is a TV show created by MTV that puts seven people in a house, and then films them practically every moment of their lives. It is an attempt to present to the viewers what happens "When you stop being nice, and start getting real." But does the cast in actuality "get real"? Although MTV would like to have the viewers believe that the show is a kind of documentary, I would argue that it cannot be real, or true to life. There are simply too many biases on the part of MTV, and on the part of the cast. MTV cannot possibly show a true representation of what goes on in the lives of the cast by condensing a week of footage of each person into a less than 30 minute episode. Instead, the producers of the show pick and choose, which manipulates the reactions of the audience, and the insight the viewers receive into the "real" lives of the cast

members. Also, although the cast does not physically interact with the cameras, they are aware that their every movement is being observed, and to respond accordingly. We end up with members trying to present a certain image to the world.

This lack of reality in "Real World" relates to the boundary of the TV life and real life. With the term "TV life," I refer to the characters that people play for the TV viewing audience. With the term "real life," I refer to how people act under normal, everyday circumstances—without being held under scrutiny. The "Real World" attempts to blur this boundary. MTV presents the TV lives as the real lives. With this claim of reality, however, I would argue the MTV takes away any possibility or hope of overcoming this boundary. I think that the two are inherently incapable of being merged together because of the nature of each. In order to support this claim, I will use episode(s) from the 7th Season in Seattle, possibly discuss *The Truman Show*, and incorporate textual evidence from articles. I will explore the viewers' reactions to the show with Sylvia Rubin's article, "MTV's 'Real World': A reality check" (San Francisco Chronicle 1994) in which she interviews people who watch the show. Also, I will explore the cast opinions of the show with "A 'Real World' of difference" (Los Angeles Times 1993) where Steve Weinstein interviews the Venice cast and I will use "Reality Check" (Detroit News & Free Press 1992) where Fannie Weinstein interviews a former cast member about his experience on the "Real World." I will also research other articles that discuss "Real World" and how it defines television vs. reality, in Joanne Ostrow's "'Real World' a Hybrid Whose Time has Come" (Denver Post 1992), Marshall Blonsky's "Reality Bites: Jennicam, Truman, Live Birth" (Christian Science Monitor 1998), and Caryn James' "The Eighth Roommate: A Camera" (New York Times 1998).

Genetic Revolutions

GATE TO *GATTACA*: THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION OF THE COMING MILLENNIUM AND THE GREAT HUMAN COMPROMISE

Brian Nguyen

The coming the 21st Century ushers in an unparalleled period of optimism and skepticism of the new millennium. The scientific revolution and technological explosion that has defined and encompassed this past decade is a mere prelude of what awaits mankind on the edge of innovation and discovery. Genetic engineering has been a topic of heated discussion, mostly controversial, as it has begun to surface as an alternative to "letting nature take its course." This struggle between nature and science, man and God is addressed in the film *Gattaca*, in which the main character is deemed "invalid" by his means of birth, and the story revolves around his struggle to overcome the restrictions society has placed upon him because of his genetic make-up. *Gattaca* is a sobering depiction of a society where utopian ideals spiral into dystopian practices. The film depicts the grave costs man must pay in his incorrigible quest for perfection and his willingness to sacrifice his humanity in the process. Therefore, the coming millennium does indeed present an intriguing compromise of sorts—that of humanity and perfection. It is this insatiable lust for perfection and eternal fulfillment that rears its head in many "utopian" works, such as *Gattaca*, with most concluding with unanswered questions and a troubled conscience. It is therefore relevant to the coming millennium to discuss the inner workings of man's spirit, and the driving force behind his mission to achieve a utopian existence, and how all of this helps to justify man's willingness to achieve perfection at the expense of his humanity. It will also be interesting to analyze the role that God and religion, especially in its absence, play in man's decision to subordinate him to science. The film *Gattaca* serves as an effective illustration of this race against time and God, to cross the finish line that will propel mankind into a utopian realm, void of and nondiscriminatory against his innate flaws and morally questionable acts. In other word, a place in which man is not held accountable for being human—after all, science will be available to work out the imperfections. It is a race that man cannot afford to lose yet carries dire repercussions in victory. Thus, man's victory over himself in order to achieve utopia will inevitably be a costly one. *Gattaca* encompasses many of these ideas and further raises doubt about the gains to be achieved from deleting all of the "kinks" while preserving a convincing replica of humanity. This paper will attempt to tackle this dilemma, and *Gattaca* will be utilized as a blueprint of sorts to illustrate this capricious future in tangible terms. What then is the "Meaning of the Millennium"? It is what man wields it to be, and not to be.

MEDICINE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM: REDEFINING MADNESS?

Jake Richard

With the planned completion of the Human Genome Project (HGP) early next decade, the medical world will gain access to what may become the most powerful tool in the fight against disease. A complete map of the human genome will allow doctors to diagnose any illness having to do with genetic defects with as little as a drop of blood or a strand of hair. From the most devastating mutations to subtle metabolic deficiencies, maladies will be infinitely easier to diagnose and thus treat. Gene therapy, replacing defective genes, will be

made possible by the HGP and will revolutionize medical practices. What about those whose illnesses are on the fringe of what the medical community defines as a disease? The mentally ill are the most likely of the fringe to be excluded. How will post-HGP medicine treat these people? Are their sicknesses genetically based, and to what extent? If not, will the medical world illegitimatize their claims of illness? If so, what ethical issues will be encountered with the permanent alterations of one's psyche? Will the HGP necessitate a redefinition of madness? Of disease in general?

These questions inevitably lead to a questioning of the construction of scientific knowledge. The interpretative practice of constructing a scientific theory is not any different from constructing a critical reading of a novel. The idea that the human is genetically perfectible is a dangerous ramification of this "critical reading" of science. It will surely force both the medical community and society at large to construct new (and not necessarily congruent) definitions of disease.

THE THREAT OF BIOMEDICAL ARTILLERY AND EUGENICS RESURGENCE

Brittney Kaufman

The new millennium brings about fears of computers crashing, civil uprisings and other sudden trauma that could bring about mass hysteria and panic. However, another process that has been matriculating since the end half of the nineteenth century continues to threaten the United States and the world. Although the issues may be more pressing outside the United States, for this purpose, the domestic issue will be considered only. The issues of racism and slavery still plague American society although the United States abolished slavery with the ending of the Civil War. The small but powerful groups that exist around the nation advocating segregation, violent remedies and a general notion of hate seem to be growing. Although virtually ancient in conception, Eugenics societies have again felt a resurgence of support with the neat completion of the human genome project.

The concept of eugenics dates back to the first research in evolution. Charles Darwin supported the "breeding by selection" concept along with numerous other scholars of his day. The Nazis based their entire reign of terror around selective breeding and weeding out the "unwanted" and "undesirable" citizens. This did not mean strictly Jewish people. Their murders and persecution included the handicapped and retarded populations in Europe. Even in America there has been evidence of this discrimination. An American court banned a woman from conceiving another child merely because she had a history of mental illness. She underwent a hysterectomy at the mandate of the state.

Needless to say that horrors occur in every population and through every period of history. Although our society is rapidly becoming more sophisticated with respect to technology and efficiency, the basic human evil still remains latent in the heart of many. With the turn of the new century and further biological technology that could eventually be used as combat artillery comes a threat of an increase in eugenics and uncontrollable, unethical behavior in the medical world and in society.

SELF-DESTRUCTION THROUGH SELF-PRESERVATION

M. YiShaun Chen

The end is near when man plays God.

Genetic engineering may prove very helpful in perfecting the human body. However, bringing it to extreme cases, as seen in *Brave New World*, begins a whole new threat to mankind: man, himself. Is man, in his quest for knowledge and power over himself, only bringing man to dangerous extremes? By playing God, does man destroy what is essential to human beings: free will and awareness?

The scenario of *Brave New World* is only a foreshadowing of genetic engineering run amok, though towards a benign goal of harmony and peace within each individual's personally designated and programmed world. However, what if genetic engineering is taken to an evil extreme, where harmony and peace is not a consideration? Genetic engineering is a new, expansive horizon that is yet being explored in all its possibilities. However, should the search for knowledge and limits be curbed so as to avoid hubris?

In my paper, I will discuss the threats and dangers of unlimited genetic engineering, and the danger man imposes on himself. The present day world is watching the unfolding of increased human knowledge in this meddling of nature, but what results of this meddling will the future see? Ultimately, in attempting to reconstruct himself, man will de-construct and implode upon himself to come full circle to a disastrous end. Genetic engineering must be viewed from an objective and future-oriented approach in order to reign in disastrous and unaccounted for possibilities.

The Construction of Celebrity Femininity from Marilyn Monroe to Ally McBeal

THE TRAGEDY OF GLAMOUR: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MARILYN MONROE IN BIOGRAPHY Barbara Duffey

Perhaps Arthur Miller understood Marilyn Monroe best; he called her life "detached and center less and invaded." She had a hard childhood; her development occurred in foster homes because her mother was declared legally incompetent. She was born Norma Jeane Baker, and she had daydreams of "becoming so beautiful that people would turn to look at me when I passed."

Marilyn Monroe is a constructed personality and façade of beauty. She had a nose job and she rounded her chin, both in an attempt to be more beautiful. She slept with men in the entertainment industry who could help her. Her development into a cultural icon was through movies, but her acting ability was questioned. Her career was to be the paragon of glamour, but she tried to commit suicide four times before she succeeded (if you believe that her death was actually a suicide).

Just as Rousseau claims that self-perfectibility is the "source of all man's misfortunes," Monroe's stardom was not pleasing to her. She said that fame "wasn't really for a daily diet, that's not what fulfills you." She was certainly constructed for other people, living not for herself but for the image the public would have of her. She is the artificial person that Rousseau talked about, making her living completely from what others think of her. She lived "outside herself," but inside of Marilyn it was not pleasing, either. Her dream of being admired was part of what she disliked about herself.

As we approach the millennium, we are extremely conscious of our faculty for self-improvement. We wish to become better in a "new beginning." We can look to Marilyn Monroe, or perhaps in actuality to Norma Jeane Baker, to analyze this process of self-perfectibility. She represents the boundary between the public and private life because she created a sharp dichotomy between them. After all, she sought a public life but was not "fulfilled" by fame. She was beautiful to the public, but tortured in private. She redefined herself by becoming "Marilyn Monroe," by consciously creating a false image of herself to present to her society in an attempt to be thought beautiful.

MADONNA: BOUNDARIES CROSSED AND CREATED Julia Verseman

Whether positively or negatively, Madonna has changed the way American society thinks about sex. She advocated bisexuality, even claiming that "God is bisexual," which created controversy in mainstream, queer and feminist cultures. She expanded the boundaries of what is sexually acceptable and expected so that feminists and queer theorists both praised and condemned her.

Madonna used ideas, language and values of both the queer and feminist communities; and in turn they used her as an advocate. Madonna is either sexually liberated or confined to the construction of the ideal woman.

She has been a source of controversy among feminist and queer thinkers, thus exposing the conflicts between and among the groups.

Should Madonna be a source of frustration or celebration? She is at present both, and refuses to capitulate to a queer or feminist ideal. She has pushed both groups to consider their goals and values and has exposed inconsistencies within their paradigms. Queer and feminist politics have remained separate from each other for the most part. Does Madonna's rise to stardom and icon status illustrate the challenges and possibilities of feminist and queer agendas dissolving the boundaries between and among them and working together in the future?

THE MORE NERVOUS I GET, THE SHORTER MY HEMLINES BECOME: THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN *ALLY MCBEAL*
Lacy Zobel

I will explore the construction of career women in television's *Ally McBeal*. In magazines and popular culture, Ally is often regarded as a symbol of the modern woman: she is a strong career woman, while at the same time she behaves as a weak and lesser being when compared to her male counterparts. As a lawyer, Ally successfully wins most of her cases, but at the same time she undermines her own authority and professionalism with her short miniskirts and her flighty behavior outside the courtroom. Every time she makes a move towards being a strong, independent female, she contradicts herself with her clothing, her love life or her neurotic behavior. Ally realizes her contradictory behavior when she says, "I am the last person who should be giving advice to anybody. I mean look at me; I'm a strong working woman who feels empty without a man. The National Organization for Women has a contract on my head" (*Ally McBeal*). By examining Ally's roles as a successful lawyer and a ditzy woman, I will show that the series constructs a woman who does not challenge the status quo, patriarchy. I will address the TO topic of self and self-definition.

Utopia/Dystopia: The Question of Progress

POSTPONEMENT OF THE APOCALYPSE: A STUDY OF THE LITERARY TANGENT

Andrew Fitzgerald

Your eye begins to scan this sentence, the opening of one of many proposals, and your eye follows it across this page, expecting its return at the next line, but what if...once upon a time there was a young man. This young man was sitting at his computer typing a proposal for an academic paper and decided that the best way to pursue his point was to utilize it in a completely nonsensical way, but with some sense attached. This you read, and it doesn't connect immediately with what you found in earlier lines, and you have to work a little harder mentally to make a logical connection between the two. You're lucky that I brought you back to this earlier though process, Joseph Heller might not have.

But why take off in a completely different direction like a fearful track star? What exactly are we afraid of that we must run from, following different storylines? Are we approaching some sort of apocalypse, a millennial apocalypse, perhaps? The millennium represents an end of sorts fast approaching and many have taken part in efforts to stave off that end. The tangent is one those efforts, the ability to take a story from its linear route and go in a completely different direction, bypassing its end. Why use this, though? Is it simply to waste time, to add pages, to "put some meat on those literary bones"? Or does it serve some greater purpose, perhaps creating a story more like the working of the human mind?

In the period after World War II to the present, this technique (whether you call it the tangent, the non sequitur, the digression), has been used more and more in literature. In examining Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, as well as Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, and the works of Milan Kundera, we will search for the meaning of the tangent. This is the reason why it has become such an important tool in modern literature. We will sift through the apocalyptic pre-Millennium writings incorporating the tangent and find its true path and intention. Does the tangent perhaps serve to put off the end, not just any end, but The End, a death of sorts? If the story is life, then wouldn't its end be death? Wouldn't we strive, as we do in life through medicine, exercise and herbal stress therapy, to put off death?

THE COMMON MAN IN RELATION TO UTOPIC VISION

Kirk Reynolds

The following is my topic proposal for the upcoming undergraduate conference: For my presentation regarding the millennium, I would like to discuss the idea of the "common" man. In his essay "The American Scholar," Ralph Waldo Emerson suggests that an American intellectual character rests in the common man. In his novel *1984*, George Orwell discusses the "proles" who make up 85% of the population, yet are oppressed to the point of being unaware of their own oppression. Yet Orwell also tells us that if there is hope for the future, it is with the proles. With 16 years between the time when Orwell supposed his future would come about and our current time, we obviously haven't arrived at his Dystopian vision. But in 200 plus years of American history, have we moved away from Emerson's ideas closer to a situation where the common man is

pushed down into a working class state and reigned over by an aristocratic minority? Is Orwell's world a natural progression of our own society, or merely satirical hyperbole of certain nuances of our current world?

This topic is still a little vague and fragmented for my tastes, but I plan to condense it into a tighter idea later. I might benefit from also bringing in Rousseau's "Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men," but with the two texts I've already discussed, I may already have more than enough to talk about.

NEGATIVE UTOPIA

Ivy Matthews

The notion of progress is especially sacred in our culture. But ideas such as those set forth in George Orwell's *1984* challenge mankind's ability to create a future that dovetails with our ideals. This narrative doesn't start out with the premise that human nature doesn't exist. It tries to reaffirm the strength of basic human qualities by demonstrating the drastic measures needed to subvert them. However, one must question whether the "human nature" being destroyed is actually natural. Rousseau writes that the acquisition of knowledge through language created an initial break that turned to a wide gulf between modern and original man; and that the more knowledge we gain, the farther from that ideal we travel. His argument about language resonates especially in *1984*, in which the destruction of language is used to bring about a state of submission. However, the protagonists of the story (who presumably possess the fundamental properties of humanity), according to Rousseau's theories, are not in a natural state because they are the products of centuries of progress.

Orwell presents his utopia negatively, but he as writer and we as reader are seeing the book through the filter of knowledge that Rousseau believes has changed mankind over the centuries. The true issue is not whether progress truly separates us from an archetype, but whether the changes it has made to our manner of thinking have structured our minds in such a way that the actual state of original man and the measures we would need to take to attain that state are negative. In other words, the questions I will attempt to answer in this paper are: is progress, specifically the type of progress in *1984*, an elevation or a fall? Should we try to achieve (or revert to) our original state? Do the ends justify the means we would need to employ?

GHOSTS OF HISTORY AND THE MYTH OF PROGRESS

Maryanna Abdo

What typifies the move toward the millennium? Is it a joyous new beginning, a once-in-a-thousand-year chance to really stand for something? Is it a time of fear, fear of us, of what we will become if stripped of our power, our heat, and our supermarket food in a Y2K crisis? Is it a moment at which we will be obliterated and Armageddon will follow? I don't know—I am as curious and as wary as the next American about the coming of the new century, the new millennium is. Given the Y2K problem in America, perhaps this is a time in which we see our grand ideas of progress defeated in the face of a tiny computer glitch—a tiny irony, a little electronic ghost come back to haunt us. Though I possess little technical knowledge, I hear that this problem

could have been easily avoided but that the programmers were pressed for time and memory space and decided to just ignore the impending millennium date change.

This seems to me quite typical of the American response to all things problematic. To move forward, to achieve, especially in favor of covering over the often-painful past or the problematic future—this is the American way. From the Revolutionary War and the slave trade and the Holocaust to Vietnam and the Civil Rights Movement, America has dealt with its historical wounds, the blemishes of the past, in very poor ways. Take the wound of slavery, for instance. Race relations remain a problem today because of relationships established during slavery. It's as if the memory of slavery is too painful, the graveyards too immense, so we attempt to cover over the wounds with progress, with this unending pursuit of capitalist gain and escape from unhappiness. But just as a wound needs light and air to heal, so do these wounds of history require examination, discussion, and bravery in order to properly heal. We must address them head on, or face the problems later, in the new millennium.

I will look primarily at three works to examine how late 20th century authors deal with the idea of progress, its myth and the solutions to our problems with history. I will be exploring the idea of the ghost of History as seen in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, as the character Beloved, and in playwright Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* with AIDS as the modern ghost of history. I also hope to explore another text—perhaps a poem from the Vietnam War era, perhaps a modern commentary on social progress. I would like to pose several questions. How is history represented in literature as a way of pursuing a social commentary? What historical events have been dealt with most poorly, and how is that reflected in the works of these authors? How does the figure of a haunter or ghost fit into this notion of past wounds and badly buried dead? What do we do with this information—how do we, as a society, go about solving these problems? How can we have progress? What is coming for America if we don't solve these problems? What does it have to do with the millennium?

I look forward to grappling with these questions. This paper will represent the culmination of a year and a half of ideas and theories about history, and may turn out to be a springboard for dissertation work and future study.

Society and Surveillance: Defining the Millennial Self

THE MUSICAL *RENT* AND SURVEILLANCE AT THE MILLENNIUM

Rebecca Lorimer

The character Mark in the musical *Rent* asks, "Why are entire years strewn on the cutting room floors of memory, when single frames of one magic night forever flicker in close-up on the 3-D Imax of my mind?" Film and popular culture references pervade the dialogue and entire premise of *Rent*. The basis of contemporary issues places the musical as yet another area of American life infiltrated by the effects of film and surveillance. Mark is the character who spends his life behind a camera, filming his friends who have the problems. He supposedly remains untouched from life's uncertainty by observing and surviving on the other, safe side of the boundary. Because this character questions his need to relate his whole life to the "3-D Imax of [his] mind," he becomes a model for exploring voyeurism. In *The Culture of Surveillance*, William G. Staples explains that "as a society, we have become obsessed with the gaze of the videocam, not only because we perceive that it brings us 'security' but also because we are fascinated by the visual representation of ourselves" (57). Staples comments on the "secure" feelings characters experience while gazing at the outer world from behind a camera and notes society's love for "visual representation of ourselves" or, in other words, reality displayed on film. The movie *Reality Bites* contains a character who documents harsh reality in the same manner as *Rent*, and will aid in my analysis of characters who distinguish themselves from others by filming.

The musical *Rent* places troubled characters in the setting of "living in America and the end of the millennium" where Mark says, "it's like the twilight zone." I will question the dissatisfaction he and his friends feel as Americans at the end of an age and how popular culture may perpetuate this disillusionment.

GAZING UPON *THE CONVERSATION* AND *ENEMY OF THE STATE*

Gloria Lily Chen

I will explore the public's consistent fear of surveillance that technology evokes in *The Conversation* and *Enemy of the State*. (Both conspiracy films contain a similar scene.) Inspired by Coppola's idea that the "safest place for two people who want privacy would be a crowd," both films show how the boundaries of privacy are being infringed upon by surveillance tactics. The socioeconomic events of each film's era increase the public's fear of the intrusion of surveillance on everyday life. For instance, *The Conversation* was released during Watergate, and *Enemy of the State* includes the Wiretap Bill of 1994. Yet the privacy between two "ordinary" people is being violated in both films. Both movies also show how the socioeconomic factors shape the ideology: surveillance leads to alienation and isolation. By researching articles such as Tim Druckrey's "Telephobic Modernity and Ecologies of Surveillance" and Sam Pratt's "008 (High Tech Surveillance)," I will reveal how the general public can be monitored. By watching the gaze in *The Conversation* and *Enemy of the State*, I will explore how the public becomes disillusioned with the advances in surveillance technology.

THE VARIOUS EFFECTS OF MILLENNIAL APOCALYPSE UPON THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Thomas Brownback

With the passing of each millennium, many sources attempt to assure us that the end is near. Be it our friendly Christian congregation that reminds us to look for the Second Coming, be it the street prophets proffering signs that "The End is Near" or the computer skeptics who claim the destruction of society through the Y2K bug. It leaves me to wonder, what can and will in fact occur on that fateful night? We can assume only that people from around the world will hold their breath in unified paranoid fixation as a natural response to these predictions, waiting as their clocks approach the next millennium in fear of that great catastrophe proving to destroy us all...and then?

We can only go two directions from there. Of course, it's entirely possible that on the eve of this night, nothing at all will happen to destroy the world. People will go on about their lives resigned to the fact that the event came and went, without profound immediate destruction. At this time we might be well suited to muse upon the societal affects of the event. However, for the purpose of this paper, I ask, "What happens if an Apocalypse does indeed come upon the millennium? What would that mean for us as a society, what would that tell us as individuals?"

I will be pulling from such hypotheses as presented in post-apocalyptic literature and such sources as can be presented by notable psychological precedents (my sources shall range from *Mad Max* to *Lord of the Flies*, as varied and as diverse and possible). I will use these sources to compile a set of generalized hypotheses concerning the societal rules and reactions to a post-apocalyptic world. How are the distinctions between self and other broken down or reconstructed in this world? What is the new role of the individual towards the society and vice versa? Granted, I do not expect to be able to accurately predict what would happen given an Apocalypse, but I only expect to approach a synthesis of our current perceptions of a post-Apocalyptic world. I merely ask that we humor our whimsical fanaticisms just this once; in fact, I find it imperative to ask these questions now, before it is too late.

10,000 MEGALOMANIACS

Simon Howard

Fifty years from now, scholars will identify this period—the shift from one millennium to the next—as the age when the focus on the ego culminated into the cult of the megalomaniac. This period will be identified as the time when megalomania was not only accepted as a healthy personality trait, but also was expected to be present in all upright citizens. Today we call this megalomania "individualism."

Technology plays a key role in falsely inflating man's power. As human capacity increases with technological advances, the superiority of the human race over the rest of the inhabitants of this world seems to become more and more apparent. Just because he has the capacity to control certain amounts of matter, whether they be nuclear reactions or electricity, man mistakenly concludes that he can control the very nature of matter and

mold it to his own purposes. When an "individual" sits down at a computer and connects to the Internet, the availability of all the resources on the web gives that person a sense of tremendous power. That person then has the ability to communicate with practically the entire world—or the part of the world that is logged in.

In brief, the availability and capacities of technology profoundly affect a person's sense of place in the world and of his abilities. Instead of revealing the smallness of the "individual" in the context of the Internet, this technology inflates his ego by giving the illusion that power is literally at his fingertips. With personal web pages and the advances in multimedia, the megalomaniac now has the capacity to freely broadcast his "identity" to the electronic world. Unfortunately—for the megalomaniac, but mostly for the rest of us—interest in the "individual" is limited to himself.

Virtual Love and Identity

ROMANCING THE MODEM: CYBER ROMANCE AND THE ONLINE DATING TREND

Carmel Heckel

Love. Romance. Internet. Can you guess which one doesn't belong? If you guessed any of them, you've been living in a state of denial. As the world approaches the millennium, these three concepts seem to fit more and more together, actually. With all of the Internet messaging services, email and chat rooms, these kinds of connections seem almost inevitable. But how exactly does Internet technology function in the context of human romantic interaction? And how does the Internet alter or enhance the emotions and interchanges generally associated with a romantic relationship? I intend to present a sociologically based study on the impact of Internet romances and relationships on society's and the individual's concepts of love and intimacy as well as the determinations of the purpose of Internet romances and why so many people turn to their modems and computers for "intimacy."

Because this is a relatively modern concept, and because print literature is relatively rare on the topic, I would like to particularly focus on interviews collected from individuals involved in or searching for Internet romances and other relationships developed through the use of online materials and resources. I would also like to focus on how the media, particularly the film and television industries, perceive the Internet as a source for romance, love and intimacy, as well as social life. Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail* presents Internet romance and romantic connections, for example, in a positive manner, whereas news media constantly warn us about the dangers of getting involved with Internet "dating."

Upon the exploration of this topic I hope to uncover and share the attraction to the Internet as a medium for personal relationships. More importantly, I would like to uncover the aspects of our society and of our approaching of the millennium which make the Internet a more popular and useful medium to interact romantically with others.

REALITY'S INVASION OF FANTASY

Devon Gallegos

Kathryn Bigelow's film *Strange Days* features a technology in which the user escapes from reality by experiencing the memories of others and escapes from present dread by reliving their own, more pleasant memories. Although such a technology does not exist at present, Stephenson's book *Snow Crash* features a synthetically produced world called the Metaverse in which people like the pizza-delivery boy Hiro Protagonist can escape his own real-world existence by becoming a samurai warrior. There is a parallel to the Metaverse currently existing, although not as complex as the Metaverse in Stephenson's vision and not as limited to previous memories as in Bigelow's vision. Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) have quickly evolved from a simple program developed by Richard Bartle and Roy Trubshaw—known simply as MUD—to a vast world like the commercially successful *Dragonrealms*. Although there is an obvious difference between the real world and the created worlds of the MUDs there are curious similarities to the real world which I will

reveal through fieldwork in a large complex multi-user game like *Dragonrealms* and a much smaller, private MUD. If the real and imagined worlds are so similar then why are MUDs so popular to the point of addiction in some players? And as multi-user gaming evolves from text-based to visual-based interfaces, how does the blurring between reality and fantasy affect the societies, both real imagined?

ROAD TO ANDROGYNY

Katherine Duree

I am writing a paper on the experience of creating a cyber-self and introducing him or her to a cyber community. I will analyze the development of the cyber-self, the difficulties of maintaining a separate "virtual" self, and the direction in which my cyber-self develops. In looking at the difficulties and experience of creating a self and introducing him or her into a community, I am going to focus on the issue of gender. I am going to create two selves, both very similar, at least at their creation, except for that one will be "male" and the other "female." I will look at the reactions to each from the cyber community to which they are introduced, as well as the development of the two selves and how they differ. I am interested in analyzing gender roles and assumptions in a cyber community, which is theoretically free of the boundaries and rules of society, as it is not an actual place. I am looking right now at a general chat room such as a LA based room, one titled "Society and Culture" or a "Generation X" room. I am also interested in the implications of the development of the two selves, which I am responsible for, whether it is similar or different, as it relates to the perception of gender and gender roles. In writing the paper I will not only use my experiences in the cyber community and in creating and maintaining the selves, but also literature on the construction of selves, gender roles and cyber-selves/communities.

OUR MONSTERS, OUR SELVES: ROLE-PLAYING OUR WAY TO A NEW MILLENNIUM

Emily Dewey

When contemplating the potential for personal disaster at the dawning of the new millennium, a pivotal fear focuses on the concept of personal identity. In a time of social and moral upheaval, one undoubtedly questions his origins, his goals and his reaction to untoward stimulus. We each have a strong sense of self, yet this concept is continually called into question in the face of ever changing conventional morality. The central question in the personal battle for identity is this: If we are defined by our world, how can we truly know ourselves in a world of constant change?

Enter the concept of the role-playing game. The role-playing game is simply a formal extension of a child's imaginary play world, yet in its confines, the individual is presented with an enclosed universe within which he or she can explore his concept of self, delving into his psyche and uncovering the wonder and horror of identity in the shelter of a consequence free game. Such games, the most famous and long lived being *Dungeons and Dragons*, have wide spread popularity among adolescents, as these individuals are questioning their identity in the bridge from childhood into the adult world. The role-playing game serves as a means through which to explore identity, without the fear of the real world.

With the approach of the millennium, the role-playing game has taken a new role. The concepts no longer revolve around childhood themes of goblins and knights, and adopt a more adult premise. In particular, *Vampire: The Masquerade* concerns itself less with the fictional elements of the undead, and more with the personal intrigue and sensuality of its players. The game's creed "Monsters we are lest monsters we become" is a direct appeal to the concept of self knowledge, thus the game itself serves as a means through which to create and explore personal identity. The consequences and mythology that structure its central concept deal with the excess, sensual decadence, and questioning of existence that accompany the entrance into a new era. Through my study of a game representing a subconscious millennial fear, I hope to bring the role-playing game out of the label of entertainment and into its more crucial role as forum for voicing and coping with personal fears and creating a personal world in the face of chaotic uncertainty.

Multicultural Women

THE POST-MILLENNIAL FUTURE OF SPANISH-LANGUAGE TELEVISION IN LOS ANGELES

Katherine FitzSimmons

Telemundo is the second-largest Spanish-language television network in the nation; it operates in fifty-nine markets in the United States and reaches about eighty-five percent of all Hispanic households. Telemundo currently won the top ratings slot as the most-watched news venue in Los Angeles, beating out its English news competitors. Telemundo's stations broadcast a wide variety of programming including community events, movies, *telenovelas* (soap operas), talk shows, entertainment, music and sports. The focus of my discourse will be Telemundo's *Noticiero* (local news coverage) here in Los Angeles, which airs on channel fifty-two.

The object of my discussion will be three-fold. I would like to examine the differences between the Spanish-speaking female news anchor and the English-speaking female news anchor. I hypothesize that demographics permit Latina anchors to express their sensuality and use their feminism more than female anchors in the English-speaking world. The Latinas' outward appearance does not compromise professionalism or quality of product.

I will also examine the rundowns of both the local Telemundo news and the local English news broadcasts to compare what each considers news. The choice of top stories, leads and teases gives insight into what each language community considers newsworthy. With Telemundo's recent takeover by, in part, Sony Pictures Entertainment, it should be interesting to discover how the influence of this wealthy interlocking directorate will color the news and effect story content.

The main issue to be tackled comes in thinking about the future. Not long after the millennium, fifty percent of California residents will be of Spanish-speaking extraction. Los Angeles will be dominated by, and immersed in, the Spanish-speaking world. This is our future. With the passage of legislation to curtail bilingual education in California, will a need for Spanish-language television still exist after the millennium? Will Los Angeles see a trend towards bilingual television news? Will native English speakers be getting their news from Spanish outlets? Is, and will, Spanish news be valued as higher quality reporting than information transmitted by English news sources? These are just a few questions that remain unanswered, and that we will come to witness answers to in the approaching future.

I plan to express my presentation in video form, showing clips and footage from both Telemundo and English broadcasts. I believe a video package, prepared in broadcast style as a news story itself, will be the more appropriate way to communicate my ideas about this timely and important subject.

CLARISE LISPECTOR: RELUCTANT FEMINISM, MAGIC REALISM, AND A POST-MODERN OUTLOOK UPON APPROACHING THE 21ST CENTURY

Allison Hector

The combination of magical realism, post-modernism and feminism, though a significant concept to the twentieth century and into the next millennium, is not always easy to see embodied in a single writer. All three, however, find their place in relation to each other in the work of Clarice Lispector, a Brazilian writer who wrote her first novel in 1944 and wrote until her death in 1977. But the interactions of these broad ideologies change the way one looks at the other and how they function in a story. And while many of Lispector's writing deals with sexism and sexual violence and inequalities she is often a rather unwilling recipient of the feminist title, loathe to be a spokeswoman or necessarily claim to be a feminist writer at all. And while her stance on to what extent she wished to be a feminist model changed through the course of her career there is no doubt that her personal attitude toward the issue of feminism influenced both her writing and how she was viewed and interpreted. How feminism informs post-modernism, and how both of these fit into her magical realist style and cultural background will be the primary concern of my paper. How the three reconcile themselves in Lispector's fictional works is also of primary consequence. It is this very balance that Lispector works with that aids the evolution of our culture by calling into question how they do relate to one another and whether those relationships will eventually thrive or hinder one another.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE GEISHA: ORIENTAL "FEMALES" IN *MISS SAIGON* AND *M. BUTTERFLY*

Emi Minezaki

Throughout much of modern popular culture, there is a portrayal of Asian women, and Asians in general, as innocent and helpless beings who need saving, usually from a white male. This orientalism is frequently portrayed in theater. Two different approaches to orientalism are reflected in the theatrical representations David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988) and Alain Boublil's and Claude-Michel Shonberg's *Miss Saigon* (1987). These two works take opposite approaches to Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* (1904). A western male becomes fascinated with the idea of the naivete and vulnerability of an Asian woman. Hwang brings attention to the misconceptions of orientalism and sexuality that are present in western society. He also highlights the role of the self and the effects of these stereotypes on the self. In *Miss Saigon*, the stereotypical representations of the orient are acknowledged, but the idea of a helpless Asian woman is still a prevalent theme. Rather than refuting this common stereotype, *Miss Saigon* reinforces this portrayal of orientalism and reinforces the role of women in this stereotype. I will examine Ralph P. Locke's article "Reflection on orientalism in opera and musical theater" (1993). I will also use David Paumbo-Liu's article "On the Functions of Asian America in the Recent American Imaginary" (1993).

HEE-SUN KIM: REFLECTING THE COLOR OF KOREA'S CULTURE

Ann Lee

With the approach of the new millennium, there are obvious implications that it is more than a drastic change in numbers on our calendar wall. It has developed into a way of presenting new goals, new ideas and hopeful change in a couple of words. The romanticized new millennium affects many countries and cultures (at least, the ones that are rich enough and developed enough to be affected by it) and the Korean culture is one of them. Although economically unstable and politically struggling, the people continue to change and develop in their own ways culturally. Kim Il Sun, a popular Korean actress of today has influenced people through her presentation of self and personality and in turn, reflects the new thoughts emerging from the people of her culture.

Kim Il Sun presented a new trend that has been called her own. She was one of the first to wear elbow-length shirts, large floppy hair bands and skirts between the knee and ankle in length. This style of dress can be attributed to her. She is thin in physical structure and her personality reflects an adorable and colorful culture of today. She reflects a culture in transition from the old to the new millennium because she is a part of a generation that introduces anxieties and concerns about the disintegration of the traditional Korean culture and hints at a convergence of cultures in various aspects. She is not seen as a traditional Korean female, yet is still comprised of Korean ideas and thought. She is colorful and animated, both males and females find their ideal in her, and she presents implications of the new millennium. Although not a woman of the new millennium in comparison to the emerging figures in other countries such as Hillary Clinton of America and Princess Rania of Jordan, Kim Il Sun reflects the current ideals of a changing Korean culture as middle ground between yesterday and tomorrow.

Representing the World

FREUDIAN SUPPORT FOR A CONTEXTUAL REALITY: A MILLENNIAL PERSPECTIVE

Matt Vinson

Amid millennial expectations for a renewed sense of progress in human thought and capacity, hope for discerning absolute truth in the world of reason has dissipated into the vaguest of notions. Emerging from an age that has fostered the systematic scrutiny of such societal constructs as language, science and religion, one can merely fathom a contextual reality in which an infinite number of similarly non-provable systems are contemplated without assigning a standard of higher certainty. Even today, Sigmund Freud's century-old modernist theories on human interactions continue to cast suspicion on these various social inventions, clearing the field of thought for the reasonable consideration of myriad seemingly fallible belief complexes.

Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* names religion as a primary illusion within human culture: "Religious ideas are teaching and assertions about facts and conditions of external (or internal) reality which tell one something one has not discovered for oneself and which lay claim to one's belief" (31). However, when applying the same rigorous standards to Freud's own theories about the origin of civilization (as initiated in *Totem and Taboo*) and to his views derived from those theories (such as in *Civilization and Its Discontents*), one finds Freudian thought to be somewhat, if not equally, illusory. Though Freud fails to establish a pattern of thought that is absolute, his deconstruction of basic social claims to truth provides unwitting support for a pragmatic reevaluation that is more germane than ever at the thought-provoking turn of the millennium.

THE MEANING OF THE MILLENNIUM

Robert Ziff

What does the millennium actually mean? It appears to me that the turning of the millennium is nothing more than the passage of another year. The only meaning one can derive from it is born, lives and dies within the human mind. Simply because our number system is based around the number ten we tend to attribute meaning to each increment of ten—decade, century, and millennium.

The meaning many have attributed to this millennium is TEOTWAWKI, an acronym that translates into The End Of The World As We Know It. Many fear the so-called "millennium bug" that may have the ability to break down the entire technical world that we rely upon every day. But is the fear realistic? Is it logical to fear the unknown to such a degree?

Isaac Asimov contemplates these very same questions in his novel *Nightfall*. A fictional planet placed a system with six stars sees light approximately 2,300 years. On that one night, the entire planet is forced to tangle with the unknown. In many ways, Asimov's philosophy addresses the true meaning behind the millennium. Through a close analysis of the text, one can see that the millennium, according to Asimov, is a fabrication of the conscious mind. In addition, Asimov sees no manner with which to fully overcome the fabrication. Even the most logical, learned, praised men will succumb to their instinctive fear at the sight of a

truly foreign surrounding. Therefore, according to Asimov, no creature is capable of defeating the fears of its creation.

MEANINGLESS MILLENNIUM: ANDREI BJELY'S *PETERSBURG*

Rob Salgado

The most meaningful aspect of the millennium is its meaninglessness. As the new millennium draws closer, the hype becomes more and more ubiquitous, and it is utterly ridiculous. We use a base ten numerical system, and we have established a system of measuring time such that year number one roughly coincides with the birth of a certain Jew about whom very little is known. From these two simple facts people infer some sort of monumental, cosmic event? Is it just because 2000 is a nice, big, round, even number? Many cultures use different calendars, ones that prevent them from experiencing this little numerical nicety (obviously, numbers like 6348 or 1429 are just too random and unexciting to have any sort of profound universal meaning, right?). I have long thought that the essence of humanity is precisely this, veiling reality in such a way as to impose a meaning that does not exist outside human consciousness onto the real world. Taking what is actually there and distorting it through imagination. It should be obvious that if we (human beings, I mean) invent completely arbitrary and completely abstract (and completely human) systems to organize our experience of reality, then we cannot expect those systems to be actually related to objective truth and reality.

In Andrei Bjely's *Petersburg*, this idea of the human as interpretive being is explored in depth. The masking of reality is taken on as a central theme. The main character of the novel, Apollon Apollonovitch Ableukhov, is portrayed as essentially a walking human brain, and it is almost absurd how completely within his own version of reality he is able to live his life. When he walks down the street he transforms, in his mind, the city into a complex structure of geometrical constructs. He has all his things over-organized through the implementation of a thorough inventory and categorization based on letters and directions. Indeed, the novel is replete with cases of human beings doing what human beings do best: "cerebral play," as it is called. Language is often played around with by characters to find meaning in the arbitrary, abstract sound patterns of which it is made. Numbers, colors, sounds all produce different arbitrary, abstract mental associations to different characters. Through a close analysis and discussion of this theme of man as interpretive being as it is presented by Bjely in *Petersburg*, I hope to gain an understanding that will help me better discuss the implications of the millennium at the Bishop Conference.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF A CONFESSION: ATONEMENT AS THE GATEWAY TO THE MILLENNIUM

Francesca Cimino

The opportunity for a new beginning always seems to have a profound effect on the desire to reconcile past transgressions and purge lingering blemishes. As the millennium rapidly approaches, the world is scrambling to make amends in an effort to shut the door on the past so it can prepare to face the future. Political and religious leaders make confessions and apologies that pervade the media almost daily. Exoneration has

become a top priority of those who hold records of dark, vile deeds that continue to affect relationships across the globe.

The very nature of a confession requires that the perpetrator humble himself to his prey, and in recent years, the world has watched and held its breath as former powerhouses bow to the whims of their victims. Japan apologized to Korea for years of bitter, tortuous rule over them as well as sought absolution for their role in World War II. People scoffed at their preposterous suggestion. South Africa set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in an attempt to heal the wounds of years of authoritarian rule under the Afrikaners, but instead of closing a chapter of their past, has not only uncovered thousands of cases of brutality but is now recommending prosecution of the perpetrators. The Vatican, having set up a committee to prepare for the millennium, has also issued its own apologies: one to the Jews for its lack of action during the Holocaust and one acknowledging the injustice of the Spanish Inquisition.

These actions raise questions about their sincerity. Can asking for forgiveness decades or even centuries after a wrongdoing really allow the world to move on? Is it truly a need for absolution or something else that drives these apologies?

I intend to explore the answers to these questions by analyzing recently published articles on the unprecedented accords and by examining the success they've had thus far. I may use Michel Foucault's discussion of confessions in his *History of Sexuality* to provide a foundation for a discourse on the dynamics behind these acts of repentance. I want to look at the potentially patronizing nature of the admissions made and hope to uncover the rationalization behind them. I also intend to investigate and discuss the implications of their timeliness in accordance with the coming millennium.

THE OVERDETERMINATION OF SELF

Marshall Shepardson

Critical analysts of the film medium use the word "over determined" to describe the fact that movies are not unified works of art communicating the ideas of a single artist, but are on the other hand influenced by a vast array of sources: from investors to writers to gaffers, each on making an impact on the film. These influences are often subtle, but opposing interests become problematic factors in the final product nonetheless.

In my presentation, I will discuss the nature of the human "mind" in terms of being "over determined." This means that there is no core "self" (and therefore no "be yourself" or "find your true self") but rather that the human psyche is composed of an incongruous pastiche of countless, often imperceptible, usually conflicting influences. From the very beginning, a person is conditioned and determined by everything it comes in contact with, gradually forming an ego and an "identity," based on external stimuli, within an elusive framework of genetically determined "hard-wiring." I will assert that there is no single, united driving motivational force within the self, but that each person exists from moment to moment, using (being compelled by) its repertoire of memories, instincts and socio-cultural training to do nothing more than survive, propagate and serve its own genes.

I will address the vexing and ludicrous "nature vs. nurture" debate from the position that they are one in the same: one could consider a person's genetic makeup to be just another environmental factor, or one may consider that person's external influences to be as unavoidable (and therefore virtually intrinsic) as genetics.

Also, I will explore the nature of consciousness and language, not as aspects of humanity that liberate it from genetically hard-wired tedium, but as adaptations that serve as multi-purpose fitness-increasing mechanisms.

I will draw text-based information from sources scientific, as well as literary. My "influences" will include Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*, Joan Scott's *The Evidence of Experience*, and anthropological articles.

Millennial Aesthetics: Film, Video and Art

BEAUTY AND ITS REFLECTION IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Shahbano Nawaz

Art, n: the use of skill and imagination in the production of things of beauty

Beauty, n, pl: qualities that give pleasures to the senses or exalt the mind

From medieval religious portraits to the Renaissance to Art Nouveau, the definition of beauty has constantly shifted to suit the popular culture and its tastes. Before these trends can be analyzed in contemporary art though, the initial question of what actually constitutes beauty needs to be addressed. For example, Carol Dunlap, in her book *The Culture Vulture*, explains that beauty, during the era of the Italian Renaissance, was defined as "harmony, symmetry...and the perfect balance of all parts." With the dawn of Industrialism, the paradigm of what is aesthetically pleasing shifted to include the factories and smog of the densely crowded cities as in the Ashcan School of Art. In the second half of the twentieth century, the criterion for beauty and its delineation has become more and more indefinite, as various movements such as cubism and the feminist art movement have challenged what was traditionally regarded as art.

This leads to the next question of what role beauty (or lack thereof) actually plays in the creation of modern art. Since interpretation of an image or art work varies from one individual to the next, depending on different "schools" of criticism, the issues of censorship, quality and multiculturalism arise. For example, pornography, though offensive to many, can be defined, in broad definition, as art since it does give pleasure to the senses. Thus, the main talk of this paper is to observe the transient, and, at times, conflicting ideas of beauty throughout mainstream art and to analyze its function in producing it. Since art reflects a culture, this examination of beauty will also emphasize the principles and standards that compose today's culture and the manner in which they reinforce the romantic notion of the present era as the threshold to the new millennium.

THE CAMERA'S EYE: THE LINK BETWEEN RODNEY KING AND CIVIL UNREST

Jeanne Klein

I will research the use of surveillance during the Rodney King beating and the 1992 Los Angeles riots that followed the trial of the four LAPD officers. The conference category I will address is technology. I will explore the role of the observer in all of the technology used, and how the medium itself (videotape or news cameras) begins to serve as the producer of events and social constructions, rather than just an objective tool. The videotape of the actual beating was used as evidence during the trial, on both sides. Using a collection of analyses in a book reviewed by Richard T. Shaefer (*Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*), I will analyze how the video was interpreted and reinterpreted with "new narrative" by the defense in order to portray King as the controller rather than the victim. The book also offers questions such as the difference between "seeing" and "reading" an event the way you want to.

"Seeing" an event is the overall objective viewing; "reading" is choosing certain parts of the event and using them to prove your subjective view of the event as a whole. Therefore, I will make the point that the different interpretations of the video clip were contributing factors to the civil unrest after the trial. I will also tie the role of the observer into the role of the media's televised broadcast of the riots, explored in Ian Watson's article "News, Television, and Performance: The Case of the Los Angeles Riot" (New Theatre Quarterly 1998). In addition, I will use Frank Tomasulo's "'I'll See It When I Believe It': Rodney King and the Prison-House of Video" (The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event 1996), and Mike Mashon's "Losing Control: Popular Reception(s) of the Rodney King Video" (Wide Angle: A Film Quarterly of Theory, Criticism, and Practice 1993) to research the role of the spectator in response to the video.

The argument I will make concerns "objective" technological mediums as not objective at all. Filmed video clips help form the observer's personal interpretations, and therefore, social constructions (such as race relations, in this case). With the growth of technology and the increasing, daily use of it as "objective" resources in courtrooms and in the media, the new millennium faces a world where the camera can create definitive, social constructions for us.

THE DELUSION OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN MILLENNIUM MOVIE MAKING

Ryan Jackson-Healy

It is asserted, however, that each one of us behaves in some one respect like a paranoiac, corrects some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him by the construction of a wish and introduces this delusion into reality. A special importance attaches to the case in which this attempt to procure a certainty of happiness and a protection against suffering through a delusional remolding of reality is made by a considerable number of people in common. The religions of mankind must be classed among the mass-delusions of this kind. No one, needless to say, who shares a delusion ever recognizes it as such.

— Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

The decades up to the millennium have seen the formation of the disaster film. We have seen this movie most recently as a stellar occurrence. Be it by extra-terrestrial or cosmic debris, the fate of mankind faces dangers in movies unlike any in reality. Yet, in each film, the individual manages to outwit the menace. Being a destructionist-humanist, I immediately question the popularity of these stories. What purpose do they serve? Reading Freud points at a possibility. Films fit in the "mass-delusions" category; I must ask what they conceal. There are several things in common with all these films that I will investigate. All films portray rugged male protagonist, an antagonist who has never existed in the "real world," and an urban setting. In both my 112 and 101 classes we are investigating the myth of individuality. These films feed into the notion of "being an individual." With the texts from my 112 and 101 classes, as well as some supplemental works and the movies themselves, I will attempt to unravel some sort of smaller answers to the larger question: In an increasingly urban and mass culture, is the narrative of the individual tantamount to maintaining our social lives?

THE NEW AUTEUR: FILMMAKING

Ethan Shaftel

For the conference, I would like to focus my paper specifically on how the changes that will come with the new millennium will relate to film production and consumption. The basis of my paper will be the original essays on the auteur theory proposed by Andrew Sarris and others at the start of what is now called the French New Wave. My argument is that the goals this school of thought put forth for cinema have been absolutely unrealized thus far. However, with the advances in film technology, both in production (digital cameras) and post-production (nonlinear editing programs), filmmakers of the new millennium can fulfill the auteur prophecy.

Alexandre Astruc, one of the prominent writers on the auteur theory, said "The filmmaker-author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen." Digital camera technology is bringing the number of people who work on film closer and closer to the ideal set by the French New Wave: One. The filmmaker. The auteur. Only then will a film truly be the expression of a single individual, as is a novel, for instance. I will also speak of how this new technology will require a true filmmaker to understand the principles of editing and post-production. I will describe today's programs such as "PhotoShop" and how that can help a filmmaker embrace his own subjective point of view. The new filmmaker will leave the camera at home, attempting instead to participate in reality. Later, relying on subjective memory, the filmmaker will utilize programs such as "PhotoShop" to perfectly create his vision of reality.

The text basis for my paper will be the original essays on the auteur theory and its goals. I will try to prove that these goals have not yet been fulfilled through evidence in film journals describing the means of production on most modern cinema. Finally, I will draw on technical articles on both production and post-production technology to help illustrate how this technology can change the means of production and reach the goals set forth during the French New Wave.

New Technologies of Body and Mind

HOW THE NATURE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY FORCES US TO REDEFINE THE INDIVIDUAL

Andrew Escobar

The concept of man as an individual developed only two centuries ago. Man as we understand him—a sentient and supreme being with natural rights—was birthed by the Enlightenment and passed its turbulent adolescence during the French Revolution. He can be viewed in the Constitution of the United States of America and its Bill of Rights, as well as *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens*. Rousseau is particularly helpful in exploring this definition of man, as he serves as one of the major foundations of these aforementioned documents. This paper will therefore examine how Rousseau develops the individual, places him in society, and most importantly, distinguishes his relationship with technology. Does Rousseau's definition of man remain relevant to today's society? Beginning with the Industrial Revolution, the technological advancements of society have grown exponentially and have culminated with the development of the computer and artificial intelligence. Man is ever more reliant on his technological tools. Are these tools taking over the lives of their creators? As man becomes more dependent upon technology, his resentment towards it grows. Rousseau foresaw the potential of this conflict in his writings. It was recently manifested several years ago in the highly publicized chess match between Kasparov and Deep Blue. This event will serve as a backdrop to the exploration of the question of whether modern technology recreates the concept of Rousseau's man, and if so, how?

CULTURE SHOCK

Peter Petro

I would like to address in my presentation how the concept of culture may be changing and evolving as we approach the twenty-first century, and how media (i.e. languages, the Internet, print media, music) within which cultures interact, combine, and conflict with one another may also change and affect the nature and perception of cultures. Cultures may begin to change or "evolve" at an accelerated pace, and may do so within a consumerist society in which people begin to more actively and freely "subscribe" to the "cultures" that are presented (marketed) to them, as if they were being sold any other type of product or service.

The cultures that would thrive in this sort of context would be the ones which most effectively and convincingly articulate and present themselves within the relevant media and linguistic systems (whether it be the Internet, print media, and music, whatever). Cultures seem to me to have an inherent "natural selection"—some die out, some live on, and some express their "dominance" to the degree that they expand and influence thought, behavior and values.

Yet while cultures are often thought of as being age-old systems of understanding and behaving in the world, these new cultures would not have the same sort of "encoded evolutionary memory," since they might be a few generations old, or less. They are therefore more seemingly arbitrary, more capable of promoting

"interests," more dynamic, and more determined by individual intuition than on corporate or shared experience over a long period of time.

The Internet appears to offer a good point of departure for writing on multiculturalism and media, given the millennial excitement and paranoia about computers. At the same time that traditional geographic and logistic boundaries are sometimes circumvented, there is less apparent need for "putting oneself" into the "interactive" experience. Information is presented in a very dynamic way, separate from ourselves, and does not appear to mold us so deeply as more comprehensive forms of cultural immersion. This "culture shock" will offer new ways for us to react to cultures, for cultures to react to themselves, for cultures to "behave." Which cultures will thrive within this medium? Why will they thrive, and to what degree? What does it mean for a culture to thrive? How will this dynamic of cultures affect our lives in the US and abroad? How will different areas be affected, like business, marketing, science, philosophy, religion, the family, interpersonal relationships?

I AIN'T GOT NO BODY: SINGING THE MULTIMEDIA MILLENNIUM BLUES

Eileen Kowalski

I don't plan on handing you a paper on April 9, 1999 as a participant in The Meaning of the Millennium conference. But I will hand you a disk. The Thematic Option Program recently integrated the New Literacy Project into its classes, accepting that multimedia is becoming increasingly important in academic life (and life in general). However, the move towards multimedia, especially academia, is not just the public embracing the next new technology. I think the move from 2-D paper to 3-D multimedia as the forum for discourse—discussing ourselves—reveals a shift in how we define ourselves as human beings as we approach the millennium.

Logically, the move from print to multimedia would seem to be a move away from the natural (words on wood paper) into alienating abstract technology (worlds inside of a beeping box). Yet, I believe the exact opposite is true. The academic essay alienates its audience by discussing concepts through abstractions—words like "epistemological" and 20 point sentences defining the essence of mankind or space-time. Furthermore, it often lacks a speaker with a personality, as the writer wants to be a serious, credible source of knowledge (huzzah for knowledge!). As Neil Postman attests to in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, people of the 19th century could listen for hours to orations done in complex essayistic formats and appreciate them. Then the majority of them would go back and work on the farm or in the shop. Viewing life in terms of abstract concepts was tolerable when humanity was in touch with reality.

Now, our entire lives are abstract concepts. I will finish writing this "abstract" on the computer (a white box), lace up my Nike Air Walks, pound the concrete over to the T.O. office (a bigger white box), and deliver this paper. Richard Lanham, author of *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts* believes the move towards discourse in terms of multimedia is a way to "heal the pains of abstraction" (from lecture on 3/2/99). Video, sound, pictures, and animation are sensory stimulation that shows us a concept through our bodies (eyes, ears, tapping feet) instead of merely telling our mind the concept in abstract words. The move towards using multimedia in discourse reveals a need to constitute and define ourselves as both body and

mind. We want flesh and blood inside the computer. We want to interact with the machine. How? How will multimedia affect academia? Will it merely expand or fully explode the traditional essay of Montaigne and Thoreau? Why? Why is the body so important? Is this some strange Freudian drama where as we are contemplating the end with the millennium we want to recreate the polymorphously perverse world of infancy—full of sensory stimulation and focused on the body? These are some of the questions I intend to tackle through texts like Adam Phillip's *The Beast in the Nursery: On Curiosity*, Stephen Toolman's *Cosmopolous*, the aforementioned Postman and Lanham, and possibly Barthes or anything else useful I can find.

The catch in accepting my paper proposal is that you will not get just a paper. I want to use the medium that I am discussing, so this will be a self-reflexive exploration of how and why we use multimedia in scholastics. I plan to write a "hyperessay," an interactive document using multimedia and hypertext where the reader is guided by their interest through the document. Professors at the University of Baltimore Stuart Moulthrop and Nancy Kaplan amongst many other scholars have adopted this method of writing and I'd like to explore the possibilities of this very new medium using their work as a springboard for ideas.

Millennial Counter-Cultures

MOONTRIBE, RAVE CULTURE, AND THE RETURN TO THE PRIMITIVE

Colleen Lester

Towards the end of the millennium a new type of drug culture is on the rise. Raves are large, all night, dance parties. Young people gather from all around to dance to techno and roll on ecstasy, tip on acid, or tweak on methamphetamines. Raves held at clubs or in parks are commercially sponsored and sanctioned. Of course, no one is supposed to sell or take drugs, but as long as the event takes place within the confines of an urban, capitalist venue, the police officers that are supposedly making sure no one is breaking the law, seem to have no problem turning a blind eye.

A Los Angeles based group of musicians, Moontribe, finds desert locales far away from the city and from law enforcement, and holds their own underground rave parties, every full moon. There is no exorbitant cover charge for these parties, every one contributes what they can afford; "moontribes" are about community and about returning to nature.

With the millennium fast approaching these parties offer an escape from urban center, and the opportunity to celebrate the moon, nature and community, which the establishment finds threatening. The police try to uncover the "secret" locations of the raves. A young man committed suicide at the last moontribe. Even though it was one of two deaths in several years, and the initial police report revealed that the young man was only under the influence of alcohol, and not any illicit drugs, the news media immediately responded with reports of the "dangers" of moontribes.

I hope to shed some light on the positive aspects of moontribe, the return to a natural setting, and the bonding between young people, and address the ramifications this has on the importance placed on urban centers, and on the controlled and capitalistic means of drug distribution.

CULT CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

Suzanne Welcome

As the current millennium draws to a close, apocalyptic cults are becoming a part of public consciousness. With these groups committing newsworthy acts like mass suicides, their philosophies and psychologies are entering the minds of the public through the filter of modern journalism. Psychologists have been studying the phenomenon of cult leadership and membership for decades, but their findings have only recently been part of the evening news and daily papers. What the press reports says as much about modern society as it says about the cults themselves.

The public looks to the media for its information in much the same way that the members of cults look to their leaders. We depend upon the media to interpret current events and research journals as cult members allow leaders to interpret astrological events and religious texts. We allow the reports of a few to tell us what normal

behavior is and what is not. We allow our opinions to be shaped and our outcasts defined. We give the press the power to tell us how to react appropriately to the dawning of a new age a cult members give their leaders the same power. Looking at the changes in information deemed appropriate for presentation by the press is a method of questioning the power we have given it.

The media coverage of the 1970 mass suicide of members of the People's Temple Movement illustrates how journalists of the past generation reacted to a cult event. Articles in newspapers and magazines popular in the time show what information was considered essential and interesting to the public. This material focused largely on physical descriptions of the suicides and political climate surrounding it. Comparing this coverage to the media blitz following the 1996 mass suicide members of the Heaven's Gate Movement shows a change in what information the press is providing and in public is consuming. This generation's reaction included psychological analyses and insights into the group's doomsday beliefs.

The change in the presentation of information about apocalyptic cults is representative of a change in the values of the American public. The shift in presentation shows a shift in the way we define ourselves and view deviant groups. The coverage shows how the view of aberrant behavior has changed over time and how the field of psychology has been addressed. The change also shows a shift in what information is considered private and what is considered appropriate for publication. This topic of cults and their changing presentation by the press would fit well into discussions of both boundaries and self-definition in the coming millennium.

AND YA DON'T STOP: HIP-HOP'S OBSESSION WITH THE YEAR 2000

Ryan Pearson

Little girl's voice: "Daddy, what's it going to be like in the year 2000?"

Fatherly voice: "Well, sweetheart, for your sake I hope it will be all peaches and cream. But I'm afraid the end-time is near—the cataclysmic apocalypse referred to in the scriptures of every holy book known to mankind. It will be an era fraught with boundless greed and corruption, where global monetary systems disintegrate, leaving brother to kill brother for a grain of overcooked rice. The nations of the civilized world will collapse..."

Such a fervent, paranoid vision of the millennium would seem appropriate in a fringe religious cult's weekly newsletter. But its urgency seems out of place as the introduction to a music CD that peaked at number two on the nation's Billboard charts at the beginning of this year. These hopeless words begin platinum-selling hip-hop artist/MTV icon Busta Rhymes' latest album, *Extinction Level Event-The Final World Front*, and are a potent indicator of the hip-hop genre's unquestionable future-consciousness.

Since hip-hop first touched the mainstream in 1979 with "Rapper's Delight" by The Sugarhill Gang, the music has always been about challenging the status quo while at the same time channeling current pop culture into a unique, urban perspective on life. America has viewed hip-hop at various times as a scapegoat, a prophet, and a voice of the voiceless. For this reason, the titles of several of the most recent hip-hop releases reveal a

startling trend: Dr. Dre's upcoming *The Chronic 2000*; Method Man's latest *Tical 2000: Judgment Day*; and Redman's *Doc's The Name 2000*.

But why? What does the millennium signify for these artists? And, with hip-hop's recent acceptance into the American mainstream, where does that leave the future? I would argue that our cultural stumble into the 21st century will fall into the clammy palms of the suburban youth that who now make up 70% of the consumer base for today's hip-hop albums. What this means for pop culture is that a mode of artistic expression that has always been viewed as a vanguard of edgy, uncompromising and challenging messages will lose its "revel" status?

How are artists coping with the millennium? Are they acknowledging the changing audiences for their music? Is there a general theme to the ways the year 2000 surfaces in current hip-hop lyrics? Has hip-hop hit a huge wall at the millennium, mushrooming out into pop culture while losing its political and social consciousness? I will examine the artists' words themselves, to determine if a sense of self-understanding can contribute to the strange brew of capitalism, culture, politics and time. The lyrical references to the year 2000 in recent hip-hop music should reveal answers. In addition, my examination of the recent recognition of the hip-hop music industry in the mainstream media will add a broad perspective to my dissection of lyrics. This blend of the meat of the hip-hop message (the words themselves) with the current popular media portrayal of the culture should guide the audience towards a refined, unique perspective on popular youth culture in America as the beginning of the new millennium.

A CULTURE OF DRUGS: PSILOCYBIN AND AMANITA THROUGH HISTORY

Jonathan Tung

I want to look into drug culture, specifically that pertaining to the Psilocybin and Amanita genus of mushrooms, otherwise known as "magic mushrooms," or simply "shrooms." The discussion I want to present focuses on the use of psychedelic mushrooms as a tool in the human quest for knowledge in the past and present. Many religions, especially those of North and South American indigenous peoples, have used psychedelic mushrooms as a major part of religious ceremonies. In addition, people from around the world have used and still use them in their personal spiritual quests. However, it seems that today, shrooms are used less for spiritual and religious purposes and more for pleasure and escape from the real world. Society seems to have had something to do with this. With its so-called war on drugs, the U.S. government has attempted to halt all drug use, but in the process, they have also promoted drug use by bringing the issue to the forefront of American culture. I want to know what role mushrooms play in today's search and construction of knowledge. Do they still serve the purpose of furthering spiritual goals, or have they merely become another leisure drug in which people seek escape? If so, is this escape an actual deconstruction of knowledge, or is it still a pursuit of it? By breaking down the constraints of everyday life, one may argue that users of mushrooms are in fact expanding knowledge by experiencing life differently, coming upon knowledge in a non-traditional, informal way. However, the opposite can also be said. By consuming mushrooms, the user is in fact deconstructing his/her knowledge of the world and slipping into something unreal, a fantasy land, in which the truths and knowledge learned there have no application in the "real world."

...HE THAT WINNITH SOULS IS WISE
Travis Flourney

In a mass-produced pamphlet entitled "Chick Publications" endorsing the comic tract ministry of Jack T. Chick, a mini-historical record appears—one which echoes the themes of past evangelists, but in a slightly different light: "Forty years ago, Jack T. Chick presented Jesus to some prison inmates. To hold their attention, he made a flipchart, showing them they would face God's judgment. With their attention riveted to the drawings, nine of the eleven present accepted Christ. "

Although adhering to age-old principles of revivalism (particularly fear tactics centered on the horrors of hell), Jack Chick utilized the power of the print media in a way seldom connected with religious dogma. His claimed success owes much of its origin to the society that recognizes and identifies with comic book literature. Such a strange mixture of the divine and the secular intrigues me. How did he "hold their attention" so very well? What power did his flipchart exert that other forms of communication failed to perform?

I intend to examine the issue of Jack Chick's method of religious indoctrination and its reasons for relative success or failure, possibly venturing into a discussion of the relevance of the very terms "success" and "failure" when discussing mass religious conversion. Moreover, I will delve into the details involved in his techniques of persuasion (with emphasis on his approach towards ignorant people and children who, by his own admittance, are more susceptible to the "word").

Further, I will investigate what Chick's methods reveal about the nature of his particular take on Christian dogma—especially in regards to its extremist nature. By unfolding Chick's intensely literal interpretation of the Bible, I hope to understand more fully the role religion fills as this millennium wanes and a new one waxes. By exploring the uncomfortable edges of thought, the picture at the center can focus more clearly. In a society ostensibly dedicated to the tearing down of stereotypes and ignorance, examining a final, all-encompassing master of the stereotype at its most basic level could only help illuminate the problem at hand. Could Chick's one-sided world-view represent a last ditch effort to cling to rabidly dogmatic life-styles in a world slowly relaxing its grip on the importance of identity? Or does he fulfill an essential need for identity, simply playing the same role as a host of other extremists before him? How is Chick's fate intertwined with the fate of the world at large? And what can his teachings predict for the time beyond the millennial barrier?

2000 and What? Eurocentrism and the Millennium

WHY 2K?

Jimmy Fusil

The Y2K Bug; millennium madness; the violence caused by the fear of the apocalypse, of the Last Judgment; the survivalist preparation for the year 2000 and what it entails: these are some examples of the concerns and problems which are direct results of Man's ideas on time, the universe and religion. More particularly, these problems are a result of specifically euro-Christian conceptions of these subjects: linear time, a single anthropomorphic vengeful God, a universe with a beginning and an end.

As much as the Y2K Bug is the result of shortsightedness, apocalyptic fears and the violent behavior they may cause are the fruit of an anthropocentric, euro-centric cosmology. The fear of a second coming in 2000, of violent uprisings (*Strange Days*), of the Armageddon (*Mad Max*), creates a brand of paranoia more widespread than that of the Cold War, a dread of an inevitable future which is further exaggerated by the media. The coming of the new helio-Christian millennium should not be a concern for cultures in which man is not the central creation, in which time is circular, in which dating is not based on the birth of Christ and on the orbital period of the Earth. Yet, the supremacy of euro-Christian theology in the economic and cultural network of the world, of the solar Christian calendar, of a linear concept of time and existence, of a man-centered philosophy in world culture, a result of the colonial expansion, creates a global tension as the "nice round number 2000" approaches. There is no doubt that the arrival of the new millennium and the fears that surround it will have global and negative economic and social repercussions. There is also no doubt in my mind that the passing into the year 2000 could be the most anticlimactic event of the millennium.

The privileged and central place of man in euro-Christian epistle can therefore be seen as the prime cause of anxiety and potential problems at the turn of the century. I will attempt to prove, through the works of Nietzsche, Francis Bacon, Diderot and others, that this assignment of value to the human is something created and developed by man, and more specifically by Christian European man. I will also try to show that the coming of a new millennium would have no meaning if there were none assigned to it by the euro-Christian mind, and that such a projection of value is the consequence of anthropocentrism.

I will also, time permitting, demonstrate how the coming of the next century, if it proves relatively uneventful, inconsequential and anticlimactic, could lead to an abrupt shift of popular ideology as to the place of Man in the universe. Maybe euro-Christian Man will no longer see himself as the superior central being, but rather as a part of a larger fabric, as many Eastern philosophies have proposed for centuries.

HURTLING TOWARD THE MILLENNIUM: THE HYPE OF EUROCENTRIC TIME

John Wasilczyk

As humanity hurtles towards the millennium, towards the inescapably significant year 2000, one must simply ask: so what? What is the true importance of the transition between December 31, 1999 and January 1, 2000?

Regardless of the intense revelry that will inevitably occur on New Year's Eve of 1999, the dawning of the next millennium will probably not be the universal turning point that it has been characterized as. The consistent oversight of such a simple detail is largely due to the overwhelming Euro centrism expressed within American society. The intense emphasis upon the European calendar system overlooks the fact that many other cultures have long since seen the turn of the millennium upon their calendars. Despite the worldwide excitement concerning the millennium, post-millennial life will remain essentially unchanged. Significant cultural changes simply do not occur overnight, regardless of the infamy ascribed to that night. Basic human nature, our collective virtues and vices, is far too constant to be revised over the span of one evening. Though technology has advanced immensely over the last thousand years, human nature remains almost completely unchanged.

The construction of the millennium event is one based in our collectively Eurocentric identity, an identity that needs validation via worldwide attention. Use of our first-world nation status is exploited in the construction of the worldwide millennium celebration—even cultures that operate within an alternate calendar system are forced to recognize the European calendar in order to operate within the business world. The positioning of the date of the millennial transition was completely arbitrary, as was the original positioning of the start of the contemporary AD calendar. Yet Americans still espouse the "undeniable" significance of the millennium regardless of the actual change that it will or will not precipitate. The entire millennial event is merely hype on an immense cultural scale—an excuse to laud our own Euro-centricism. Our celebration of the millennium acts as a pretext to distance ourselves from our history; to define ourselves as millennial pioneers within a brave new era. And yet the simple truth is that humankind still remains fundamentally unchanged from the first centuries of its nascence. The millennium is merely a conceit for celebrating change, our desire to imagine evolutionary progress, in a world of profound constancy.

MAGICAL REALISM IN LATIN-AMERICAN WRITING: THE REINCARNATION OF THE MILLENNIUM BY CARLOS FUENTES

Viet-Huong Nguyen

The idea of past lives and reincarnation has fascinated generations of readers. Of course, scientists of the modern era are quick to point out evidence which would disprove such antiquated notions, but as the millennium draws to a close, interest in such things has boomed in today's pop culture. Such interest comes from the ever-increasing popularity of science fiction film and literature, especially in the growing genre of magical realism. Magical realism has its foundations in the strongly instilled supernatural beliefs of the Latin-American culture, particularly in our border neighbor to the south, Mexico. The Mexican writer, Carlos Fuentes, has used such superstitious and supernatural beliefs from his native country to create works of fiction, which look into self and meaning. In his writings, he has used such techniques as varying perspectives, therefore varying views of the self, and highlighting events in erratic chronological order to create a "magical realist" world. Essentially, his writing is an exploration of what it is to be Mexican, and how influential the past is in determining who you are. He says of himself and his colleagues: "...every Latin American writer goes around dragging a heavy body, the body of his people, of his past, of his national history. We have to

assimilate the enormous weight of our past so that we will not forget what gives us life. If you forget your past, you die" (Gale, 1999).

Fuentes' "Aura" is a novella in which the theme of the past and the self is very prevalent. Fuentes again employs the manipulation of time, and the manipulation of the past to blur the lines between what was said and what is, between what is real and what cannot be possibly real. Essentially, he reincarnates the characters, and in doing so we begin to question identity and understand the full significance of past events on the present.

Nostalgia and Trauma: Reading at the Close of the Twentieth Century

APOCALYPTIC SHAKESPEARE, *HAMLET'S* MILLENNIAL METAPHOR

Ben Gaines

"To be, or not to be, that is the question" (*Hamlet*, III.i, 55) and truly, it seems that in the face of all the madness of a millennial myth which portends the destruction of all mankind, we must wonder if existence will continue. The question for humanity is, however, one of conscious decision, as it is for Hamlet. The similarities between Hamlet's tragedy and the circumstances that surround the coming of the millennium are striking. Hamlet finds himself in an anguished void—leading to madness—which has been created by his disillusionment with his Uncle's sudden marriage to his mother, Gertrude, after the death of his father. As a metaphor for the millennium, Hamlet may represent humanity; Hamlet's father may represent God, that figure which is idolized by humanity; Gertrude may symbolize nature (the mother); and the calculating Claudius can be seen as science. This can be used as a metaphor for the crisis faced by humanity today as we struggle with the loss of religion (the father) to science (Claudius) and the domination of science over nature (as Claudius seduces the mother). The parallel continues as Hamlet, and humanity, search for meaning in a life that has brought cold disillusionment and destroyed peace of mind. Issues of Hamlet's denial of Claudius as the new father figure and desire to cleanse his mother of this new, corrupting presence are relevant as well as the way that mankind views the detrimental effects of science on nature (i.e. environmental crises brought on by industry) and realizes a fear of dependence upon science, evidenced in the Y2K computer crisis. The answer to both of these problems for Hamlet, and mankind, is an apocalypse in which all is destroyed. The millennial myth is a creation of humanity designed to bring conclusion to the madness brought on by conflict between science, theology, and nature. Finding no other conclusive answer, death and destruction are the means which humanity has chosen as a resolution to this conflict. Hence, the millennium can be read in *Hamlet*, as the journey toward a demise which humanity has devised for itself in answer to those postmodern issues which cannot be resolved.

FADE OUT: THE SEARCH FOR CLOSURE AS THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM

Kyle Buchanan

The 100 Greatest Films Ever. The 100 Greatest Books Ever. The Ten Most Important Events of the 20th Century. You may have noticed that lately, people seem to be gripped by a list-making frenzy. Now that the decade, the century, and the millennium are drawing to a close, people and organizations are rushing to offer their definitive summations of these eras before it is too late. It is as though we must hyper-analyze the past while we are still in this informed perch of time, for once 2000 rolls around, we will no longer be in a place to judge.

My paper would concern itself with this rush for closure in 1999. Instead of looking ahead to the future, people are primarily concerned with the past. The market for nostalgia is high as people rush to definitively encapsulate what has come before them. When confronted with the future, humanity takes one last-ditch plunge back into the past in order to say their final goodbyes. Even in the film industry, a place where movies

seek to take us into fantastic world of the future, all of this year's nominees for Best Picture were movies that took place in the past.

Why is there such a rush for closure, and what does this mean about people's view of the future? Does this tie into a fin de siècle fear of civilization's crumbling in the next millennium? Or is it an unwieldy imposition of a third-act narrative structure onto people's uncertain lives? These are all questions that ought to be explored as humanity shies away from the implications of the future in a comprehensive embrace of the past.

THE REALITY OF *GONE WITH THE WIND*

Dominique Sopko

With the approach of the millennium the past is slipping away. The whirlwind speed of technology and accelerated pace of daily life create the desire for return to a seemingly simpler time when things moved slower and people had a chance to appreciate their surroundings. Nostalgia becomes an escape from reality to a happier place that offers renewed hope. History can be embellished and facts can be altered because of society's hunger for escapism. Margaret Mitchell's portrayal of the mythological grace and beauty of the South in *Gone with the Wind* continues to captivate because of its romantic idealism. Mitchell takes us back to a time and lifestyle long gone. It seems that this type of fiction is alluring because it is created to be seductive and attractive almost to the point of brain washing. I have developed this paper with the intent of discussing the importance of the romantic fantasy to satisfy a cultural need.

The cultural desire to live in the past is demonstrated by annual battle reenactments and the creation of social societies such as: the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The ticket sales of the recent re-release of *Gone with the Wind* show that this classical myth is still awing audiences of all ages and creating another generation of nostalgic longing. In my paper I intend to address the questions: What do these intense feelings of nostalgia say about the past and our views of the past? How do we create this vision of a good life in a time of civil unrest and slavery? Why does the past seem so appealing? How will the dawning of the millennium effect our views of the past?

Our hunger for the past is deeply rooted in our fear of the future. A longing for a simpler time, when time was less scarce and people felt their future was more secure. The immense following and popularity of *Gone with the Wind*, the novel and the movie, are a classic example of society's cultural need for nostalgia.

AMERICANS FACING THE MILLENNIUM: DRIVING TOWARD THE YEAR 2000 WITH EYES FIXED IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Nicholas Burger

We are approaching the year 2000, a year that many people have foretold to bring the Armageddon, the apocalypse, and any other event that will, without a doubt, end the world. But what is in this date? The calendar that the U.S. (and much of the world) has adopted is based on one religious system; moreover, that system has been recalculated, realigned, and changed throughout its history so many times that its accuracy is

questionable. Moreover, the groups predicting these events call them "end of millennium" events, but in actuality, the end of the millennium will occur at 11:59 PM on December 31st, 2000. There was no "year 0," therefore the first year of the new millennium is the year 2001. This being the case, shouldn't these "catastrophic" events occur at the actual end of the millennium, not at the end of the next to last year? Furthermore, who's to say that there is any validity to the Christian calendar that goes above and beyond the many other calendars used by different countries and cultures throughout the world? What makes the four numbers 2000 so special?

I would argue that these numbers are not special, but rather they have been given artificial significance. I see, in many areas of our culture, an abnormal fixation both on the year 2000 and the concept of the "new millennium"; consequently, interesting and somewhat abnormal reactions have become pervasive in much of our society. We witness this trend in music with the way that the 90's have seen few new styles of music while at the same time have brought a revival of many past musical trends (disco, jazz, swing, etc.). This seems to represent an inability to move forward and a desire to turn to our musical past for deciding what is popular. Concerning computers and technology, the so-called "Y2K" problem has dominated the computer industry for the past few years and now this hysteria has invaded popular culture. Many people have vowed not to fly on December 31st because of this computer glitch that will, if not already, be resolved most likely before the year is up. The apparent compulsion to focus so closely on this date has prevented much of our society from looking forward into the future and revealed how much we believe, even subconsciously, in superstitions and insecurities. Why, if we claim to be a rationally based country, do we not have thirteenth floors in buildings and thirteenth rows on airplanes? Why, if most of us claim we don't foresee the "end of the world" in the year 2000, have we become so fixated on this date? I would like to analyze this fixation and focus both on its widespread existence and possible social implications.

