

*Pandora, dear Pandora, have pity upon us!
Free us from the gloomy prison!
Open, open, we beseech you!*
- Hesiod

Pandora's Box

Eighth Annual Thematic Option Research Conference

April 13-14, 2005

Curiosity is the thirst of the soul.

- Samuel Johnson

Curiosity is one of the lowest of the human faculties. You will have noticed in daily life that when people are inquisitive they nearly always have bad memories and are usually stupid at bottom.

- E.M. Forster

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

- Zora Neale Hurston

Thematic Option Honors Program
USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
University of Southern California

The myth of **Pandora's Box** persists to this day in various incarnations. Even with entrenched gender bias, the story as a myth, forever re-told, re-translated, re-interpreted, and re-applied, has gained an excess of significations. These linger and shape our sense of ourselves in the world. Pandora's insatiable curiosity reflects our fervent need to peek where maybe we shouldn't and to know. Such curiosity carries consequence and potential. Looking into the box is looking into the abyss; exploring the unknown releases the great ills of the world or the wondrous gifts of the gods.

This conference invites you to lift the lid and look into matters related but not limited to cultural values, epistemology, identity, society, and scientific progress. What is released will depend on you.

Background and Purpose

The Thematic Option Honors Program, part of the USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, is the University of Southern California's general education alternative: an interdisciplinary program of academic rigor that encourages exciting and vibrant discussion among its community. Each year approximately 200 outstanding freshmen from all majors participate in a unique combination of core courses, supplemental theme courses, writing classes and tutorials.

This conference provides an opportunity for undergraduate students to enrich their academic experience by publicly presenting their ideas and research. In response to a general call for papers, Thematic Option students developed topics under the theme "Pandora's Box" to be presented as part of a panel. Topics are reflective of students' various disciplines and interests and focus on issues ranging from politics to popular culture. Each panel is composed of three to five students, with a faculty member or Thematic Option writing instructor serving as the panel's chair and respondent. An opportunity for questions and answers follows after the presentation of papers at each panel.

Student Conference Coordinators:

Anne Aubert-Santelli
Aaron Brown
Andy Bunting
Lauren Carlson
Melissa Causey
Kelsey Dixon
Maggie Galvan
Sadie Holzman
Nicole Jilly

Sonya Khan
Jaime Lee
Monika Lind
Marie Lu
Bryce McFerran
Azita Mirzaian
Lilyanne Ohanesian
Jenna Pedley
Shir Pridonoff

Anna Roth
Sarah Schuessler
Meredith Schulte
Clive Stanger
Joyce Sutedja
Phil Taylor
Layla Torres
Tracy Wang
Jason Yelvington

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, April 13

4:00 pm **Keynote Address** by Professor Thomas Habinek
Department of Classics
USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

5:00 pm **Dinner**

6:00 pm **Panel Presentations**
Cultural Crimes – *Room A*
The Thoughts that Count – *Room B*
Fault Lines – *Banquet Room*
Crises of Representation – *Pub*

7:15 pm **Break**

7:30 pm **Panel Presentations**
Simulacrum – *Room A*
Reading between the Lines – *Room B*
Darwinian Notions – *Banquet Room*
Fake It to Make It – *Pub*

Thursday, April 14

5:00 pm **Panel Presentations**
You are What You Watch – *Room A*
Truth or Dare – *Room B*
Declaration of Interdependence – *Banquet Room*
Same as it Ever Was – *Pub*

6:15 pm **Dinner**

7:15 pm **Panel Presentations**
The Un-Real World – *Room A*
Gender's Game – *Room B*
Altered States – *Banquet Room*
Made to Order – *Pub*

Cultural Crimes

Moderated by Jeff Solomon, Department of English

Wednesday, April 13

6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Room A

Shadrick A. Small

White Riot: Black Music and the American Mainstream

“Who are our true rulers? The Negro poets, to be sure. Do they not set the fashion and give laws to the public taste?” - *Knickerbocker Magazine*, 1845

Jazz, rock, and rap all have several things in common. All three originated largely in the black community. All three crashed into the mainstream and caused a paradigm shift in American popular culture, despite the opposition of conservative social forces. However, it is only rock that has come to signify “whiteness,” at least as the absence of “blackness.” Drawing on the fields of ethnomusicology and semiotics, I attempt to uncover the roots of this racial switch of signifiers and address the issue of appropriation in music.

Jesse Hans

Pandora’s Music Box: Indie Music, Mainstream Music, and Anxieties about Pop Culture

Due to the nature of popular music, “indie rock,” which has evolved into the musical equivalent of high art amongst today’s American youth, is consistently eclipsed by the mainstream. However, the fact that music aficionados rarely deem the mainstream as “good music” is paradoxical; after all, common sense tells us that the best music would garner praise from the masses. There must be, then, a distinction in the notion of taste between the two categories. I believe that, while the indie taste is a matter of personal preference, with aestheticism being the focus, popular taste is bound to pop culture, with certain forces that undercut a true enjoyment of music. My paper will be examining these forces and the anxieties they cause within the indie music scene. In the end, is this criticism of pop culture’s taste being inferior legitimate, or is it, in part or all, a manifestation of snobbery?

Ning Yap

No One Wants a Gay Child: Constructing the Homosexual as a Tragic Figure

While our society is becoming increasingly accepting of gays, homophobia continues to manifest itself through the ways we justify why homosexuals exist and how they lead their lives. An analysis *A Parent’s Guide to Preventing Homosexuality*, a paranoid text that purports to help parents “set straight” their “pre-homosexual child,” reveals how easy it may be to fall into the trap of a homophobic mindset when one fixates on the wrong questions. The homosexual individual, this view asserts, is essentially a tragic figure: homosexuality not only brings about the individual’s downfall, but it also represents a failure on the part of the family and society. By framing homosexuality as tragedy, the texts propagandize that homophobia is the only “redemptive” stance in dealing with homosexuals. Parents who fear the shame of raising a gay child grow even more homophobic themselves, instilling in their children - gay or not - fear and contempt of homosexuality. We can further extend this analysis to mainstream culture by examining *American Beauty*, a recent film about family life in suburbia. The

Colonel, an extremely homophobic character, is revealed to be a repressed homosexual and ultimately fulfills the role of the homosexual tragic figure.

Kathrine Taylor

James Watson's *Double Helix* and the Twisted Nature of Genetics

In his autobiography, *The Double Helix*, James Watson describes the excitement that resulted from his deduction of the structure of DNA in April 1953. But he had little idea about what sort of Pandora's Box his exciting discovery had opened. The 1997 film *Gattaca* explores the darker side of genetics. It envisions a perfectly plausible yet distorted society based on genetic superiority and predisposition. In one of his other autobiographical works, *A Passion for DNA*, Watson finally recognizes the danger of creating such a society. From his scientific point of view, however, he advocates that the use of genetic technology should proceed unhindered, acknowledging that abuses will inevitably occur. Without bureaucratic interference, scientists like Watson will be better able to rid society of pain and suffering, but at what cost? Simply because an autobiography is authoritative does not mean that the opinions expressed within it are without bias or the best way of thinking. Watson's opinions are misleading, providing only a scientific point of view that neglects to provide future generations with protections against the possibility of a *Gattaca*-like society.

Daniel Howard

Beyond 2001: The Future of Technoculture

Every technological advance we make brings the human race closer to one of many possible futures. There is a school of thought that says that the science fiction genre is simply a manifestation of the present changes going on in our world. If this is so, then one way of predicting this future is by analyzing the fictions and cultures of the modern world, and there are many possible sources on which to base such predictions. Some are based in concerns about technology replacing the roles of humans in society, forcing a loss of identity and culture in a world based solely on cyberspace. In the future predicted by Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, advances in technology precipitate the creation of machinery believed to be infallible, but when too much trust is placed in the technology, the result proves disastrous. In reality, modern advances in the field of artificial intelligence are allowing for the creation of machines that far surpass human mental capacity. Though such advances can be used to make life better for humanity, they run the risk of placing too much responsibility in the hands of stoic, emotionless machines. The creation of cyberspace and artificial intelligence has introduced the world's population to new, high-speed methods of communication and intercourse, making life easier for countless people. However, such a world also requires a certain loss of self, a complete immersion into cyberspace that results in the loss of identity. If this proves to be the case, then the future depicted in *The Matrix*, with all of humanity pacified by life in a completely virtual world, may not be far away. Morally, it is clearly wrong to create technology that would allow such a future to occur, but from a purely scientific standpoint, it would be a crime not to try.

The Thoughts that Count

Moderated by Professor Thomas Habinek, Department of Classics

Wednesday, April 13

6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Room B

Myka Persson

Mind into Matter: Bridging the Mind-Body Split

Recently, neuroscientists, philosophers, and psychiatrists, among others, have returned to the question of the mind-body split. This time they are contesting Descartes' claim that the body is separated from mind. Recent studies show that the mind and body are co-dependent. These findings are illustrated by the phenomenon of phantom limbs, in which the brain and body are shown to be mapped in accordance to each other. Indeed, experimental investigations reveal that neural processes provide for embodiment, both phantom and corporeal. Furthermore, the mind is now being mapped and measured through brain scans in order to determine its influence on the body. It is possible that the psychological realm of the mind, once viewed as illusive, may be fully explained by neuroscience. The reduction or annexation of all mental phenomena to matter is very influential to some scientists who are attempting to reconcile the mind and body. The mind can now be taken into the physical realm and biologically explained, thus making the mind-body division one entity: physical matter. Although the mind-body problem is not conclusively solved, research has built an overwhelming case for a very intimate relationship between mental, neurological, and corporeal phenomena.

Jessalyn Starbuck

Sticks and Stones May Break My Gears: Why You Should be Nice to Your Computer

Does the golden rule apply to characters like Data, an android from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* that appears to have emotions despite the claim that he does not feel, and the Holographic Doctor from *Star Trek: Voyager* who, while made of nothing but photons and force-fields, has the ability to fall in love and feel emotions like rejection? What exact role does emotion play in our moral judgment? Through the characters from *Star Trek* and texts on emotions and ethics I seek to show that emotions are inseparable from our ethics. As long as a machine is able to portray enough emotion to cause an empathetic response in humans, it should be treated ethically not just because it might really be able to feel, but because we feel for it and are therefore obligated by our own moral standard to treat it well.

Daniel Johnson

The Humanistic Brain

In recent years, through the studies of modern psychology and neuroscience, worrisome questions have come up about human consciousness and the mind. Instead of the traditional western view that the mind and body are separate, science is bringing forth evidence that shows our mind as really nothing more than a set of firing neurons, and that everything we experience as our "higher self" really can be defined through biological properties. In essence the conclusion can be drawn that human beings are deterministic entities, guided by nothing other than our own biology. Looking at literature and film where this belief is taken seriously, implications of this view can be troubling for society, and it seems to imply a death of the humanities. However, in order to understand the mind in relation to people, we need to turn to the humanities themselves. Thus, while we may indeed someday explain our

biological selves, we will never lose the arts or humanities because we cannot understand ourselves any other way.

Jackie Bors

Prisoner and Physician: The Incomprehensible Dilemma of an Auschwitz Doctor

“And I myself, carrying out the orders of a demented doctor, had dissected hundreds of bodies, so that a science based on false theories might benefit from the deaths of those millions of victims.” –Miklos Nyiszli

When Miklos Nyiszli stepped out of the selection line and identified himself as a physician, he entered a world of terror filled with moral ambiguity. In his bone-chilling and heart wrenching memoir, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*, Nyiszli objectively tells of his experiences, not seeking sympathy, but rather speaking as a man who witnessed, inflicted, and suffered the trauma of the Holocaust. He wrote with the purpose of simply exposing the horrors, but because he was a physician yet still a prisoner, his memoir raises issues of his own ethical dilemmas and the implications that arise from the medical experimentation. While the genre of autobiography is often marked as historically unreliable, part of the Holocaust's history lies in the way that people understood, or in some cases, misunderstood it at the time. To avoid repetition to any degree, this tragedy should always be remembered, and likewise, the ethical issues exposed by the medical research must be examined to protect the past and the future. Using the tainted Nazi data could potentially further modern medicine, but would it not also inevitably open a Pandora's box and legitimize the Nazi “pseudo-science”?

Sarah Tynes

Physicality of Tragedy and Social Commentary in Edward Albee's *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*

In the myth of Pandora's box, there are underlying elements of both the physical and the immaterial. There is the literal opening of a vessel, a bodily movement on Pandora's part which can be clearly identified as her transgression. Then there are the less visible, ethereal elements – disease, sin, even hope – which escape and do damage. These two elements of transgression are also apparent in Edward Albee's controversial play on themes of bestiality, tragedy, and forgiveness, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* In the play, as in society, we imagine a literal physical “breaking” of relationships, “falling” of people, and “coming apart” of certain elements in our lives. One of the key effects of Albee's use of such language is the establishment of areas of stability and chaos in the play. How does the playwright construct these competing realms and present them to his audience? Like Pandora, *The Goat's* main character unleashes specters of the uncertain and unforeseen with a literal physical act of an affair, perhaps not unlike Albee himself with the physical creation of a script. As we assess these sins, I believe Albee wishes us to see certain relativity in our beliefs of what is beyond acceptance, what is truly unimaginable. In *The Goat* as in daily life, it is impossible to discuss these elusive concepts without using metaphors of the physical and tangible. This paper will be an exploration of the language and manner in which Albee approaches these elements.

Fault Lines

Moderated by Professor David Eggenschwiler, Department of English

Wednesday, April 13

6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Banquet Room

Kristen Stolt

Vigilante Justice and Popular Culture: Saints or Sinners?

“For justice, we must go to Don Corleone.” - *The Godfather*

From the Italian Mafia to other organized crime syndicates, vigilante justice has inflicted its mark on American society. Even though vigilantism operates outside of mainstream culture, it is glorified in Hollywood films like *The Godfather*. Popular culture seems to praise this arbitrary justice, and in so doing, turns the representation of murder into a masterpiece, a form of art. Through this depiction, murder is transformed from an evil that is punishable by law to a “killing for good” that should not be punished, but in fact honored, as in the film, *The Boondock Saints*. I will explore how the relationship between vigilante justice and popular culture brings about ambiguity as to whether or not murder is justifiable when it is committed based on the idea that it is “good.”

Maren Jinnett

Lilith and Lolita: Liberating the Femme Fatale

A demoness with long black hair, who births hundreds of demon children a day; a succubus who copulates with men at night and steals their sperm; the obstacle between man and spiritual redemption; the negative side of Eve. While Lilith began as a Jewish legend, meant to explain a discrepancy between two passages of Genesis, she rapidly turned into a well of inspiration for hundreds of artists, painters and poets, all of whom created and recreated the mythic figure of Adam’s first wife. The creations, though, were always one-sided and, thematically, the same. In Jewish folktales, throughout the Victorian Era and up until the feminist movement, Lilith’s story was entirely told by men; and, in these representations, she is always the “wanton seductress...the death-dealing female fiend,” the woman that every man wants and who will always destroy him. It is not until Nabokov’s *Lolita* that Lilith began to change. *Lolita*’s perversion of the story of a “femme fatale” told through the eyes of a neurotic pedophile, provides a new way of looking at a long literary and artistic tradition: as a mirror reflecting its creators. It is through Lilith’s creation and recreation that one can see the arc of cultural conceptions of women, from the Babylonian demon, to the empowered, feminist icon.

Michael Grimaldi

Joseph K. Goes to Washington: The Patriot Act as Panopticon in a Post-9/11 America

Since the 2001 passage of The Patriot Act, the civil liberties of individual citizens have been greatly threatened in the face of a government purporting to keep us safe from future terrorist attacks at the expense of some of our most basic rights as Americans. In this paper, I will first trace the eerie similarity between the “arrest” of Joseph K., the protagonist of *The Trial* by Franz Kafka, and the

circumstances of the real world arrest of Jose Padilla, the suspected dirty bomber, who has been imprisoned for over three years without due process. Secondly, using Jeremy Bentham's conception of the panopticon, wherein an empowered few can control the many cowed by the threat of constant surveillance, I will argue that the federal government's new powers under the Patriot Act amount to an inscription of just such a "total surveillance" model into law. By exploring the psychology of the panopticon in relation to the curtailed rights of the individual under the Patriot Act, I would like to show how each of us, especially in our use of the Internet, risks facing the demoralizing fate of Joseph K. in his confrontation with the law.

Laura Nastase

Fight Club: Continuing the Cycle of Male Disempowerment

Tyler Durden is a reaction to the feminization of men. He is released from the narrator's subconscious by the feminine elements that dominate and emasculate men in the 20th Century. As a response to the ills of consumerism and loss of masculine identity, the narrator hopes that Tyler Durden will save him. In reality Tyler is all those ills of the world that men sought to escape. He repackages the ills of subservience, immoral acts, addiction and emasculation into a violent framework that he gives his followers to consume under the name of Fight Club.

Indeed, the narrator could not project anything but the same corporate disempowering framework into existence because the narrator is part of a generation of men raised by women, in a corporate structure so nothing that he can project can ever escape that structure. It is the classic puzzle: You don't know what you don't know. The men in the novel do not know a maleness that is outside of the structure that they are raised and work in, so they cannot project anything new.

Tyler becomes a mirror of the ills of society, just in a more brutal setting. The appeal of this lies in that it does away with the "paradoxical cultural environment that makes heroes of aggressive men while debasing aggressive impulses" by giving those impulses free reign. But Tyler will not save the men who follow him. The men serve him in a rigid, terrible structure because they expect to "save the world [...with] a cultural ice age." If that ice age comes about, then Project Mayhem and its structure will no longer be needed, and Tyler cannot eradicate the ills that he creates and that gave him birth, just strengthen them. He does not reinvent the world, just projects the same ills onto a violent framework. The narrator will remain in the sanitarium where he ended up, and the men of the 20th Century will continue to be cogs in a machine, servile, expendable and addicted to the structure they are trying so hard to escape, by their continuing loyalty to Project Mayhem.

Sean O'Toole

Making Enemies, Left and Right

Dissecting the work of Michael Moore (books such as *Stupid White Men* and *Dude, Where's My Country?*; films such as *Bowling For Columbine* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*) alongside that of Ann Coulter (the books *Slander* and *Treason*; syndicated columns), common tactics, attitudes, and implicit messages emerge, especially in the ways the two go about assigning blame. In fact, although they are polar opposites politically, Moore and Coulter share a penchant for framing their opponents in the most incendiary of terms. Within the context of a broader discussion of the intersection of entertainment and politics in an age of unprecedented mass media saturation, I will examine the conditions that give rise to a public debate in which rancor can replace reason and demonization can substitute for discourse. At stake is more than merely two pundits and their agendas; the implications of inflammatory rhetoric are vast when we consider their potential impact on democracy – a system of government that depends on a rational and well-informed public.

Crises of Representation

Moderated by Professor Ed Finegan, Department of Linguistics

Wednesday, April 13

6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Pub

Allison Norman

Titian and the Techies: Art, Science, and Redefining the Beautiful

This paper examines the relationship between technology and concepts of beauty in the contemporary context. We are living in an age in which most things—and most people—can be scientifically improved, an age in which the ideal façade is attainable, yet somehow alienating. A pair of texts establishes a starting point in both biology and critical theory: *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty*, by Nancy Etcoff and *The End of Art*, by Donald Kuspit. Connecting the evolutionary background of beauty with the evolution of modern technology and its impact on art, I considered such examples as a *Metropolis* magazine article on highly-engineered haute-couture dresses, plastic surgery, Andy Warhol's pop art, and sustainable architecture. I found that technology is both usurping the role of the artist in the creative realm and placing new and more severe expectations on humans in the social realm. Beauty is becoming more a product of engineering than of biology, and so are humans; the tools we created to assist the achievement of our goals have become the rulers of our minds, our bodies, and our aesthetic attitudes.

Daryl Li

The Untouchables: Deconstructing Society's Affection for the Rebel

The rebel's search for identity and purpose is often morally ambiguous but strangely endearing to those who witness his plight and we frequently view the rebel as our protagonist. Hollywood is notorious for glorifying the rebel, and in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather Part I* and *II*, the Mafia don is portrayed as a family man and immigrant hero who rebels against America's capitalist society. However, we see our rebel protagonist concurrently striving to legitimize his family's name and achieve full assimilation into American society through his act of rebellion. In this light, Coppola's representation of the Mafia don in *The Godfather Part I* and *II* forces the audience to question the cultural complexities that fuel society's obsession with this unique film rebel and the character's role in reshaping (and reinforcing!) social ideologies.

Lisa Carrillo

Dialect: A Preservation of Culture or Perpetuation of Stereotype?

"To be or not 'tuh' be?" is the question which Zora Neale Hurston's use of dialect in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* arouses. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston uses dialect to present the nature of the "folk culture" through gritty realism, as she also creates a distinctive folk identity. Although critics such as Richard Wright argue that Hurston is continuing a tradition of the minstrel Negro, she is in fact continuing the highly oral tradition of her culture. Hurston has a grasp on the folk culture and chooses to portray these people rather than the more urban and idealistic representations advocated by Wright. Furthermore, Hurston emphasizes the importance of a cultural past in order to present her image of "the people." That cultural past is something which developed out of the enslavement of her race, and this is

why some such as Wright associate the use of dialect as a glorification of the uneducated and subservient Negro. But a past is important to developing a present as the past defines the culture and is something which is not easily ignored. Rather than turning her back to the history of her culture, Hurston rather embraces it and perpetuates the oral tradition of her race as a form of identity.

Scott Krisiloff

Clinton Unzipped: How a President Shaped His Legacy

Why do we write autobiography? Because we feel that there is something left unsaid? Because we feel that we have something to teach? Something to learn? Something to preserve? Something to gain? Or perhaps something to leave behind? In his memoir, *My Life*, Bill Clinton gives many reasons explaining why he wrote his autobiography. Among others, he lists: "to tell my story, and to tell the story of America in the last half of the twentieth century" as his primary reasons. Two reasons that he doesn't list are: for the preservation of his legacy and for the multi-million dollar paycheck. Interestingly, even though Clinton doesn't list the preservation of his legacy as one of his primary goals, efforts to do so continually show up throughout the text. During his presidency, Clinton was known as "Slick Willy" for his ability to talk himself out of a corner. Clinton's autobiography clearly demonstrates this ability. Through his masterful ability to mold language, Clinton mitigates the discussion of his faults and promote the discussion of his strengths, thereby discrediting his critics and shaping his legacy as a president that successfully led America in pursuit of a more perfect union.

Jennifer Fairbanks

A Framed Identity

Susan Sontag in *On Photography* posits that to judge the content of photography only in terms of truth limits the potential influence of the medium. She argues that photography is not necessarily about a way to find truth, but rather an "ethics of seeing." By understanding photography one can better understand what is worth seeing and what one has a right to see. Implying that photographs have a type of morality attached to them, she directly confronts Roland Barthes' assumption in *Camera Lucida* that photographs are merely a link to one's memory. The motion picture *Memento* mediates the line between Barthes and Sontag, using the photograph as a material embodiment of memory as well as a basis for a questioning the reliability of a constructed self. In this paper, I will explore the relation of memory to embodiment, and in turn the relativity of a constructed sense of self to a "pictured" past.

Simulacrum

Moderated by Professor Hayward Alker, School of International Relations

Wednesday, April 13

7:30 – 8:45 p.m.

Room A

Andrew Horning

The Devil Inside: Sex Toys as a Human Replacement Mechanism

Sometimes a human simply isn't enough. In an early episode of *Sex and the City*, the character Charlotte tells her friends, "It's no big deal, I'd just rather stay home with my vibrator than go out and deal with men." This paper examines the cultural effects of sexual devices that provide human pleasure through nonhuman means. Sex between two people, one of the most distinctly human experiences, is replaced by a mechanical device, and the replacement works quite well. Contemporary representations of sex toys are investigated, from popular literature to television to internet advertisements, with many voices echoing Charlotte's find that a sex toy may be an ideal substitute for a human. The examined works present a spectrum of reactions to such toys, ranging from considering such devices as purely mechanical devices to complete dedication and "love" for the inorganic gadget. In each instance, a human being is able to transcend the boundaries of physical sex and gender to experience sex as an inorganic pleasure, dehumanized through technology. But is such dehumanization of a human act something to be feared? Can humans become too attached to the devices themselves? While society must avoid replacing the entirety of human interaction with machines, sex toys expand the definition of sex as an act, enabling a transcendence of human sexual limitations that is beneficial as long as the object itself does not become more desired than the human responses it provokes.

Julia Hardman

Technology's Impact on Gender Dichotomy

The male-female separation, an elementary dichotomy, is ever-present in today's society. It affects everything from bathroom signs to the marketing of products. It is this constructed division that compels our society's members to identify as part of one gender category. Yet there exist people who refuse to classify themselves, or to perform their gender role. Our society's desire to connect biological manifestations of sex with mental and behavioral characteristics create problems for these people, as well as for those who comply with "norms." However, emerging technologies, including the Internet and medical advances, challenge the idea that gender must be dimorphous or dichotomous. If indeed gender can be viewed as a continuum or spectrum, then the possibilities for variation become endless. These possibilities in turn open up a new world of acceptable behaviors for members of varied gender groups.

Alexandra Orton

At The Crossroads of Identity: Adapting Autobiography into Film

When a written autobiography is adapted for the big screen, the focus, tones, and narrative structure often have to be altered for the purpose of the movie. Written autobiographies are altered and repackaged into a format that is physically and financially possible to film. Adaptations must also appeal to a wide audience and perform well at the box office. The recent film *The Motorcycle Diaries* was adapted from two autobiographies about a motorcycle trip around Latin America that Ernesto Guevara and

Alberto Granado took together in 1952. To make the story relevant to today's audience and to help the audience connect to the main characters, the makers of *The Motorcycle Diaries* emphasized the content in the autobiographies that was emotionally captivating and exciting. The alterations made for the movie raise an interesting question of whether the identities of Guevara and Granado (as presented in the diaries) can remain intact. Analysis of the three primary sources will prove that, though some of the stories in the books are changed or omitted, the movie remains faithful to the identities and the story of Granado and Guevara by juxtaposing the humor and insight into Guevara from Granado's book with the political and compassionate tones, moods, and themes from Guevara's book.

Kate McKenna

Night Sweats: The Purging and Purification of New York

New York, with its unique energy and convergence of rich and poor, high society and subculture, has become emblematic of contradictions and challenges set up by an urban environment. Due to the efforts of Rudolph Giuliani and present mayor Michael Bloomberg, tangible changes have occurred in New York, altering the personality of the city and one's experience in it as a resident or a tourist. In this paper, I will argue that while the efforts made by these mayors have reduced crime and made many areas safer, the gritty, frenetic atmosphere that so defines New York is being lost to sanitization and censorship. Even the veil of night no longer acts as a safe haven for the transgression it once welcomed since it, too, has been altered by new regulations.

Alexi Robichaux

The *Alice* Books: Satires of Victorian Sentimentality

An author questioning his own originality seems peculiar, yet in the preface to *Sylvie and Bruno*, Lewis Carroll states: "[I do] not know if *Alice in Wonderland* was an original story—I was, at least, no conscious imitator in writing it—but I do know that, since it came out, something like a dozen story books have appeared, on identically the same pattern." Carroll's questioning of his own originality may strike the modern reader of *Alice* as nothing more than feigned modesty because to the modern lay reader the silly characters and nonsense of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass Land* appear to be founded only in the "drug-induced" creativity of Lewis Carroll. Yet, while the modern reader may gloss over the question of what motivated Carroll to write *Alice*—often assuming that such absurdities could only be conjured up by a madman under the influence of opium or laudanum—deconstructing the motivation behind *Alice* has become a point of contention in the field of Lewis Carroll studies. Carroll's ingenuity lies in his emulation of the didactic style of children's literature the Victorian reader was weaned upon in order to satirize Victorian sentimentality. In doing so, Carroll criticizes Victorian morals, revealing them to be nothing more than illogical sentimentality.

Reading Between the Lines

Moderated by Kathy Strong, Department of English

Wednesday, April 13

7:30 – 8:45 p.m.

Room B

Ryan Bronson

The Panopticon and Mrs. Piggleswiggle

Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled sculptor, the minds of impressionable youth are shaped and molded into an adult form that will be well adapted to the demands of modern society. Since the expectations of society are not explicitly outlined by any one source, children learn the demands of their future lives of responsibility through observation of the world around them. Children's literature can serve as a window into this "real" world, allowing children to develop their moral understanding into a grasp of reality that is decidedly more "mature." My research serves to decipher the impact and significance of children's literature upon the moral development of children, specifically between the ages six and ten. By analyzing the literature targeting this age group that is either derivative of its child-based subject matter or universally accepted in its literary significance, a distinct pattern of moral encouragement emerges. Using the arguments of social control as outlined in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, both sources serve to recite the demands of society with varying degrees of subtlety.

Zuoyi Joy Chen

Musically Sound

The different forms of visual and performing arts often come together in one masterpiece in a way such that each art form touched upon can be isolated and expanded, and each form helps to illuminate another by such juxtaposition and contrast. Chay Yew's *Wonderland*, written in 1999, is a play that refers to art, sculpture, visual art, film, and theatre while using poetry as dialogue and music as the basis for portrayal. Though critics have commented on the musicality of this work, no one has really analyzed it for its artistic content nor has anyone shown how the play could, in fact, be presented as an orchestral piece. I believe that the play can be successfully presented through one cohesive musical form, with the musical motives expanding and developing the themes of the play, the underlying harmonies providing unity to the story, and the modulations shifting the direction of the piece.

Luis Melendrez

Morbid Curiosity: Peering into the Mind of a Serial Killer

The mind of a serial killer is a complex Pandora's box that continues to intrigue and terrorize us. Even more complex are the "Pandoras" who willingly research them and peer into their minds. Dr. Helen Morrison, a successful psychiatrist, has worked with serial killers for a large portion of her career. Her intense curiosity of what triggers the serial murderer to kill has led her into the labyrinth of terror and death found within the minds of these individuals. In her autobiography, *My Life among the Serial Killers*, Morrison shows how her curiosity about these individuals repeatedly drives her to relive their horrifically blatant accounts of unfeeling murder in an attempt to discover the trigger that causes this behavior and search for ways to treat this "condition." Entering as a young woman in this peculiar field of psychology and challenges to Morrison's authority as a capable professional have led her to write her autobiography as a means of validating her expertise in the study of serial killers. Ultimately, while

Morrison claims a professional interest in this field, the tone of her text belies an inborn morbid curiosity that she tries to deny as the actual reason for her consistent return to the study of serial murderers.

Elysse Applebaum

Parental and Filial Acceptance of Sexual Behavior in Contemporary Society, or What is Normal?

Using ideas and situations in Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* as its main focus, this paper will examine the notion that a person's private sexual practices seem to reflect whether he or she will be considered "normal" within society at large. Furthermore, society pits "outsiders" against themselves as everyone struggles to stay within the boundaries of sexual acceptability. As a result the sexual outsider experiences extreme alienation, especially when he or she is shunned by others who are deemed to be higher up on the socially constructed hierarchy of decency. This isolation can cause a person to act out in ways that may be against character, and is particularly potent when it occurs within a family. Through the illustration of the damage that society's shifting paradigm of normalcy can cause, Albee pressures his audience to question whether "normal" exists at all, and whether it should matter.

Richard Wayland

The Pressure to Control

Tillie Olsen's *Tell Me a Riddle* is often only regarded as a feminist text, with most critical analysis placing all focus on the wife/mother, Eva, and almost completely ignoring the husband/father, David. This paper alleviates that analytical fault by adding some insight into David, implementing ideas from masculinity studies from the 1950's to the present. *Tell Me a Riddle* needs to be read from the perspectives of *both* genders in order to make the story whole. In the story, Eva is depicted as having made all the sacrifices throughout the past. In the present, however, culture, family, and society have placed all the pressure on David. He must manage all the property and finances. He must urge Eva to make all the "right" decisions and to perform all the "necessary" duties. Finally, he must stay strong throughout the last few days of her life. In short, David is continually feeling the pressure to control – even when some of these things are inherently uncontrollable. The ways in which he manages to get through this difficult time is an example to all modern men of the unexpected enlightenment that can come from accepting a loss of control.

Darwinian Notions

Moderated by Professor Jim Kincaid, Department of English

Wednesday, April 13

7:30 – 8:45 p.m.

Banquet Room

Anita Damodaran

“To Move the Spirit from a Nowhere Pedestal to a Somewhere Place”: The Impact of Evolving Scientific Theory on the Human Psyche

From the largely psychological framework of the unconscious, preeminent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the evolution of an increasingly physiological context for the mind is epitomized by the work of Antonio Damasio, who merges the fields of neurobiology and psychology in his discussion of the interplay between mind and body. This paper explores the transition from psychological to physiological theories on consciousness, specifically with Damasio’s work as a representative of this shift and as a manifestation of the paradox inherent in this course of study. Damasio’s reluctance to dispute the idea of a human soul reveals an anomaly within the newer, “enlightened” model of the psyche. That uncertainty is more bearable than finding the key to our human essence and perhaps reducing what has always been divine to scientific fact suggests that we jeopardize the very psyche we seek to define. It is the mystery that both compels and sustains us; thus, our quest for truth must remain never-ending, for complete knowledge would shatter the core of our existence.

Alex Schnieders

Where's My Knight in Shining Armor?: Men, Women and Courtship in Literature

The evolution of gender roles in the last century has been a source of heated debate; from changing roles in the home and the workplace, the "separate spheres" of gender seem to have lost their shape entirely. These now amorphous shapes change almost daily and seem to impact every aspect of modern society including dating practices. The circumstantial evidence is readily apparent: the end of the arranged marriages, the birth of the one night stand, the movement from formal courting to playing the field, changing gender roles seem to have put an end to conventional styles of romance. Of specific interest is the degree to which gender roles impact dating rituals. For instance, if a woman is earning the same salary as her date, who pays for dinner? In order to better understand the evolution of dating, I will compare and contrast Jane Austen's classic *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Green's modern fiction *Mr. Maybe*. The comparison of the two novels acknowledges the distinctions between the courtship of Elizabeth Bennet and the haphazard dating of Libby Mason but pays special attention to the similarities in the search for a suitable mate—both Elizabeth and Libby seek a man who is witty and independent and are enchanted by mysterious men. Employing *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mr. Maybe* as examples of two distinct eras in the evolution of mating rituals, I argue that although the actual practices of courtship have changed drastically, elements of romance (including the definition of a desirable mate) have evolved much more slowly.

Matthew Cieplak

Cyborgs by Necessity: How Modern Medicine Could Change Our Evolutionary Future

It is certain that human evolution has not stopped. Not well understood, however, is the effect of modern medicine, an intervention in natural selection, on the genes of future generations. Medicine

enables many genetically disadvantaged individuals to survive and have children, so deleterious traits are passed on more often. Correspondingly, many genetically linked diseases, such as myopia, obesity, and diabetes, have increased in frequency and so has our dependence on medical technology. But medicine also offers new ways to cure and possibly prevent genetic diseases. As we edge towards a moral precipice of controlling genetics, we must be aware of the possible consequences of action and inaction for future generations. If medicine continues to direct evolution, might our descendants' lives resemble our science fiction more than our own?

Miles Killingsworth

Quantum Stumble: Einstein, Uncertainty, and the Modern Psyche

"...most of the grand underlying principles [of physics] have been firmly established." - Albert Michelson
"[I] think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics." - Richard Feynman

Isaac Newton published *Principia* in 1687 and the ideas therein were humanity's ultimate universal model for over 200 years. The implications of his theory were comprehensible and concise; all events (at a fundamental level) were nothing more than simple, predictable collisions. Art and philosophy reflected this simplicity—as well as its implication of absolute (and attainable) truth. In 1905, Einstein destroyed Newton's fundament and forever changed the way humanity perceived the world with a series of papers that set the stage for relativity, quantum theory and what came to be regarded as modern physics. The new theories created a host of problems with absolute truth and simplicity; relativity proved that experience is *necessarily* determined by one's vantage point, while quantum theory showed that the basis for all events is inherent probabilistic randomness. For the art and philosophy of the 20th century, the universe could never again be a safe haven of objective truth and predictability; modern physics forever plunged humanity into a universe dictated by mutability and randomness.

James Liacos

Wake Up and Smell the Burning Hummers: From Walden to Ecoterrorism

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor." - Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

"The joy of bringing down a whaler can be one of the great pleasures in an eco-warrior's life. It can be the most treasured of feathers in one's spiritual war bonnet." - www.animalliberation.net

While Thoreau urged preservationist and conservationist approaches to protecting nature, ecoterrorist groups, such as the Earth Liberation Front, engage in militant activity in the defense of the environment, advocating "direct action," primarily in the form of economic sabotage. *Walden* remains one of the most important foundational texts of American environmentalism, but the movement has expanded greatly since the mid-nineteenth century, with many branches espousing philosophies that resemble Thoreau's only remotely at best. How did Western environmental thought evolve from the reflective pragmatism of Thoreau to the violent extremism of ecoterrorists? The connection is between Thoreau's inward searching and focus on the self and the almost-religious zeal of ecoradicals. For some, a "conscious endeavor" results in a Hummer dealership in flames.

Fake It to Make It

Moderated by Professor Emily Anderson, Department of English

Wednesday, April 13

7:30 – 8:45 p.m.

Pub

Daniel St. John

Making Paradise: Terraforming and the Human

In the age of emerging commercial space ventures, the potential to visit another planet is closer than ever – and the prospect of permanent colonies on foreign globes runs hand in hand with these bold undertakings. Terraforming would undoubtedly expand scientific knowledge through exploration and experimentation in new fields of study. The scientific community benefits directly, but society itself may not fare as well. Potential negative repercussions of such a radical endeavor have yet to be shown. This paper looks at the effects on the human. A potentially stigmatized and prejudiced view of groups who grew up on separate planets could escalate as far as armed conflict. Ultimately, the paper will determine if the benefits outweigh the risks of terraforming and planetary conquest.

Jenny Beck

Suffering Perfection: Why Cinderella Sleeps in Ashes

“Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.” - Antoine de Saint-Exupery

In Gregory Maguire’s recent remake of the classic Cinderella story, *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister*, Clara, alias Cinderella, is not exactly perfect, likable, or even the real heroine of the story. Then again, she is also rich, beautiful, and universally admired, actually choosing to stay home and perform kitchen duties in order to avoid a proposal from some rich and grotesque bourgeoisie four times her age. In other words, Clara’s suffering is incomplete. However, why must suffering complete the image of a true hero or heroine? Why is Perrault’s Cinderella, patient and perfect, a more satisfying heroine than Maguire’s? How do the contents of Pandora’s Box provide the necessary crucibles through which true heroes and heroines are revealed?

Daniel Chang

Masculinity's Role in Shaping War

Similar to the appeal of Pandora is the glamour of war, which possess as its counterpart to Pandora's box: death, trauma, and pain. My project will compare war experiences and how they are depicted in literature in order to argue that the government plays upon the myths of the courageous soldier to effectively wage war. Finally, I will consider the role of religion in perpetuating myths about war, which will demystify the concept of good and evil that religion introduces into war.

Kelly Nakamura

Railway to Reality: A Young Girl's Journey in Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*

In childhood, reality and dreams are not completely distinct. Instead, the spatial and moral ambiguity and creative possibility that are typical of dreams are implicit in the childhood consciousness. Such a fluid world of magic and imagination is depicted in *Sen To Chihiro No Kamikakushi* (known in the United States as *Spirited Away*), a film directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Miyazaki uses the dynamic medium of animation to depict ten-year-old Chihiro as she struggles to rescue her parents and herself from a hostile but spectacular fantasy world. By presenting the narrative from the point of view of Chihiro, Miyazaki invites examination of the childhood conception of reality and identity. By applying the analysis of developmental psychologist Jean Piaget to the film, I will argue that Chihiro's initial regression into helplessness and confusion enables her to rebuild a conception of reality that distinguishes between the sign and the signified, the internal and external, and the immaterial and material.

Amy Kaufman

Goodbye, Norma Jean: Dream, Delusion, and the Imagined Self in American Performance

Her paradoxical combination of sexuality and innocence gave her fame, but actress Marilyn Monroe's life remains legendary due to American preoccupation with the mysterious mirage surrounding Monroe's dreams. The misunderstood public persona of Marilyn Monroe is echoed in the voice of her autobiography, *My Story*, where readers are finally allowed a glimpse into the most unstable years of Monroe's history. Marilyn looked to her acting career to help escape her unidentifiable past (a past in which she was only known as orphan Norma Jean) hoping that as celebrity Marilyn Monroe, she would take on a stronger character. Ultimately, however, Marilyn's self anonymity caused her demise – and recent psychological studies suggest that actors in scenarios similar to Monroe's also suffer from detrimental effects to the psyche. In the attempt to evade the pressure of fulfilling various screen roles and simultaneously projecting the public image of fame, the genuine self often ends up damaged. Marilyn Monroe demonstrates her skewed view of self through her cryptic memoirs, which prove nothing more than an inherent desire to find her undiscovered, truest self. Monroe is a clear illustration of the innate human desire to transform oneself – to become another. This “act” is often overlooked for fear of acknowledging the most congenial characteristics of human nature – a nature which reveals itself as selfish, caught up in illusion.

You are What You Watch

Moderated by Professor Meg Russett, Department of English

Thursday, April 14

5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

Room A

Nathan Dahlin

White Keys to a Black Box: The Appropriation of African American Music

"If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars." The words were said by Sam Phillips, owner of Sun Records, and the man destined to fulfill them was Elvis Presley. Forty years following the release of Elvis's eponymous debut album, Phillips deserved a seat amongst the twentieth century's great prophets, as 1998 saw the meteoric rise of a new great white hope – Eminem. While scandal helped ignite and maintain the success they both enjoyed, that parallel doesn't seem coincidental if one stops to consider their respective genres. The story of American popular music is the story of black genres with white figureheads. Despite standing as an important site of dialogue between races, the realm of music has hardly served as an accurate barometer of the overall social climate of the United States. Memphis, the home of Sun Records, was also the locale of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. This paper explores the tension in white America's anxious infatuation with black culture, and how the emergence of these two white stars reflects lingering racial anxieties within white America.

Dana Peterson

Metrosexuality and the New Male

The current trend of "metrosexuality" has had a strong impact on society today and on how we view males and masculinity. The stereotype of masculinity has changed in the past few decades, as instead of the "macho" male figure typified by actors such as Marlon Brando in *On the Waterfront* and James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, we find our culture today moving towards more metrosexual male figures such as Johnny Depp. Metrosexual males are a target audience for advertisers, and it is all over television shows and movies, but why and how did it start? The female population has responded positively to this new image of males today, but as most males are uncomfortable with this new image, how long will it last? Is it a good thing for our society today to have more blurred gender roles and definitions? Our stereotype of masculinity and of the "typical male" has changed and the trend of metrosexuality perfectly showcases this. No matter if it dies out or continues as a strong trend, it has made a significant impact on our culture and on our thoughts about masculinity.

Christine Matsuda

Broadcasting Deception: A Study of Howard Koch's Adaptation of H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds

On Halloween Eve, 1938, the radio personality Orson Welles opened a proverbial Pandora's box, a box that Howard Koch had written and placed before him. Welles and his production staff performed "An Adaptation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*," and caused an unprecedented panic in roughly one million people nation-wide. Most of the scholarly work done about this event has focused on the aftermath, on the nature and extent of the panic, while ignoring a fundamental question: What was it about the broadcast itself that inspired such panic? Howard Koch's adaptation of H.G. Wells' novella utilized three primary paths into the collective psyche of the American public. The broadcast appeals to

the people's psychological vulnerabilities, relies on social conditions and structures, and utilizes the people's insecurities based on the historical turbulence of the late 1930's. This event has become a part of not only American history, but the American national identity as well, and continues to be a highly relevant lesson in media deception in our present time.

Michele Hadbarg

The Danger of Looking: Loss of Feminism in *Dangerous Liaisons*

The 1782 novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* presents an aristocratic community in which a man and a woman devise a plan to seek revenge, power, and sex. In 1988, the novel was adapted into the film *Dangerous Liaisons*. Film critics' responses to the film were nearly universal in their disdain of John Malkovich as Valmont and their praise for Glenn Close as Merteuil. Malkovich, many of them said, appeared "neither terribly bright nor attractive," while Close was a "powerful embodiment of pure evil." My paper argues that the critics' responses arise from the film's elimination of the novel's feminist possibilities. By using devices that are specific to film, *Dangerous Liaisons* presents a woman who appears to be liberated but is ultimately condemned for her autonomy. My argument suggests that the filmic medium may be incapable of telling a truly feminist story.

Heather Johnson

Dark Desires and Hidden Terrors: Seeing Our Nightmares on the Big Screen

Our darkest fears and desires repressed within ourselves, and expressed outwardly through nightmares, are mirrored in the medium of popular horror film, such as the film, *A Nightmare On Elm St.* There, in a movie screen, a seemingly safe setting, the cathartic experience of viewing our own terror can be had without any real danger to our own selves physically or mentally. The real danger, of course, is the admittance that such dark desires exist and never really go away, much like the monsters in open-ended horror films like *A Nightmare on Elm St.* This also opens the door for profound psychoanalytical commentary on the broad appeal of popular horror films and what they say about the secret terrors lurking within us, buried behind a façade of normalcy, and how these films in which the evil is never quite overcome are intertwined with recurring nightmares. It is the merging of the two worlds, nightmare and horror film, that provides us with the possibility that what it is we really fear are things we secretly covet, and the reason we fear these repressed desires is because of the thin line of control we have over them. Primarily, I will be looking at the works of Sigmund Freud, and contrasting that with the film, a pivotal work in the horror film genre.

Truth or Dare

Moderated by Professor Elaine Andersen, Department of Linguistics

Thursday, April 14

5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

Room B

Christy Comer

The Crisis of Curiosity in Dysfunctional Families

When a lie is discovered within a family, its members are driven to discover the truth by the love they have for each other, though this act can often endanger the love that led them to pry. When Stevie in Edward Albee's *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* and Nora in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* realize that the families they have cherished are held together with lies, they each react with grief, horror, and, surprisingly, curiosity. Like Pandora, they refuse to leave mystery unexplored, doggedly pursuing the entire truth although it means destruction for the comfortable worlds they have inhabited. It seems, though, that a careful examination of the truth is the only path to understanding or self-acceptance. This possible path is the kernel of hope Albee and Ibsen plant for their misfit protagonists, Martin and Nora. As authors they are seeking to meddle with our comfortable preconceptions. The hope that the two families find for possible reconciliation, mirrors the author's hope for their radical protagonists' acceptance by an audience. If Torvald can come to love Nora, perhaps the "new woman" she represents can also be found worthy of acceptance. If Stevie can grasp the depth of Martin's feeling for the goat, perhaps others will come to understand the depth of love there is even in unconventional relationships. Curiosity is the beginning of the route to understanding, understanding the beginning of acceptance and love. In my paper I will investigate curiosity and its role in healing the dysfunctional families in these two plays and in changing our own worldviews.

Lindsay Pond

Cheap Shots: Exploring Scopophilia and Exhibitionism in Female Desire

In the two films *Belle de Jour* and *Mulholland Drive*, both protagonists present a tangled relationship between the desires to see and be seen. While Severine and Diane delight in exhibitionism, they feel manipulated in their own viewing. Confusion rather than desire dominates the female's experience of looking because it compromises her role as the center of the fantasy. Diane enjoys being the object of visual pleasure, but she cannot engage as the viewer. Even in fantasy, she demonstrates an incapacity for voyeurism. Like Diane, Severine slips into her roles as both chaste housewife and erotic call girl with relative ease; Severine desires to be only what everyone else wants her to be, and there seems to be no limit to her will to please. Yet, Severine's double life requires a certain degree of blindness to avoid compromising her perceptions as bourgeoisie housewife. Although she engages in the erotic, looking too closely, or enjoying through looking would force her to recognize the conflicting values of her worlds. In both cases, the female's desire becomes merely a byproduct of male desire; although the role of an individual male is muted to varying degrees in both films, the male presence and gaze is the source of desire in terms of both exhibitionism and scopophilia. The lack of voyeurism and scopophilia shows the imposed ignorance in female desire, as the act of viewing would force the recognition of the female's lack of power in generating her own desire.

Megan Sim

Desire: The Games We Play

Some people have said that life is a game. For Julien and Sophie, the protagonists in Yann Samuell's *Jeux D'Enfants*, this cliché is taken on a literal level; their game controls their lives and their lives are the game. Their lives clearly portray the effects of desire – how desire for what one cannot obtain is often manifested in the willingness to break certain physical and psychological boundaries. Julien and Sophie's curiosity as to how far exactly the other party will go to is mirrored in the escalating degrees of the challenges they each propose. This desire has a definite destructive potential, which has also been presented in other literary works such as the plays *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *Suddenly, Last Summer*.

Daniel Tkach

Life as the "Champion of Fun": Performing the "I" in Gonzo Journalism

"The best fiction is far more true than any kind of journalism. . . . Which is not to say that fiction is necessarily 'more true' than journalism – or vice versa – but that both 'fiction' and 'journalism' are artificial categories; and that both forms, at their best, are only two different means to the same end." – Hunter S. Thompson, *The Great Shark Hunt*

Journalism is usually read as an objective reporting of the facts, but in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Hunter S. Thompson alters this genre by adding his "gonzo" touch. In his book-length article he changes the focus from being the Mint 400 motorcycle race, his original assignment, to his personal week-long binge of psychedelic hedonism. Through a combination of post-facto commentary and original dialogue and drama from his pseudonym, Raoul Duke, Thompson creates multiple narrative voices, with the alias' life acting as the "story" by which Thompson's voice explores the death of the American Dream and the end of the Sixties, an era marked by individual freedom and self-expression. In this picaresque work, Thompson brings fiction and autobiography to journalism, using a unique "gonzo" style of writing opposite most conventional journalistic rules in an attempt to maintain his individualism and fulfill the American Dream on his own terms.

Lauren DePaepe

Dangerous Confessions: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath

"Dying / Is an art, like everything else. / I do it exceptionally well." – Sylvia Plath, "Lady Lazarus"

Unlike a confession made in the church, there is no code of silence with confessional poetry, which reveals one's secrets to the world. As a type of public purgatory, this vivid, compelling form of autobiography often yields unexpected consequences. Such is the case with confessional poet Sylvia Plath, whose turbulent poetry has been misinterpreted, according to Plath's daughter Frieda Hughes, by critics and groups wanting to take advantage of her strong words. This conflict represents the difficulty of making assumptions about the purpose of confessional poetry and relying on purely autobiographical explanations for the poet's words. In addition to revealing the unforeseen outcomes of public confession, Plath's poetry helps us to understand other aspects of the genre, such as its appeal to a wide variety of readers. Whether it is our ability to relate to the experiences and emotions of the poet and thereby achieve a sort of catharsis, or simply our voyeuristic tendencies, there is something undeniably powerful about confessional poetry that draws the reader into a world of inexorable passion.

Declaration of Interdependence

Moderated by Nicholas Buccola, Department of Political Science

Thursday, April 14

5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

Banquet Room

Reema Doshi

Hollywood and Bollywood: Media Influence in Images of Masculinity

The media is famous for propagating and even creating stereotypes, especially those associated with masculinity. Movies, in fact, have had an unparalleled influence on how individuals view themselves and current definitions of masculinity. By examining two recently filmed movies, *Hitch* and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham...* (K3G) and the older *On the Waterfront* and *Sholay*, I have identified three distinct characteristics of masculinity.

First, I have been able to distinguish the fact that the definition of masculinity varies from generation to generation. The macho masculinity of the past has shifted towards a more modern, softer version of masculinity, often identified as metro sexuality. Surprisingly enough, though, notions of masculinity actually do not vary cross-culturally as much as would be anticipated. The hegemonic form of masculinity described above is both depicted in *On the Waterfront* and also in *Sholay*. On the other end of the spectrum, we see those movies that were recently filmed that also develop comparable forms of masculinity. And finally, women play an undeniable role in defining masculinity. They have progressed from the damsel in distress to women who speak out against wrong, who can support themselves and fight adversities.

Many claim that third world countries, such as India, are backwards in their views, especially in the context of the treatment of men by women. But perhaps it is time to recognize that no true third world country exists because trends and progress in one country quickly proliferates throughout the world even if in minimal degrees.

Nick Lerum

Surface Tension: The Father-Son Dynamic in *Long Day's Journey into Night*

Eugene O'Neill's director's notes for his play, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, claim that "American children of immigrants do not understand their fathers. They are always disappointed in them." Although this generalization seems logical, it does not do justice to the deep bond of mutuality between generations in immigrant families. This paper will unpack the complexities that lurk beneath the clichéd surface of the immigrant family by examining the relationship between fathers and sons in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The Irish immigrant father, James, was abandoned by his own father at a young age. Yet this does not cause James to reject his Irish heritage. He still finds his identity in being Irish: he claims Catholicism as his faith, drinks excessively, keeps a working-class mentality, and even goes so far as to claim that his idol, Shakespeare, was Irish. Nevertheless, these tributes to his heritage are hollow, and James is clinging only to familiar forms because of his own uncertainties. His sons, Jamie and Edmund, take the opposite tact. They both espouse nihilistic worldviews and live according to those views, leading self-destructive lifestyles. Jamie scorns what he sees as weakness in their father when he clings to a religion he does not practice. Nevertheless, James, Jamie, and Edmund are all dependent on each other to affirm their shared identity. Edmund goes the furthest in attempting to understand his father, but Jamie too shares a bond with his father that is deeper than their mutual scorn. In short, the father and son relationships in O'Neill's play reveal the complexities of an immigrant family where love

can run deeper than hate, mutuality transcends misunderstanding, and devotion surmounts disappointment.

Fiona Tang

Making Monsters of Men: An Analysis of American Demonization of Foreign Enemies

Throughout US history, the American public has repeatedly presented a united front against foreign rivals. Stereotypes, misinformation, and propaganda have been used to demonize the cultures of our enemies. From the Red Scare to the Iraqi War, we've seen our enemies metamorphose from men into monsters. The most recent foreign enemy to be demonized is North Korea. By depicting North Koreans as mad and grotesque, the US has succeeded in creating yet another foreign monster to unite against. Indeed, the key to creating a national enemy is by portraying the foreign culture as perverted.

Emily Coppel

Irish Hospitality and the Meaning of Nationalism in Joyce's "The Dead"

In a much-anticipated (and sincere) speech, Joyce's main character Gabriel reveals that his home country of Ireland "has no tradition which does it so much honor and which it should guard so jealously as that of its hospitality." Yet, it is this very notion of hospitality that stifles Gabriel, and causes him to admit vehemently that he is "sick of his own country, sick of it!" In this way, Joyce's "The Dead" is an anomaly of inconsistency: it is his "repentant" work of *Dubliners*, revealing the unique beauty and customs of Ireland, but it is also – through its specific look at hospitality – a kind of scathing criticism. The effect of this inconsistency leaves Joyce's work out of the realm of logic, and forces his audience to come to conclusions about the political state of Ireland themselves. As the text itself (as well as critical sources) shows us, "The Dead" rejects the strong nationalistic mythology of the Irish Literary Revival, and instead, praises the individual and requires him to answer the question, "what does it mean to be Irish?"

Anthony Wu

Looking Through the Lens: Film and the American Dream

"The cinema... makes it possible to experience without danger all the excitement, passion and desirousness which must be repressed in a humanitarian ordering of life." - C.G. Jung

Films and dreams share unique qualities of being surreal experiences that we often have little control over. Both require darkness to permeate our surroundings and suspend our disbelief for extended periods of time. Yet for all that films and dreams demand of us, they also allow us to escape from the confines of our reality, to be inspired, and to build the foundation upon which relationships with others are built. In Chay Yew's *Wonderland*, the cinematic images of Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, and Marilyn Monroe play vital roles in the development of the individual characters and their dreams, whether they be nocturnal or motivational, fantastical or realistic. Films can nurture budding dreams, and likewise, dreams can fuel a different perception of films. They are at once distinct and symbiotic. Chay Yew's work addresses the way these mediums are crucial for each another, and at the same time, necessary for our daily lives. But for all the power of films and dreams, the inability to interpret and distinguish them from reality can be disastrous because it squanders the inspirational potential that is inherent in films and dreams. They then become mere fleeting images existing only within the mind, never fully-realized, yet wistfully drawn upon from time to time like the cinematic icons of the past.

Same as it Ever Was

Moderated by Professor Thomas Ward, Department of Anthropology

Thursday, April 14

5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

Pub

Michelle Enriquez

“I’m just not ready for gay marriage”: The Role of Identity in Political Rhetoric

This essay examines campaign speeches of President Bush and Senator Kerry, editorials, and the discourse of personality party supporters such as Rush Limbaugh and Michael Moore during the 2004 Presidential campaign and compares them to similar documents of the Cold War period. Analysis of the public discourse reveals that despite a seemingly distinct cultural chasm along party lines, the bridge that links these cultural identities is a preoccupation with hyper-masculinized rhetoric and a tendency to equate the identity of the militarized state with an accordingly militarized President. Assessment of these texts reveals a gendered national identity that transcends generations and party lines, exposing the naturalization of gender assumptions and institutionalized rejection of the feminine.

Daniel Oettinger

Hacking Stereotypes: The Common Misconception of Computer Hackers

The term hacker did not always mean "cyber criminal." In the infancy of the computer age, a hacker was anyone proficient in computer programming with a desire for knowledge. The changeover occurred with the publishing of "The Hacker Manifesto," which redefined what it means to be a hacker, and with cyberpunk works such as *Neuromancer* and *Bladerunner* which changed the public perception of this internet subculture. These works established the labels that are more commonly thought of today. While the faction of destructive hackers are definitely the most publicized, there still exist a large portion of hackers that are not malicious and do not deserve the stigma attached to the term hacker.

Matt Mieskoski

Opening the Greatest Box of All – the Human Mind: Psychedelics are the Key

The mind is a box, a box with walls of conformity and limitation. These near-impermeable walls manacle the mind’s infinite potential. But there is a key to freeing the brain from these manacles, and that key is psychedelic, mind-altering drugs. Dr. Timothy Leary strongly advocated the use of mind-altering drugs as a means for exploring the human psyche; he was not alone in this belief. Famed author Aldous Huxley was among those that agreed with Leary that mind-altering drugs were a means for better understanding both the human mind and the universe as a whole. Leary and Huxley were two trailblazing intellectuals able to shatter the manacles that society has placed on the mind. Furthermore, they advocate the widespread use those psychedelic drugs outlawed by society.

Kelly McMullan

The Walking Dead and the Walking Contradiction: The Growth of the Gothic Pop-Culture Movement

“Those who ‘think outside of the box’ often find that they have merely traded one box for another.” – a fortune cookie

Goths, Punks, extremists, and Hippies. Throughout modern history many social groups have come and gone, many of which have expounded a supposedly new way of thinking that is outside the norm of “mainstream” society. There will always be those people who want to go against the normal flow of the river, but in what ways are they just following a different current? A current social group relevant to this argument is the Gothic movement, a group that definitely harbors its own private “box.” Cliques like this one strive to beat conformity- an evil that they see in contemporary society. Despite their preoccupation with assimilation to the norm, there is no way that they can escape the homogeneity of the social world. The pressure to conform still hounds them, as the members of this sub-culture struggle to comply with the tenets of their own fellow Gothic followers. In a sense, by desperately struggling to “think outside of the box,” they have merely developed a new box of their own with which to conform. Interestingly enough, it is most often impressionable youths who first become involved in a trend such as this, as they struggle to rebel against a society they feel has shunned them in many ways. But this new “box” they create fails them in being very similar to the first confinement they despise, and these “Goths” are stuck with the personal problem of being the ever-conforming non-conformists.

Myung Suh Shin

Pornography and the Art of Social Power Maintenance

What is art? What is pornography? Whether pornography is art or trash is a popular debate. Politicians, scholars, and the judiciaries have all attempted and failed to formulate satisfying answers. However, regardless of whether it is truly art or not, it is clear that pornography is considered illegitimate by mainstream society. Despite the similarities in the sexual content of the works of acclaimed movie directors, artists, and talk show hosts and their less acclaimed counterparts, the works of the former are given legitimate attention and concern while that of the latter are persecuted as immoral and obscene. For example, why is Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller’s film *Sin City* celebrated while Gerard Damiano’s porno *Deep Throat* is shunned by mainstream society? Why are Leonardo da Vinci’s nude sculptures considered art while Rox de Luca’s nude portraits of herself are not?

Pornography and other related obscene material are not considered illegitimate mainly because of their lewd content. Rather it threatens the maintenance of the middle-class and its social values that present itself as the ideal and the norm that everyone should follow. It is much easier to blame pornography as the source of school-shootings, problem children, and male chauvinism than it is on the poor parenting of the middle-class. Thus, in order to keep blame and critical attention away from the flaws and vices of the middle-class, the middle-class and elite, who espouse middle-class norms, continue to deride pornography as harmful and illegitimate.

The Un-Real World

Moderated by Erika Wright, Department of English

Thursday, April 14

7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

Room A

Valerie Giambanco

Becoming the Lab Rat: LSD, Isolation Tanks, and John Lilly

Controversial psychiatrist and scientist John C. Lilly believed that medical researchers should only conduct their experiments on themselves before they involve a patient. The reason for this philosophy was that “sometimes one does not use another subject after one has done it oneself, because one realizes either that it is not necessary on a second subject or that it is too dangerous” (*Center of the Cyclone*). While this precautionary measure to opening the box of human research exceeds both the mid century and current minimums of US regulations for clinical trials, the nature of Lilly’s psychological studies makes self-experimentation appear to be more of a curious, selfish endeavor than a noble act. By his use of LSD, isolation tanks, and hypnosis to induce altered states of consciousness, one is able to question whether or not Lilly was actually in a state of mind to be an objective scientist throughout the self-experimentation. While his survival did leave hope for the future of these experiments in that patients should not die under such conditions, the self-assessment of his research, however enlightening to psychology and neurology as it may seem, has no validation to be proven unbiased and should thus be invalidated from any reported scientific results.

Fonda Jiang

May Contain Artificial Happiness: Technology’s Role in a Culture of Convenience

“Methyl-2-peridylketone makes something taste like popcorn.” - *Fast Food Nation*

Washing our clothes, transporting our bodies, artificially flavoring our food... Technology’s presence in our everyday lives continues to grow as we fulfill our natural desire for increased ease and leisure. It’s been said that we are paying too high a price in our constant pursuit of convenience, but thus far, we have been willing to pay those prices. Instead of condemning this willingness, perhaps we should consider why it is present and examine our love of convenience when it is taken to its logical, though extreme, conclusion. After all, with every technological advance, our bodies become increasingly unnecessary. With all this time and effort we save, perhaps we should wonder just what we’re saving it for.

Julianna Gale

Dangerous Education: Sexist Enlightenment in *Dangerous Liaisons*

Education, at one extreme, can be seen as enlightenment. At the other extreme, it is manipulation. Sadly, for women in 18th century France, the whole continuum, from good to bad, was focused almost entirely on relations with the male sex and hidden sensuality. The women had only two directives: they must remain chaste, and they must please men. As pointed out by early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, these contradictory instructions could only lead to trouble. With his movie adaptation of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, director Stephen Frears joins the centuries-old debate on women’s education in the Age of

Enlightenment. My argument suggests that the “ruining” of Cecile and the Marquise are not isolated incidents, but rather an effect of a whole system of faulty education.

Sarah Dubina

Mahler’s “Resurrection”: Peaces from the *Kulturbund* Puzzle

The dawn of the Third Reich resulted in an outpouring of anti-Semitic legislation, ultimately resulting in the physical and cultural ghetto-ization of the German-Jewish population. As Jews were segregated from Aryans, they were left with no cultural outlet – until the formation of the Nazi-sanctioned *Jüdische Kulturbund*, or Jewish Cultural Association, which provided lectures and musical and theater performances expressly for Jews by Jews. Many argue that the *Kulturbund* was a propaganda ploy detrimental to the Jewish population, and that those who participated in or attended the *Kulturbund*’s performances were therefore complicit with the Nazis themselves. However, the implications of symbolic programming choices such as Mahler’s *Symphony No. 2* (“Resurrection”) would suggest that perhaps the *Kulturbund*’s relationship with its Nazi officials was much more complex: the *Kulturbund* collaborated with the Nazis essentially to peacefully, but forcibly, work against them.

Alison Rose

Prison Rape, Popular Culture, and the Potential for Reform

In July of 2003, President Bush signed into law the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which was intended to foster an understanding of the impact of prison rape on society and to offer solutions to this widespread problem. Although the bill passed both houses of Congress unanimously and received the support of diverse organizations from Human Rights Watch and the ACLU to the Christian Coalition, most Americans have never heard of it. However, to say that the American public is unaware of the problem of prison rape would be a mistake. While Americans may feel uncomfortable about discussing the harsh realities of inmate life, prison rape has become a media fixture and is regularly joked about on sitcoms or is used by police to threaten criminals on television dramas. These popular portrayals are usually not intended to shock viewers, but rather to reinforce the way in which most Americans have come to regard prison rape – an inevitable fact of prison life or a problem with no apparent solution. Prison rape is largely regarded by the law enforcement community in much the same way, and many experts are skeptical that the PREA will have any far-reaching effects. I suggest possible reasons for why many Americans, whose views have been shaped by those expressed in popular media, have come to regard prison rape as justified, or at least as an appropriate punishment for crime. I argue that prison rape affects all members of society and that popular perceptions first need to change before any reform measures can be enacted successfully.

Gender's Game

Moderated by Beth Callaghan, Department of English

Thursday, April 14

7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

Room A

Roselyn Hallett

“Slaying Makes You Horny”: Sex, Strength and Feminism in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

Embraced as a "symbol of empowerment," Buffy has become a poster woman for the feminist movement. Buffy's status as such allows us to ask (and answer) a crucial question: how is feminism's "ideal female" sexed? Scholars have sexed Buffy in various ways, covering the spectrum from "purely feminine" to "undeniably masculine." My analysis of scenes (specifically from the Buffy-Spike relationship) and essays (notably those of Symonds and Bodger) has led me to a more specific definition of Buffy's sex, a placement that better describes the gender of feminism's "ideal female." Rather than seeing Buffy as limited to distinct sex roles, I argue that her gendering represents a rejection of the masculine/feminine polarity. Furthermore, I dismiss the idea that Buffy moves along a "continuum" between the genders, with absolute masculinity at one end and absolute femininity at the other. This concept precludes occupying two sides of the spectrum at once, but time and again, we see Buffy embodying extreme masculinity and extreme femininity simultaneously. In light of what Buffy *cannot* be and of her expression of traits from both genders, I am interpreting Buffy as having an ambiguous third gender. She uses feminine and masculine strengths for survival and advancement, but is not limited to either. The description is satisfying: Buffy's unique gender encapsulates the spirit of female empowerment.

Tippi Ellis

The Triumphant She-Devil: Heroine or Cautionary Tale?

Second wave feminism challenges the idea of the traditional role of a woman as a meek, loving, and unquestioning wife and mother. It purports that the husband is the oppressive force holding women back, and that abandoning marriage altogether is the most obvious way to achieve independence. Surveys of female graduates of Barnard College indicate that many women embraced this rejection of marriage, seeking success through complete self-reliance. In Fay Weldon's *Life and Loves of a She-Devil*, the heroine plays into this assumption perfectly, leaving her family and becoming an independent woman. However, the twisted creature she becomes leaves the reader to wonder whether or not her actions led her to a desirable outcome. In my paper, I argue that this feminist ideal is a broad misconception, leading oppressed women to pursue a course of action that cannot bring them the fulfillment they seek.

Kris Kemeny

The Machiavellian Turn: Neo-conservative Ideologies of Masculinity and Political Leadership

This paper will examine traditional definitions of masculinity through works of political and philosophical theory and explore ways in which ideologies of such masculinity re-emerge and are re-constructed in current neo-conservative political practices. Previous scholarship such as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* have positioned and created an image of man as strong, aggressive, rational, emotionally-detached, resolute, and pre-emptive in dealings with potential threats.

These works will delineate and demonstrate interrelations among ideologies of masculinity, political culture, and ideal leadership of the time. In comparison to the traditional Hobbesian and Machiavellian ideals of masculinity, leadership, and politics, contemporary political and ideological paradigms will be examined. An analysis that uncovers the historical, political, and ideological roots or 'organic anchors' of current neo-conservatism can provide important clues for a better understanding of its theory, mechanism, and practice.

Anna-Marie McLemore

The Lady and Her Chains: The Enslavement and Liberation of the Dominatrix in *Venus in Furs*

At first glance, the dominatrix is the paragon of female liberation; she is the whip-wielding symbol of a woman's ability to dominate over a man. But Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, an emblematic work of S&M literature, reveals that the mistress of sadomasochism is allowed to be dominant only in the arena of sex games, and only under the jurisdiction of her male lover, the masochist. Her apparent domination over her physically submissive counterpart creates the illusion that she possesses control. If she believes that assuming the role of dominatrix gives her power, she paradoxically relinquishes it. Only in realizing her own bondage to the terms of sadomasochism, and stepping away from her role as dominatrix, does she gain power in and out of the realm of sex.

David Welch

Celluloid Pandora

An investigation into George Wilhelm Pabst's 1929 film *Die Büchse der Pandora* (*Pandora's Box*), demonstrating how not only the content of the film parallels the Pandora myth, but the film itself acts as a Pandora's Box in its conscious upheaval of cinematic and social conventions of the era; it deliberately questions the role of femininity and sexuality, and is one of the last expressionistic German films. Scorned by critics and censors of its time, it is only recently that film historians have reevaluated *Die Büchse der Pandora's* place in history.

Altered States

Moderated by Professor Steven Lamy, School of International Relations

Thursday, April 14

7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

Banquet Room

Emi Kiyoizumi

Alice the Chameleon: Situational Use of Behavior in Wonderland and Modern Society

The situational use of one's identity is not rare or infrequent in any society. Due to varying expectations in certain situations, members of societies and groups consistently alter their behavior. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Victorian expectation of the "child-woman" forces Alice to frequently switch between multiple personalities both in her world and Wonderland. Alice's identity and situational behavior are briefly discussed, but never fully realized in comparison to current and Victorian standards in psychology and expected behavior. The relatively new field of psychological research of situational use of self sheds light on the awareness of society's simultaneous expectations and the consequential behavior that arises in the pursuit to fulfill them.

Annie Park

Act Your Age: A Contemporary Asian Female Phenomenon

Math whiz. Camera toting tourist. Computer savvy geek. All of these are contemporary stereotypes of Asians, but they are predominantly applied to males of the race. A different set of stereotypes project beliefs about Asian females, but from the tiger ladies and Japanese schoolgirls emerges a far more interesting version: one that is actually observed in daily life on a far larger scale than geishas and Suzy Wongs may be. This view of the Asian woman is that of a woman in her late teens to early twenties who persists in engaging in childish behavior that would better suit a girl of five or six. Certain characteristics distinguish these "innocent" women from women whose emotional and mental development echoes their physical development, and these characteristics often include a fascination with cartoons such as "Hello Kitty," undergoing plastic surgery without full awareness of possible consequences to make themselves appear more Western, and giggling with their hands over their mouths. While certain Asian cultures have been known to encourage a physical childlike state, such as the Chinese practice of foot binding, these contemporary Asian women are interesting in that they willingly perpetuate the societal expectation that they act like children. A plausible explanation for this behavior is that they believe that projecting a state of innocence and altering their appearance to emulate a Western ideal of beauty will help increase their chances of marriage and so these women hope to achieve some autonomy in a suffocating environment through a married state.

Amy Weidig

L.O.V.E. (The Limit Of Validity in Emotion): Emotional Agency in Human and Robot

If, as technology advances unstoppably, the stuff of our creation becomes as apparently capable as we are, what distinguishes human from machine? Emotion, often loosely defined, is heralded in pop culture and science fiction (*I, Robot* and Bester's short stories) as a distinctly human and irreproducible trait, and the primary tool for differentiating the real from the artificial. As biological science progresses, though, much emotional tendency can be traced to chemical disposition in the brain, making the mind, as

Pinker argues, not the “blank slate” many assume it to be. If chemicals create human emotion (as opposed to a higher “soul”), then the electrical impulses governing robotic emotion are equally valid, as both stem from “programming” uncontrollable by the creature experiencing the emotion. Perhaps what makes the human “human” lies not in emotion itself, but in the act of creation, the imprintation of the impulse we call emotion by the human onto the robot. By choosing to create, even if we share our intrinsically human traits with machines, we retain agency.

Elissa Stooker

Holding Your Heart on Your Sleeve with a Safety Pin: The Transition From Punk Rock to Emo

Punk rock does not conjure images of a guy onstage in thrift store clothes and an acoustic guitar, but chances are that twenty years earlier that same guy would have been covered in tattoos and safety pins while rocking out on a beat-up Fender Strat. Emo may be thought of as more mellow than punk rock, but the emotions in both forms of music are just as intense – it is easy to follow both the musical and societal evolution of the more radical, “hard-core” style of early punk rock (bands such as Black Flag and to a lesser extent, the Sex Pistols) to the now socially accepted form known as “emo” (including stereotypical bands such as Bright Eyes and Dashboard Confessional). In this evolution, I will describe the subcultures that are associated with these forms of music, how they evolved into more mainstream forms of expression and were forced to go underground again, and the resulting fashions and attitudes that members of these subcultures adopted.

Johanna Michael

Incendiary Opinions, Confounding Actions: Bisexuality According to Social Groups

People who pretend to be bisexual for social status, often referred to as “bi posers,” contribute to the widespread misinterpretation of true bisexuality and cause the role of bisexuals/bisexuality in society to become even more muddled. These results are hardly ever the goal of the person feigning bisexuality; they are merely side effects. The bi poser’s goal is usually to be accepted within their own social group, which in many cases does not involve actual bisexuals. Secondary motivations can include the need for attention and the desire to rebel.

Made to Order

Moderated by Professor William Weber, Department of Chemistry

Thursday, April 14

7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

Pub

Hannah Marcuson

Slash Fanfiction: A New Literature

In the last ten years, the Internet has brought forth a media explosion. One of the many media forms that it supports is the genre of writing known as “slash fanfiction”: fiction about television, movies, books, comics, etc., which puts male characters into homosexual relationships. Hundreds of thousands of writers, mostly women, post stories on websites, livejournals, and email lists, forming online communities and discussions. I will be exploring the concept of slash. Why do people write slash? Why do so few outside the community know about it, or approve of it? Why is it then so attractive to those inside the community? And what happens when the community brings this new genre to the outside world?

Kirsten Rommel

Controversial Chromosomes: Ethics and The Human Genome Project

A new frontier in science opened with the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003. With the sequencing of all 3 billion DNA base pairs of the human genome, scientists acquired a reservoir of untapped genetic information, gaining the potential to explain and possibly cure everything from cancer to addiction to gene expression. However, the unlocking of this information has also created a Pandora’s box full of ethical and legal issues within society. Inspired by these issues and the Human Genome Project, Matt Ridley’s *Genome: An Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters* addresses the genome from a scientific and social perspective. Through the use of the “autobiographical” form, *Genome* takes an unconventional approach to scientific writing – reaching a larger audience but also raising questions about the literary form of autobiography. Through Matt Ridley’s *Genome* and the film *Gattaca* this study explores the processes and forms by which society conveys scientific information.

Carl Petrillo

Albee’s Worlds of Words

In both *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* And *The Goat*, Edward Albee draws great attention to the verbal wordplay between the characters. Wives Martha and Stevie wilt under words from their husbands because what they say determines what is true – George kills his imaginary son by speaking the words; Martin uses words to make his goat lover, Sylvia, a souled being; and Stevie employs words to portray the goat as a thing. The words the characters use are fundamental to determining their realities; by analyzing how this principle operates in the texts we can see to what extent this principle is active outside of literature in our lives.

Laura Fruen

e-Motion: Technology and its Effects on Affections

Science and technology are essential to the advancement, and usually enhancement, of human culture; they are driving forces in everyday life. With this desire to continually increase the scientific field, however, come a dependence on technology and, generally, a step away from natural emotions. More technology brings less direct human interaction, and people substitute computers for traditional means of communication. At certain points, people carry out technological experiments to such extents that they create cyborgs devoid of any semblance of emotion. Historically, lack of emotion is perceived with negative consequences. Is it still? Using *Frankenstein* and other modern texts, I will explore the relationship between emotion and technology and whether they even are separate identities. Science and affections impact each other; has technology made emotions obsolete?

Amit Levi

Selfish Motherhood: Eva's Pursuit of Autonomy in Tillie Olsen's "Tell Me a Riddle"

Eva, the oppressed mother in "Tell Me a Riddle," is restricted by the desires of her family. Finally, in her later years, she does what she wants to do. She therefore stays at home. Ironically, home is her prison, the location of her domestic labor. Feminists argue that for women to become autonomous, they must leave home. So why does Eva continue to be a mother when the role caused her unhappiness? According to social psychologist Edward L. Deci's research, people pursue three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Applying his research to the text, I prove that Eva seeks her needs to promote her psychological well-being. To escape feeling entrapment, she strives to be a mother through her own volition. Even though it seems ironic that she wants to return to the site of her oppression, Eva can only fulfill her needs at home.

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