

**9:30-10:50**

**Mapping Place & Power: Hybridity and Transgression**

**Moderator: Andrew Jones**

**Eastwoods Room, 2.102**

*The Global Space of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Who Put the "Imperial" in Imperial Valley?*

**Jason Oliver Chang---UC Berkeley, Dept. of Ethnic Studies**

**Abstract:** Imperial Valley, California did not become known as such until the turn of the twentieth century. This paper answers the question, "Who put the 'imperial' in Imperial Valley?" While its residents, as well as the national imaginary, have normalized the name, it serves as an important reminder of this region's history. From its very inception, the Imperial Valley has been a rural expression of the cultures of U.S. imperialism and a partner in its material and migratory circuits. Like other early real estate projects in California, the Imperial Valley was started through the monopolization of cheap undeveloped land combined with irrigation infrastructure investment. The Colorado River Land Development Company (CDC) perfected this development strategy in the Imperial Valley. The owner of the CDC, the LA Times magnate Otis Gray Harrison, was also General Harrison in the Philippine-American war. While in the Philippines, General Harrison developed a keen imperialist sensibility and colonial mentality that would inspire his work in the Imperial Valley. Drawing from archival sources, this paper argues that Harrison put the "imperial" in Imperial Valley by creating a second Eden in which to rehearse the colonial narratives of settlement and racial superiority. This history complicates prevailing critical conceptions of U.S.-Mexico relations and incorporates the Pacific Rim as an important geopolitical feature of *la frontera*.

**Two Parallel Motions: Mapping Hong Kong**

**Jennifer Cheng---University of Iowa, Nonfiction Writing Program**

**\*\*Note, this is a "Lyric Essay Submission"**

See Attachment.

*Mongrel Bodies, Mongrel Technologies in Quiroga's Cinema Stories*

**Allison Schifani---University of CA Santa Barbara, Dept. of Comparative Literature**

**Abstract:** The Argentinian writer Horacio Quiroga's cinema stories offer a keen analysis not only of the changing character of Argentina's place in the technologically mediated landscape of the Americas in the early 20th century but also of the technologically mediated body wandering that landscape. In a close exposition of two of Quiroga's stories, *Miss Dorothy Phillips mi esposa* and *El espectro* we can gauge the ways that, in form as well as content, Quiroga's stories map out the multiple layers of a media ecology in which both the author and his characters are enmeshed. Quiroga's analysis of the erotics of cinema are made richer by his dynamic sense of the real material impact of this particular new technology not only on the body but on the city. In a Buenos Aires made in part by what we might call movie house mongrels wandering in their dizzy post-cinematic stupor, Quiroga's stories engage the mobile body of the spectator, modern vision and the larger field of the market dominated by North America and Europe. Using theories of cinema presented by both Beatriz Sarlo and Linda Williams, this paper will read the map of this particularly American media ecology offered in these two neo-gothic short stories.

**Bodies & Boundaries: Skirting the Gender Lines**  
**Moderator: Allison Wright Munro**  
**Sinclair Suite, 3.128**

*My Wonder Woman: The “New Wonder Woman,” Gloria Steinem, and the Appropriation of Comic Book Iconography*  
**Andrew Friedenthal, UT-Austin, American Studies**

**Abstract:** In 1968, DC Comics changed the character of Wonder Woman from a mythically-powered superheroine into a karate-trained superspy figure. Despite the best intentions of DC’s writers and editors, the backlash against this change was so strong that in 1972, after appearing in her original star-spangled costume on the cover of the first issue of *Ms.* magazine, Wonder Woman was given back her super-powers. This paper serves as an examination of the politics behind both the creators who depowered Wonder Woman and the second-wave feminist activists who “rescued” the superheroine from this state. By looking at just how and why Gloria Steinem and her cohort idolized the superheroine in her original form, the paper explores the importance of Wonder Woman as an icon versus Wonder Woman as a character. This analysis points towards a critical, and underlooked, aspect of comic books as pieces of mass media – the tensions between corporate ownership of characters and the appropriation of iconic imagery by readers. No matter how much Wonder Woman may be said to be “mine” by various readers, she is ultimately a money-making commodity for DC Comics, and the appropriation of that commodity by any other party can only go so far.

*The Radio Girls Will Show You!’ Women and Politics in Early 1920s Radio*  
**Anne Gessler--Dept. of American Studies, University of Texas--Austin**

**Abstract:** This conference paper examines the multiple ways 1920s women radio broadcasters used the emerging medium to advance their own political and social identities. I use the 1920 children’s book *The Radio Girls on Station Island* as a model for how to understand women’s self-positioning in early radio. The novel centers on three girls’ discovery of radio and their attempts to expand women’s access to communications technology. By highlighting various radio-related careers and adventures that women could pursue on equal terms as male counterparts, the *Radio Girls* book has serious political implications that mirror those put forth by real-life female radio operators. I argue that female broadcasters’ pioneer status had wide-reaching political ramifications by questioning male assumptions about women’s relationship to work, technology, and society in general. I suggest, then, that radio was a tool for women activists, amateur operators, and broadcasting insiders to gain greater political, economic, and social equality.

*Performing Prison: Dress, Modernity and the Radical Suffrage Body*  
**Katherine Feo, Dept. of American Studies, University of Texas—Austin**

This paper addresses how American suffragists in the National Women’s Party (NWP) used prison dress as part of a performance of political agency from 1917-1919. By strategically co-opting the uniforms they had earned while being “jailed for freedom” on behalf of their cause, these radical activists played upon the juxtaposition of coarse clothes on elite bodies to highlight the injustice of disenfranchisement for women.

Contemporary accounts from NWP suffragists dwelled at length on the horrors of being forced to adopt what they called the “cloth of ‘guilt’” during their incarceration for protesting, and describe the process of stripping off civilian clothes and redressing in prison garb as the final, iniquitous submission to the prison experience. To the jailed suffragists, the forced adoption of prison dress inside Washington D.C. prisons corrupted the integrity of their bodies by exposing them to poor hygiene, rotting food, and loose morality—all conditions that corroborated their “guilt” as criminals. By 1917, however, the party’s decision to seek political prisoner status for protesting women came with a concomitant decision to resist wearing the prison uniform upon arrest, an outward manifestation of the wider resistance to prison’s effect on the physical body through hunger and work strikes. Fighting to keep their street clothes on was a way for suffragists to maintain a boundary against the physical violations of the body within the prison. Establishing this boundary in turn gave suffragists the agency to safely use prison dress to visually advertise the suffrage cause outside the prison. As prison dress was being refused inside the workhouse, radical women who had been released from jail began to willingly adopt reproductions of the attire outside the prison, first for studio portraits published in the NWP journal, *The Suffragist*, and then as the costume for a two-month, traveling speaking tour called the “Prison Special.” The demarcation of political status gave NWP members the freedom to put on or take off their prison experience to suit a political purpose without fear that wearing the dress would brand them as criminal. Prison dress on the NWP speaking tour can be conceptualized both as a costume for the performance of the NWP prison experience—one that included story-telling, singing prison songs, playing the comb and “lockstepping”—and as a performance in itself, in which the specter of coarse dress on an elite suffrage body was offered as visual evidence of the hypocrisy of disenfranchisement. The final incarnation of prison dress as a performance of the suffrage struggle signals its shift from a “cloth of ‘guilt’” integral to the criminal body, to an external “wrapper” separate from the suffrage body.

Dress can be considered the most potent form of visual rhetoric representing the shift in political activism of the NWP from 1917-1919. Wearing prison experience made the body a primary site for the perceived injustice of the radical suffrage cause—materially juxtaposing the women’s

degradation at the hands of the American government with their status as educated, socially elite and forward-thinking citizens. Performing the prison experience through dress not only highlighted the indignity and hypocrisy of the suffragists' disenfranchisement, it also exploited existing discourses about class and race to tacitly underscore the legitimacy of their claims. This paper uses textual and photographic evidence produced by NWP members to chart the progression of prison dress as visual rhetoric in three key moments of suffrage activism—prison dress as synonymous with criminality, prison dress as a site of resistance in the fight for political status, and prison dress as a self-conscious performance of rights on the “Prison Special” tour.

## **Framing Identity: Production & Representation of Race in Art**

**Moderator: Jackie Smith**

**Asian Culture Room, 4.224**

*Laboratory Space: Experiments in Modernism, Medicine, and Racial Categorization at 291 Fifth Avenue*

**Tara Kohn, UT-Austin, Dept. of Art & Art History**

**Abstract:** Because of their immigrant roots, the radical artists of the Stieglitz circle were particularly prone to critical tirades infused with biologically-deterministic rhetoric. In fact, according to cultural purists, their “unconventional art” not only embodied the looming “threat...[of] social decay,” but also “obscured” their “inferior breeding” and enabled them to “masquerade as members of cultivated, cosmopolitan society.”<sup>1</sup> Seeking retribution, this community of intellectuals infused their textual contributions to “What 291 Means to Me”—a series of essays and poems devoted to the metaphorical significance of Alfred Stieglitz’s gallery space at 291 Fifth Avenue—with biological and medically-inspired language. I argue that these writings, in dialogue with cultural philosophies that exploited similar scientific analogies, challenged widespread ideological parallels between radical artistic practice, immigrant identity, and social pathology. Drawing upon Stieglitz’s installation photograph *Nadelman Exhibition* as an organizational framework, I explore the textual transformation of this modest space from a simple series of rooms into a metaphorically-significant structure with the capacity to “soothe” patrons “back to health” and perhaps, even, to alleviate American culture of its ills.<sup>2</sup> I suggest that in their descriptions of the austere gallery, published collectively in a special 1915 volume of *Camera Work*, the New York modernists configured 291 as an aesthetic and intellectual antidote to social discourses that linked immigrant nonwhites, along with radical art, to cultural degeneracy, disease, and decay. Appropriating scientific language from art critics and ethnologists, but using it to celebrate, rather than to denounce, modern artistic practice, these artists and intellectuals subversively described the radical gallery not as a sickness, but rather as a *cure*.

*Histories Buried in Clay: Appropriation, Cultural Diffusion, and the Pottery of Jerry Brown*

**Sarah Melton---University of Alabama, Dept. of American Studies**

**Abstract:** The contemporary Southern folk potter Jerry Brown draws on his family’s extensive background in ceramics for inspiration and self-promotion. His most popular pieces, known colloquially as “face jugs,” have an extensive, transcontinental history. These pieces, first produced in South Carolina in the mid-nineteenth century by enslaved artisans, share aesthetic similarities with West African art. The continuation of this art form by white potters, such as Jerry Brown, raises questions about the thin boundary between cultural diffusion and appropriation. Moreover, this study examines the ever-permeable color line and the ensuing problems of ownership in art, especially when the pieces in question are potential sites of resistance. As an example of transnational material culture, face jugs are a complicated piece of Southern, American, and global history. Jerry Brown’s pottery represents the multilayered story of “American” art, as well as the fallibility of easy categorization.

*Performing Other, Performing Self: American Identities in Nikki S. Lee's Projects*

**Anna Warbelow---Washington University, Dept of Art History**

**Abstract:** Photographer Nikki S. Lee’s *Projects* (1997-2001) presents American identity as fluid and constructed yet also as a social reality that can function as a form of empowerment. The series consists of thirteen sets of snapshots in which Korean-born Lee participates in various American subcultures, altering her appearance with the aim of temporarily posing as a different race, ethnicity, class or sexuality. This paper will consider the projects in which Lee changes her race and class (*Ohio, Hispanic, Hip-Hop*). I argue the subjects in Lee’s photographs are also performing identity based on class and racial stereotypes. This raises the question not of how “real” her photographs are, but rather how “real” the people she captures are. Yet, these categories are not as easy to transgress as an initial viewing of these projects might suggest. Lee does not seamlessly integrate herself into these groups, but rather remains quite conspicuous. Her inability to appear authentic in these images underlines the social realities of race and

class. Lee's *Projects* reveal the complicated reality of identity as powerfully constructed by photography, but also by both individuals and broader societal conditions. Lee plays with the tension between identity as performative and the authenticity of perceived social categories.

11:00-12:30

**Panel: Marginality, Racialization, and the Politics of Exclusion**

**Moderator: Amy Ware**

**Eastwoods Room, 2.102**

*Political Liminality: The Case of Puerto Rican Inbetweenness*

**Parissa Majdi-Clark, UCLA, Dept. of Political Science**

**Abstract:** The experience of living “in-between” cultural worlds is one of extreme duality, as Esmeralda Santiago evocatively portrays in her autobiographical account of growing up in Puerto Rico and New York in *When I was Puerto Rican*. The political realm of in-between “does not, of course, erase the national, in the sense of the place where one is born and educated (even if that place is a borderland) but it does imply such erasure” (1995: 174). Consequently, for Puerto Ricans in the United States, political identity is “at once fixed and floating” and begs inquiry into the power structures that result in a “neither here nor there” state (or space) of being (Mignolo 1995: 174). This paper seeks to articulate three political forces that have created a sense of Puerto Rican *Inbetweenness*: 1. The neocolonial status of the island of Puerto Rico 2. Puerto Rican transnationalism 3. The process of racialization that Puerto Rican migrants have undergone in segregated communities in the United States. These examples of intermittent *inbetweenness* produce the larger status of liminality, the space one occupies if the mythical sense of returning to one’s homeland has been revoked by the powers that be.

*Theoretical Construction of the “Other,” Toward the “illegal” as Human Day Laborers in the U.S. Empire*

**Albert Ponce, UCLA, Department of Political Science**

**Abstract:** The contemporary reality of undocumented immigrants in America is embedded within the historical and theoretical construction of the “other.” Thus, state sanctioned repression also vindicates the “citizen” or nativist attacks upon them. The state apparatus constructs the “illegal” immigrants, and individuals in society rationalize violence upon the “illegal” as an extension of this practice. On the margins of this vulnerable group of immigrants are day laborers. Day laborers have been relegated even further to the margins of the “illegal.” Their social and geopolitical space has been limited and intensified their marginality. Constructed as “illegal” they are “erased of legal personhood-(into) a space of forced invisibility, exclusion, subjugation, and repression.”<sup>1</sup> This paper will examine the historical and theoretical racialization of the “illegal” immigrant within the United States of America. Secondly, the racialization process that the “illegal” immigrant undergoes at the hands of the state will be discussed. Thirdly, an attempt to uncover the relationship of state and citizen violence upon the “illegal” will be undertaken. Specifically, I will focus on the group that exists on the fringes of the immigrant population in the United States, day laborers, whom are also at the highest risks of racial retribution and violence.

*Becoming Americans: Self-Fashioning a Japanese American Identity in Dorothea Lange’s Internment Photographs*

**Elissa Yukiko Weichbrodt---Washington University, Dept. of Art History**

**Abstract:** Dorothea Lange’s recently rediscovered photographs of Japanese Americans during World War II represent the tragedy of the internment through visual irony, juxtaposing racially marked bodies with the apparent innocence, wholesomeness, and American patriotism of the evacuees. While Lange certainly acknowledged the politics driving her documentary approach, this paper argues that a more complex understanding of these images should take into account the Japanese Americans’ own agency in fashioning themselves for the recording camera. In the decade prior to the war, the Japanese American community on the West Coast vigorously debated the relative strengths and inadequacies of cultural isolation, assimilation, and biculturalism. Through most of the 1930s, many Japanese Americans consciously embraced a hybridization of Japanese and American practices and expectations as a means of establishing the ethnic community in the U.S. But by the early 1940s, the looming threat of war prompted the primary community group, the Japanese American Citizens’ League, to change course, promoting a strongly assimilationist model that downplayed cultural difference and highlighted cultural, economic, and political integration into broader, white American culture. Reading Lange’s

photographs through her *subjects'* concurrent discourse thus reveals the ways in which many ethnic Japanese re-presented and re-fashioned their public identity as American citizens.

## **Selling “American Dreams”: Consumerism & Appropriation**

**Moderator: Stephanie Kohlberg**

**Sinclair Suite, 3.128**

*(Re) Framing Revolutionary Politics: The Black Panthers at 40 and the Dynamics of Collective Memory*

**Anne-Marie Angelo, Duke University, Dept. of History**

**Abstract:** In 2004, the Huey P. Newton Foundation requested a trademark for “Burn Baby Burn,” a phrase popularized during the Watts Riots of 1965.<sup>1</sup> Black Panther Party founder Newton’s widow Frederika Newton borrowed the phrase to name a new hot sauce. Each bottle’s label noted milestones in Black Panther history. Newton recalled that it “was a catchy phrase, and I thought it would be reminiscent of the ‘60s. I sure didn’t want it to be a call to burn anything other than our taste buds.”<sup>2</sup> Former Panther David Hilliard explained that the sauce and a new line of Panther-nostalgic clothing were “all a part of us trying to find new formats for marketing our history.”<sup>3</sup> Why did Newton and Hilliard develop this product long after the Party’s 1982 demise? Why were they insistent on educating consumers about the Panthers’ history and community programs? And why did Hilliard feel that the Panthers needed to “market” their history? With these questions, I examine the dynamic nature of Black Panther collective memory in 2006. In that year, which marked the fortieth anniversary of the Party’s founding, a number of objects and events provided opportunities to authenticate and contest the Panthers’ legacy. I consider the multiple narratives that the hot sauce and a documentary photography book entitled *The Black Panthers* (2006) present.<sup>4</sup> I suggest that Panther collective memory works within the boundaries of the middle-class market, while also subtly destabilizing consumerism’s inviolability. I argue that the iconic Black Panther style—visualized in raised fists, guns, and panther logos—is always entangled with the long-term realization of Panther ideology. These memory objects are not merely kitsch or nostalgia. Their aesthetic appeal whispers a radical, mongrel voice into the contemporary mainstream.

*The Bug Conquers the U.S.: The Americanization of the Volkswagen Beetle*

**Peter Kovacs, UT-Austin, Dept. of Radio, Television, & Film**

**Abstract:** By the late 1950s, maintaining the pace of capitalist expansion became impossible without a genuine global marketplace. The era of dumping American surplus products on war ravaged Europe was over: 15 years after the fall of Berlin, the economies of Western Europe recovered and demanded access to the US market. One sign of the changing times was the appearance of European durable goods in America - however, the European manufacturers faced an uphill battle for the hearts and minds of the US customer. It proved especially difficult to convince Americans to buy European automobiles. Despite a moderate surge of import car sales in the late 1950s, only one company managed to carve out a significant market share in the US: Volkswagen. Where all French, Italian and British car manufacturers badly failed, Volkswagen literally made a name for itself: by the end of the 1960s, the odd looking little car became a permanent fixture of the American cityscape and Volkswagen was a firmly established brand throughout the country. This paper argues the legendary Volkswagen Beetle advertising campaign, created by the New York advertising agency Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) played an important role in 'Americanizing' this very 'un-American' car, which the *Los Angeles Times* called in 1961 "the most unusual and controversial automotive product in the world today." By tapping into what Raymond Williams calls the "structure of feeling", DDB managed not only to make the Volkswagen more palatable for the US customer, but also mediated the radical changes in American society in the face of globalization.

*Of Kitchens and Conglomerate Ownership: The Money and Meanings Behind Kelly Ripa’s Electrolux Commercials*

**Katherine Haenschen---UT-Austin, Dept. of Radio, Television, & Film**

**Abstract:** Kelly Ripa zips across the screen in her made-for-TV kitchen, demonstrating how women can ‘have it all’ thanks to Electrolux appliances. The *Bewitched* theme tinkles as Ripa exhibits superwoman-type powers managing career, home, children, and entertaining thanks to machines that make her “even more amazing.” The commercials recall Susan Douglas’ argument in *Where the Girls Are*, which claims that Samantha, Jeannie, and other 1960’s-era female television characters used their supernatural skills to better serve as domesticated women. As the

celebrity spokeswoman for GE's high-end appliances, Ripa is similarly positioned, while her successful career—and celebrity husband—are largely effaced. Ripa is one of the few contemporary actors capable of this role, due to her fame from housewife-friendly *Hope & Faith* and *Live With Regis & Kelly*: Ripa is hardly the threatening feminist. Complicating the commercial are General Electric's conglomerate ownership of both Electrolux and NBC, which airs the commercial frequently. The intellectual property, however—of both *Bewitched* and Ripa's sitcom and soap opera—came from ABC. Thus the commercial is not only a problematic statement on contemporary womanhood but also a demonstration of corporate oligopolistic practices that drive the media industry.

**Panel: Cultural Politics of the City**  
**Moderator: Rebecca D'Orsogna**  
**Chicano Culture Room, 4.206**

*Screening Memories: Deaccessioning Eakins in Philadelphia 2006 – 2008*  
**Laura Holzman—UC- Irvine, Program in Visual Studies**

**Abstract:** In 2006, *The Gross Clinic* (Eakins, 1875) was activated as a local icon when the Philadelphia university that had owned the painting since 1878 put it up for sale. Throughout the media frenzy that followed, a language of local pride, communicated through testimonials grounded in personal memories, characterized the public discourse. By the end of 2006, concerns regarding Philadelphia's skyrocketing homicide rate seemed to be the only topic to rival the buzz about preserving an emblem of the city's cultural heritage. The painting, having itself transitioned from disrepute to celebration, can be read as a metaphor for the way Philadelphia's active cultural community wanted to see the city – as primed for its comeback, with *The Gross Clinic* a fitting rallying point for the movement. Dr. Gross would not only heal his patient through surgery, he would repair the broken city and prescribe the antidote for Killadelphia. The appearance of these discussions in tandem renders the 19<sup>th</sup> century artwork a contemporary cultural object that offers a point of entry into an exploration of the construction of public memory, a hybrid forged from contrasting perspectives within Philadelphian communities.

*Changes in the Landscape: East Austin and the Cultural Politics of Gentrification*  
**Andrew Busch, UT-Austin, American Studies**

**Abstract:** In today's urban core, gentrification is one of the most important and interesting modes of change, affecting and affected by urban constituents, businesses, and government. Very broadly, gentrification is the process whereby dilapidated, poor urban areas are redeveloped using a variety of methods into more socioeconomically and culturally vibrant neighborhoods. The process has been engendered by both neighborhood groups and local governments, generally in some form of partnership, in an effort to create tax revenue for the city and stimulate business. In the United States gentrification has occurred since at least the 1970s; in Austin gentrification began in the 1990s and continues at a quick pace in East Austin today. This paper will outline the history of institutional segregation and subsequent gentrification in East Austin, and argue that while gentrification is an inevitable outcome of urban growth and decline, it must be carried out using methods that sustain and integrate gentrified communities. The wholesale urban renewal of the 1950s, gentrification's harsh progenitor, demonstrated the ill effects that renewal can have on poor, often minority communities. Gentrification threatens similar but less obvious problems by forcing less affluent citizens into less centralized but equally poor areas of the city that are often "hidden" from view. In Austin, census data strongly indicates that this effect is occurring rapidly, where poor minorities are moving out of the urban core and into equally problematic areas on the city's periphery. I will focus the last section of this paper on an architectural method in which citizens can combat the ill effects of gentrification, what I call "integrative gentrification" as opposed to "fortress gentrification."

*Urban Exploration as Historical Preservation: Brooklyn, Paris, Niagara Falls*  
**Anthony Fassi, Dept. of American Studies—University of Texas, Austin**

**Abstract:** Urban exploration is the practice of discovering, infiltrating, and documenting little seen parts of the built environment. Accounts of urban exploration date back to at least the seventeenth century when Raffaello Fabretti published three dissertations reconstructing the routes of ancient Roman aqueducts. French cataphile Philibert Aspaire lent mystique to the Parisian underground when he disappeared while searching for a hidden cache of liquor in 1793. American poet Walt Whitman published an account of his trek through Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue Tunnel days prior to its being decommissioned and sealed in 1861. Lost to posterity, it would be 120 years before a twenty-year old MIT student rediscovered what is now recognized as the world's oldest subway tunnel.

The term urban exploration was coined in 1996 in the urban-explorer fanzine, *Infiltration*. *Infiltration* founder Jeff Chapman, a.k.a. Ninjalicious, explains that urban explorers regard themselves as preservationists, not vandals. In his do-it-yourself guide to urban exploring, *Access All Areas*, Chapman contends that urban explorers should follow the Sierra Club's maxim: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints."

This paper reviews adventures of urban explorers who act as committed historical preservationists. I begin in Paris with the Untergunther, the preservationist wing of a French-based urban-explorer network. In 2006 the Untergunther announced that they had been sneaking into the Pantheon in Paris's city center every night for nearly a year. Members of the group aided master clockmaker Jean-Baptiste Viot in restoring the famous Wagner clock, an eighteenth century relic that had been left to rust in the building since the 1960s. Next, I move to Brooklyn where Bob Diamond rediscovered the long-forgotten Atlantic Avenue Tunnel. In 1982 Diamond formed the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association to restore the historic tunnel. The tunnel is now designated on the National Register of Historic Places. Finally, I join Michael Cook ten stories below Niagara Falls. Cook's photographs archive areas of the built environment most of us will never see. His website, the *Vanishing Point*, is dedicated to the documentation of storm drains, sewers, tailraces and power – infrastructure that city dwellers rely on daily but fail to appreciate or understand.

The contribution of urban explorers to historical knowledge and cultural posterity is as little studied as the places they describe. This conference paper hopes to introduce the legitimate historical efforts of a burgeoning subculture to scholars from a wide range of disciplines including urban history, the history of technology, and cultural geography.

## **From Racial Containment to a Post-Racial America?**

**Moderator: Andrew Friedenthal**

**Asian Culture Room, 4.224**

*The Swirl: Dancing and Romancing in a Vision of Post-Racial America*

**Inna Arzumanova---USC, School of Communication**

**Abstract:** Recent teen dance films featuring interracial couples have rejected the most prominent narrative convention of their predecessors – the tragic cautionary tale motif. With dance facilitating the spectacle of exalted transcendence, interracial love is no longer doomed to failure. In the veritable melting pot of song and dance, the protagonists melt into a vision of an essentialist black America, inviting rituals of racial passing and mobility. This shift in the representation of miscegenation (confined largely to the dance film genre) espouses the ideologies of colorblindness in a culture struggling to claim a post-racial reality in order to re-invent a national identity in a time of war and increasing image crisis – to simultaneously articulate and ignore difference. This paper examines the social conditions and racial discourse that enable the films to materialize at this historical moment and the kind of cultural work the films ultimately perform. Obama, urban gentrification, gay marriage, the mortgage crisis and Iraq are all implicated in this discourse on race and national identity. My aim here is to use these films as a lens for theorizing what post-race means in contemporary U.S. discourse (failures or potential transgressions) and how the ideology is trafficked in popular culture.

*"You're Well-Protected": The Racial Politics of Youth and Containment Culture in West Side Story*

**Alyxandra Vesey---UT-Austin, Dept. of Radio, Television, & Film**

**Abstract:** For this conference, I will consider the cultural relevance of *West Side Story* with regard to how racial and ethnic identities are understood in contemporary American culture. This musical adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* unpacks gang violence, immigration, racism, and interracial romance in New York City. Focusing on the turf warfare between the Jets, a gang of Polish American boys, and the Sharks, a recently immigrated group of Puerto Rican teens, as well as the controversial romance between Tony, a former Jet, and Maria, the younger sister of the Sharks' leader, *West Side Story* provides a useful commentary on the civic paranoia around outsiders infiltrating America during the Cold War. In considering the tensions around race, ethnicity, and youth culture during the Cold War, the musical *West Side Story* serves as an interesting commentary on containment. While enduringly successful, the musical reflects on the resulting racial tensions of America's collective struggle to carve and preserve identity during the Cold War, and provides insight in America's continued anxieties around how race and ethnicity may define or destroy our national character.

*Rethinking the Investment in Race: The 2000 Census and the Multiracial Movement*  
**Jasmine Mitchell---University of Minnesota, Dept. of American Studies**

**Abstract:** For the first time, the 2000 United States Census allowed respondents the option to "check all that apply" to self-identity. Americans could mark multiple racial categories instead of trying to choose a singular racial category determined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This new form of enumeration and classification potentially changes thinking about race as a contained category. The 2000 United States Census broke with tradition and allowed respondents the option to "check all that apply" to self-identity their race, and were no longer limited to a singular, government defined, category. Americans could mark multiple racial categories instead of trying to choose a singular racial category determined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This new form of enumeration and classification potentially changes thinking about race as a contained category. The 2000 census reveals the instability of racial classification, processes of racial formation, and the politicization of multiracial identity. The concepts of mixed race and multiracial are disruptions of a stable articulation of race and rigid forms of racial classification. Yet, the contradiction in the concepts of multiracial is that in subverting the idea of race as a singular category with binary oppositions, it also reifies race by assuming that individuals embody race and pass it on to their children and therefore reinforces notions of pure races. This paper looks at the investment in race through the lens of the multiracial movement and the 2000 US census. Additionally, this paper will also examine the inconsistencies in racial classification and the importance of the specific racial composition of multiracial individuals as related to the political and social psychological stakes involved in the 2000 census conflicts and debates that the multiracial movement and the 2000 census engendered.

**1:30-2:50**

**Panel: Encountering the "Other": Masculinity, Race, and Representation**  
**Moderator: Marvin Bendele**  
**Eastwood Room, 2.102**

*What I Tell You Three Times Is True: The Texian Tale of Peppery-Skinned Mexicans*  
**Annette Rodriguez---University of New Mexico, M.A. in American Studies**

**Abstract:** Narrating the Battle of San Jacinto, Walter Prescott Webb wrote "Then the Rangers rode onto the field where the Mexicans lay dead in piles... the buzzards and coyotes gathered to the feast, eating the horses but refusing the Mexicans because of their peppery skins" (The Texas Rangers, 1935). Later, folklorist *James Frank Dobie reiterated that at the Battles of San Jacinto and Goliad* coyotes would not eat dead Mexicans due to their piquant flesh (The Voice of the Coyote, 1949).

The invention of the peppery-skinned Mexicans was launched by Texian colonists who assaulted Northern Mexico fighting for Texas Independence. In the diary of James W. Nichols, a contemporaneous account of the battles, Nichols claimed "We had frequently heard that neither wolves nor buzzards would eat a dead Mexican and we wanted to see if this was so... We went on to the camp and found everything just as we had left them ten days before, tin cups, coffee pots, saddles, bridles, blankets, dead Mexicans and all as we had left them." The myth continues to be disseminated, most recently in Stephen L. Hardin's *Texian Macabre: The Melancholy Tale of a Hanging in Early Houston* (2007). What accounts for its fascinated recirculation? Are these veiled cannibalistic fantasies betraying a desire for spicy Mexican flesh? Or do the tales mean to 'mongrelize' the Mexican as unnatural and irregular? And what is the significance of Texian narrations of a 'mongrel' battlefield—seething with coyotes, buzzards, mules and Mexicans? I utilize the anthropological work of Mary Douglas on concepts of ritual, 'mongrelization' and foodways (along with sociologists, historians and literary critics) to explore the significance of the reiterations of peppery-skinned Mexicans.

*Representations of Race and Manhood in the Western Dime Novel; Or, Daniel Boone, Hawkeye Harry, and the Half-Blood's Vengeance*  
**Paul Scwhinn---UCLA, Dept. of History**

**Abstract:** The first forms of popular, mass-produced culture in the United States were the dime novels of the nineteenth century. While dime novels covered many topics from detective stories, to mysteries, lurid urban tales, and romance novels, the most popular genre of the dime novel was by far and away the Western. These Dime Novel Westerns dealt with many themes having to do with the frontier and many scholars have used dime novels as evidence in their research. However, one unexamined aspect of the Dime Novel Westerns are their representations of masculinity. My research analyzes the gendered and racialized themes of dime novels and argues that they: challenged readers' class-based ideals of manliness and advocated a

racialized ideology of masculinity, provided their own unique commentary on the issues of race mixing, whiteness, and class tied together the issues of race, manhood, and the imagined West in the American mind. Being the first mass-produced form of popular culture and the first widely read Westerns I argue that these serial novels had powerful voices in discourses of race and gender in the late nineteenth century.

*Cooper's Ordeal: Racial Construction in the Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America*  
**Josh Holland---UT-Austin, Dept. of American Studies**

**Abstract:** The Order of the Arrow was officially adopted by the Boy Scouts of America in 1948. An experimental "honor society" within the BSA that employs "indian" characters as gatekeepers of initiation and membership rights for that organization, the OA has been "playing indian" for 60 years. This paper reveals the historical (and fictional) underpinnings of the OA - finding surprising connections to James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*.

**Panel: Power & Paranoia: Challenges to Racial Categorization**  
**Moderator: Rebecca Onion**  
**Sinclair Suite, 3.128**

*Separation or Mongrelization: Senator Theodore Bilbo's Extreme Rhetoric of Racial Purity*  
**Erin Boade---UT-Austin, Dept. of English**

**Abstract:** United States Senator Theodore Bilbo (D-MS) spent the last decade of his career, 1937 – 1947, working against civil rights legislation such as anti-lynching measures. Meanwhile, he developed and disseminated his ideas about so-called racial purity, culminating in his book *Take Your Choice* (1947) in which he claims repeatedly that he would prefer an American nuclear holocaust to intermarriage between whites and African Americans. This presentation argues that Bilbo both prefigured and influenced white resistance to the civil rights movement that would increase in the 1950s, especially after *Brown vs. Board* (1954). Bilbo was among the first to make the argument that African Americans who argued for full equality were actually the dupes of communists. His arguments would reappear in the writings of Thomas Brady, widely regarded as the father of the Citizens' Councils, organizations of white people throughout the South that opposed *Brown* which were often referred to as the respectable Klan. Bilbo's intense focus on racial purity reveals anxiety about whiteness in the South that would find its fullest expression in the next decades, and his arguments continue to reappear in public speech in subtle ways.

*From "mongrel-complexioned children" to "culturally rootless consumers": The spectre of American miscegenation on British politics and culture post 1968*  
**Daniel McNeil---University of Hull**

Europe's "brown babies," now young men and women who are starting to marry and produce families of their own ... have their experiences throughout their lives, scarred as racial freaks, proved anything positive for integration? **Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), 277.**

**Abstract:** This paper argues that the spectre of American miscegenation has haunted political and cultural debates in the United Kingdom after 1968. I begin by addressing the opposition to "racial dilution" that allowed British conservatives to find common ground with African American nationalists during the 1960s and 70s. Along with the public pronouncements of well-known figures such as Malcolm X about "mongrel-complexioned children" (*Autobiography* 286), I focus on the letters sent to right-wing British politicians such as Enoch Powell and Patrick Wall that complained about mixed-race fifth columnists corrupting civilization. Probing the shared fears of Black Nationalists in the United States and Conservative politicians in the United Kingdom has also been a feature of Paul Gilroy's work against racialized thought. However, Gilroy's *Left Melancholia* also invites comparisons to his ideological enemies on the right who are invested in racial explanations for Britain's supposed moral decline. I conclude by noting the connections between Gilroy's world weary approach to top-down multiculturalism and disaffected youngsters relying on an American-led consumer culture, and the rhetoric of contemporary British fascists, such as Nick Griffin, the Chairman of the far-right British National Party, who condemn "enforced multiculturalism" and "mixed race, culturally rootless consumers."

*Body Signs: Bodies and Communities in Cynthia Kadohata's In the Heart of the Valley of Love*  
**Nikki Rabin---Clark University**

**Abstract:** As we move into the new millennium with an increasing population of mixed-race Americans, there is a growing trend by ethnic writers to use multiracials in an attempt to write a novel that is not about any specific racial or ethnic issues. In her dystopian novel *In the Heart of the Valley of Love*, Cynthia Kadohata, uses her mixed race protagonist as a representative of the “mélange” of all non-white minorities. With this intended use of the multiracial character, Kadohata neglects the full potential of her mixed race protagonist to demonstrate the futility of our current understanding of racial identification, which still attempts to categorize identities in monoracial terms. In this paper, I discuss the ways in which Kadohata produces bodies and communities that destabilize our current understandings and suggest a new means of thinking about the formation of identity in American society. I will examine the ways in which Kadohata questions the authenticity of racial markers used in formulating identities, locates the social conflicts on her characters’ bodies in new ways, how the subjects are given a means for reclamation of their racialized or politicized bodies, and what alternative means for understanding identity formation are created through the text.

**Panel: Negotiating Faith Politics in America**  
**Moderator: Nadine Romig**  
**Chicano Culture Room, 4.206**

*Rhetorical Positioning: Pro-Life Youth and the Meaning of Resistance*  
**Justin Philpot---Bowling Green University, Dept. of American Studies**

**Abstract:** In a world defined by fractured and amalgamated identities, simple answers and sweeping generalities are feverishly sought and seldom found. It is increasingly clear that to fully understand cultural meaning, subjects and subject matter must be painstakingly contextualized, often with surprising, sometimes counter-intuitive, results. This paper considers pro-life youth activist group Rock for Life, and the influence of American Catholicism, the pro-life movement, and middle class youth activism in the creation of the group's frame of reference. Rock for Life consciously positions itself through press releases, political activism, and public displays of faith as resistant to their conception of dominant culture. Yet the group openly utilizes the institutions of that same dominant culture to disseminate their own pro-life message. This seemingly irreconcilable contradiction can be understood to be the result of the unique pressures of American Catholic identity, an ever shifting pro-life movement, and a belief in the political power of American middle class youth. As a result of these combined forces, resistance for Rock for Life has become a group-specific subcultural symbol, wholly dependent upon the group’s frame of reference for its meaning.

*Constructing America’s Religious Identity: Treatments of Mormonism in Scholarly Surveys of Religion in the United States*  
**Cristine Hutchinson-Jones--- Boston University, Division of Religious and Theological Studies**

**Abstract:** For two hundred years scholarship on religion has played an important part in the debate about religion and American identity, as surveys of the wildly diverse American religious landscape have directly and indirectly assigned relative values to the faiths they examine. Our “national identity” has been hotly disputed since the nation’s founding, and nowhere is this more apparent than in debates that have raged over religion, punctuated by regular outbursts of intolerance directed at minority groups that were (and are) perceived as dangerous to “American values,” often loosely identified with democratic rule, the separation of church and state, the protection of the traditional (heterosexual, monogamous, child-bearing) family, and, ironically, religious tolerance. This paper will examine prominent scholarly surveys of American religion, from the nineteenth-century works of Philip Schaff and Robert Baird to more recent textbooks by Sidney Ahlstrom and Catherine Albanese, with attention to the treatment of minority groups, particularly Mormons, in an effort to understand how these texts have constructed “American religion.” Examining these works in historical context, the paper will also discuss the ways in which scholarly work has reflected and challenged prevailing attitudes about appropriate ways of being religious in the United States.

*The Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints: At the Borders of Utah, Arizona, and American Political Culture*  
**Cassie Ambutter---University of CA Santa Cruz, Dept. of Political Science**

**Abstract:** This paper argues that the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints (FLDS) raid in April 2008 constituted a liberal intervention. This event represents the classical liberal distinction between individual choice and group custom, as John Stuart Mill identifies. While the raid was ostensibly an investigation into child abuse allegations, this paper argues that the intervention was also premised upon another major factor: the FLDS women's presumed lack of choice. Thus far, liberal feminists have been palpably silent on the status of the FLDS women and their political subjectivities. A feminist critique must account for how a liberal approach can be simultaneously inclusionary and exclusionary. This paper examines print coverage of the raid to compare the FLDS women's public statements and their depiction in the mainstream media. I argue that the FLDS women are both within and at the margins of American political culture. Ultimately this subject position renders FLDS women's bodies unintelligible. Although it may seem a formidable task to read FLDS women as anything other than non-autonomous, a feminist critique must transcend a liberal framework to consider what bodies get to count and why.

**Panel: Making "American" Places, Designing "American" Identities**

**Moderator: Anna Thompson-Hajdik**  
**Asian Culture Room, 4.224**

*'Cultivated Americans': The Hull-House Circulating Collection and the Creation of Feminine Identity*

**Rebecca Arnfeld--- UC-Davis, Dept. of History**

**Abstract:** Early twentieth century reformers like Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr conveyed the proper notions about home and family to immigrants as a way to cultivate middle-class American values. Specifically, décor and the placement of art within the home, even in a crowded tenement building, could promote moral uplift and channel household spending away from alcohol or other entertainments looked upon disapprovingly by Progressives. Addams and Starr promoted bourgeois American taste as a way to create common cultural ground to help new Americans make needed connections outside of their own communities and to grant their children upward mobility. Addams' and Starr's own notions of how to create a welcoming and feminine domestic space prompted them to amass a circulating collection of art. Since this assortment of reproductions belonged to the Hull House community at large, its function was quite different from a personal or museum collection. In contrast to a private collector's selection of valuable originals, it was by its nature meant to be shared and experienced collectively and within individual family units. Using canonical works of western art, Addams and Starr both familiarized immigrants with the shared values of American culture and reminded them of their own cultural heritage.

*America Spread Your Golden Wings: Disney Theme Park Imagining of American Identity*

**Daniel R. Vogel, Texas Christian University, Dept. of History**

**Abstract:** Since Disneyland first opened in 1955 the Walt Disney Company's leaders and engineers have been presenting the public with the company's vision of America. This holds true for all other Disney theme parks around the world, where such attractions as the Hall of Presidents tells a distinctive version of American History. Earlier in the company's history these visions of America are directly modeled after the opinion of its founding father, Walt Disney. As the company gets farther away from the era of Walt it has not lost its ability to construct its own historical identity of America to vacationers. This paper examines how the United States and its people are portrayed to Americans and foreign tourists who visit these attractions every day. On any given day there are at least fifty thousand people being entertained and influenced by Disney's perceptions of American identity. This paper will attempt to answer the fundamental question about this large scale experience: who are we (Americans) according to the Walt Disney Company? Finally, this presentation will look at how accurately American diversity is represented in these same attractions.

*Remaking Chinatown: Conceptualizing Chinese American Space and Identity in Cold War America*

**Jennifer Fang, University of Delaware, Dept. of History**

**Abstract:** The term "Chinatown" describes both a specific place and a concept. As part of the built environment, Chinatowns across America have been characterized as areas with heavy concentrations of Chinese businesses, restaurants, and residents. As a concept, these areas are identified by a set of commercial and cultural characteristics that differentiate it from other ethnic and urban neighborhoods and mark the space as a "Chinatown".

This paper explores the mid-twentieth century conceptualization of Chinatown as a place where culture could be celebrated and experienced. I use Chinatown as a lens through which to examine how Chinese Americans used their “foreignness” or “otherness” as a way to assert social and cultural citizenship. Through festivals, restaurants, and nightclubs in Chinatown, Chinese American community leaders and entrepreneurs presented Chinese culture in a non-threatening manner by playing upon American Orientalist stereotypes of China as an opulent and ancient culture. This helped erase long-held perceptions of Chinatown as a dingy and dangerous area and the Chinese American residents as a racial menace who threatened to undermine the values and racial purity of white America. Although this conceptualization of Chinatown worked within stereotyped Western constructions of Chinese culture, they ironically helped Chinese Americans gain a greater amount of social acceptance within mainstream America.

**3:00-4:30**

**Panel: Interrogating “mongrel” america: Personal Narratives**

**Moderator: Irene Garza**

**Eastwood Room, 2.102**

*Brown and White in the Borderlands*

Marisol Cortez UC-Davis, Cultural Studies Graduate Group

Celina Rodriguez—UC-Davis, M.A. in Education, Socio-Cultural Studies

**Abstract:** A recent installment of Gustavo Arellano's popular column "Ask a Mexican" invites its "half-breed" readers to submit the nicknames they use to describe their half-Mexican heritage. Arellano's hilarious compilation manifests a burgeoning visibility or recognition of "mixicanidad" that academic writing has yet to exhibit, despite the wealth of recent literature on mixed-race identity. We are two mixed-race Chicanas (or, borrowing from Arellano, guerexicanas) who would like to interrogate this absence of brown/white voices from recent scholarship on mixedness. The panel we would like to propose for "Mongrel America" explores precisely this personal, political, and theoretical space of being both Anglo and Mexican. The format of the panel would reflect our simultaneous attention to the personal and theoretical dimensions of identity; we would first present individual autoethnographic pieces and then follow these with a collaboratively-written and -presented theoretical piece that questions more broadly, from within a Chicana/o Studies framework, what it means to be brown and white in the borderlands.

*“Anyone Else Like Me?” The Hapa Project on MySpace: Social Networking and Multiracial Identity*

**Alexander Cho—UT-Austin, Dept. of Radio, Television, & Film**

**Abstract:**

*“Hapa”:* A Hawaiian-language term used in a contemporary American colloquial context to describe an Asian-descent multiracial individual.

Artist and educator Kip Fulbeck's Hapa Project began as a series of portraits of individuals who might racially or ethnically identify as “hapa.” The express purpose of this series of photos was to show the—literally—multifaceted aspect of this liminal racial category, as well as challenge the broader arc of oppressive racial categorization that has persisted in the United States since its earliest days. In this study, I analyze The Hapa Project's MySpace page, which has blossomed into a sort of community node, rife with interactive possibility far beyond a book or gallery installation. Through this particular social networking interface, an opportunity for people to connect on their own terms around the shared notion of a hapa identity is created. While American society as a whole has had a problematic time categorizing and containing multiracial identities, in this user-driven digital space, people are able to express and interpret their own multifaceted racial and ethnic identity—and share experiences with others—by posting pictures of themselves, their children, their favorite hapa celebrities, along with comments, links, and any number of other internet conventions. In this paper I apply aspects of critical race theory, theories regarding identity and digital media, and Asian American history and politics to perform a textual analysis of The Hapa Project's MySpace page. Chiefly, I analyze comments, pictures, friends' pages, graphics, and links. I show that, in this particular Web 2.0 setting, the cultural construct of race is simultaneously questioned, acknowledged, transgressed, and reappropriated.

**Panel: Listen to Us!: Performing Culture & Resistance Through Music**

**Moderator: Jason Mellard**

**Sinclair Suite, 3.128**

*Psychobilly: Acting Out a Historical Fantasy*

**Kim Kattari---UT-Austin, Dept. of Radio, Television, Film**

**Abstract:** Psychobilly, a musical and stylistic blend of rockabilly, punk, and horror, has cultivated an underground popularity in recent decades due to its overt nostalgia for the 1950s. Fans keep the 1950s culture alive through live music, vintage fashion style, an obsession with pre-1964 hot rods, and a fascination with old cult horror movies. However, these fans, who were obviously not around during the “Golden Era,” have constructed their own “memory” of the past decade, one that differs from actual memories of those who were growing up during that time. Reflecting disillusionment with the postmodern crisis of identity, psychobilly fans are drawn to their imagined idea of the 1950s decade when gender, race, and class values are believed to have been clearly defined. In essence, psychobilly concerts become a way for fans to act out a historical fantasy, both musically and stylistically. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper will examine the ways in which members of the psychobilly subculture have re-constructed a 1950s lifestyle, but one that differs from the realities of the decade. Since psychobilly has received little academic attention, this paper is an important contribution to the examination of subcultural responses to post-modernity.

*Puro Punk, ¿y qué? Piñata Protest and the Making of Cultural Identity in San Antonio*

**Sandra D. Garza & Sylvia Mendoza, UT—San Antonio, Dept. of Bilingual & Bicultural Studies**

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the social aspects of creative expression as performed by the local Chicano punk band Piñata Protest. Piñata Protest fuses Norteño influenced accordion, bilingual lyrics, and punk rock. This project seeks to explore the way that Piñata Protest performs identity through the trans-cultural musical performance. Cultural citizenship includes how groups form, define themselves, define their membership, claim rights, and develop a vision of the type of society they want to live in. It includes how excluded groups interpret their histories and define themselves.

This project investigates the way that performance, as a form of expression, is a natural process to the performers seeking the right to belong on their own terms. However, for marginalized groups, we contend that this is further complicated in that the performance is situated within the larger social framework that comes with its own set of dominant norms and expectations. Consequently the performance, while natural in process and formation to the performer, is in opposition to this larger structure. Methods used include personal correspondence with band members, band interviews, live performance observation, as well as analyses of public discourse such as You Tube, My Space, NPR, etc.

*The Politics of Patti Smith: Horses and the Rhetoric of Music*

**Shayna Maskell---Univ. of Maryland, Dept. of American Studies**

**Abstract:** The rise of conservatism in the sociopolitical landscape of the early 1970s brought about a paradoxical time for women’s rights and gender roles. Within this political and social context – where feminists battled ingrained patriarchy, conservatism sought to roll back the civil rights advances of the sixties, and Richard Nixon became the face of both of the “Silent Majority” and the evils of government - Patti Smith entered the dialogue in the form of her album *Horses*. While music has always been acknowledged as a force of social and political change, it has yet to gain significant attention within either the field of communication as a pertinent mode of rhetoric or as anything more than a footnote in social movement theory. Yet Smith’s album can and should be analyzed as rhetoric for an accompanying identity movement, as cultural resistance to the assignation and strict bifurcation of gender roles and sexuality. By understanding *Horses* as an amalgamation of postmodern technique and modernist socio-political protest, we can enhance and complicate our understanding of the way in which social change occurs, focusing on the reconstruction and articulation of identity.

**Panel: Bridging Identities in Language & Literature**

**Moderator: Tracy Wuster**

**Chicano Culture Room, 4. 206**

*The Ethics and Rhetoric of a "Mongrel" Authenticity in Kingston's The Woman Warrior*  
**Sarah Hart---Texas A&M, Dept. of English**

**Abstract:** In his article "Authentic Watermelon: Maxine Hong Kingston's American Novel," Elliott H. Shapiro argues that Kingston "theorizes, through her novel [Tripmaster Monkey], an America that is always already heterogenous and an American literature characterized by appropriation, parody, and play" (6). Shapiro maintains that Kingston's appropriative allusions ultimately construct an American novel that, through its "coalition of many voices," severs authenticity from national and artistic purity (24). His qualifications of authenticity can also be affirmed by a rhetorical reading of Kingston's The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts. Here, Kingston's "narrator," Maxine, suspended between fact and fiction, draws upon family stories to give a coherent account of her Chinese-American identity. The deep authenticity of Maxine's approach can be clarified via Emmanuel Levinas's essay "Ethics as First Philosophy" (in which he demonstrates that the ethical self arises in relation to the Other) and Judith Butler's rhetorical analysis of Levinas in her article "Giving an Account of Oneself." Finally, viewed in terms of rhetorician LuMing Mao's heuristic, interdependence-in-difference, the ethical emphasis infusing Kingston's complex rhetorical device, Maxine, emerges as representative of a multi-faceted morality that already underlies the singular authenticity of the literature—and citizens—of a "mongrel" America.

*Rewriting Chicano Hybridity and Indigeneity in Juan Felipe Herrera's Mayan Drifter*  
**Marzia Milazzo---University of CA Santa Barbara, Dept. of Comparative Literature**

**Abstract:** Juan F. Herrera's hybrid work *Mayan Drifter: Chicano Poet in the Lowlands of America* (1997), which relates the author's journey among the Mayas of Chiapas, Mexico, leads us into unexplored territories of American and Chicano identity. In fact, "Herrera envisions the disappearance of borders and evokes a fluid American self that needs no fixed identity or location." Herrera describes the aims he pursues in writing *Mayan Drifter* as follows: "I am involved in a triple vision: to rethink America, to rethink myself, and to rethink American writing.... I want to tackle concepts of nation, symbols of ethnicity... the border work... between the language of America and for America" (8). In *Mayan Drifter*, Chicano identity acquires new importance because it is detached from any notion of romanticism and *Indigenismo*. As a Chicano, Herrera has the significant potential of communicating across cultures. Yet in the Mexican lowlands the category *Chicano* has little significance and for the Mayas Herrera is principally a foreigner: he speaks the languages and has the appearance of the Spanish conquistadores and *gringo* tourists. In Mexico the author must constantly question the significance of his "Chicanismo" and his indigeneity. Being an American, a Chicano, an Indian, an anthropologist, a Western intellectual, a tourist, a poet... means that Herrera fluctuates between identities which continuously want to redefine themselves. Most importantly, in affirming a plural personality, the author recognizes that he is directly and indirectly part of, and *responsible for*, the complex contradictions and legacy of genocide which characterize the lives of the Indians that he intends to depict.

*The Two Tourismisms of Pacific Writing*  
**Craig Santos Perez---UC-Berkeley, Dept. of Ethnic Studies**

**Abstract:** I propose a paper examining one possible danger of hybridity in relation to Pacific Island literature. Specifically, my paper focuses on Rob Wilson's essay "Pacific Postmodern," in which he describes two post-modernisms of Pacific writing: post-colonial "identity lyrics" and experimental "language-centered" writing. Wilson argues against post-colonial identity poetry by claiming that this poetry "[packages] patterns of the tourist industry and the marketplace of semiotic and cultural kitsch." On the other hand, he valorizes "language-centered" experimental writing as a form that resists the touristic gaze by "[activating] the play of languages and heritages of representation as in some inter-textual and deconstructive abyss that implicitly calls into question any under-theorized, stable, or reified version of 'identity', 'voice', or 'sovereignty' of meaning, cultural self, nationhood and so on." In my proposed paper, I will argue that Wilson's second postmodernism does not escape the touristic gaze but actually replicates its marketing desires. In addition, I will show how dangerous Wilson's "mongrel-magical" project is to the literary sovereignty of Pacific writing. Finally, I will argue for one possible route of how Pacific Island writers can navigate the turbulent currents of what I call "the two literary tourismisms" of Pacific literature.

## **Panel: Reading “Culture” through Linguistic Liminality**

**Moderator: Jeannette Vaught**

**Asian Culture Room, 4.224**

*Harryette Mullen: Language, Identity, and Innovation at the Crossroads of Difference*

**Jennifer Reimer---University of CA, Berkeley, Comparative Ethnic Studies**

**Abstract:** I propose a paper that explores how African American poet Harryette Mullen reconfigures language and identity in her book-length poem, *Muse & Drudge*. Mullen’s innovative poetics emerges from a geographic, social, and linguistic crossroads where struggle produces a playful diversity of speech/text forms and a pointed critique of rigid categories. Mullen dismantles the site of what she calls the “iconic black woman.” Her voice becomes a linguistic and historical nexus where the blues, black vernacular speech, traditional written poetry, the language of advertising, Creole, and Spanish collide to contests assumptions about “black poetry” and “black culture.” Mullen reinscribes word play within historical moments that shift from the American South to the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, Africa and the Caribbean. Mullen stands at the crossroads of a shifting, hybrid language culture. *Muse & Drudge* translates the embodied experiences of being a gendered and racialized body in America by asking, what are the potential limitations of language in America—how far can we take it and what borders threaten to bind and silence us? Harryette Mullen creates, out of difference and the fragments of traditions, new languages of resistance and an oppositional consciousness of liberation. This consciousness liberates the poet from victimhood, from the literary and socio-political traditions that would silence, stereotype, and render her invisible.

*We Are All Mongrels”: Hybridity and Self-Determination in Muse & Drudge*

**Kristen Ames---York University, Dept. of English**

**Abstract:** In her playful and richly allusive poem *Muse & Drudge*, Harryette Mullen confronts the assumption “that ‘avant-garde’ poetry is not ‘black,’ and that ‘black’ poetry, however singular in its ‘voice,’ is not ‘formally innovative’” (Mullen, “Poetry and Identity” 88). Through extensive allusion, punning, wordplay, and a paratactic quatrain form, Mullen aims both to articulate black feminine experience and to invite multiple, irreducible understandings of the text, wherein readers’ diverse personal and cultural experiences open up the poem to multivalent and simultaneous meanings. My presentation will examine Mullen’s poem as a hybrid or “mongrelized” text that refuses reductive categorization, focusing on the work as a performance of Mullen’s own “reading” and rearticulation of African-American culture that demands a parallel process of inventive reading through self-determination from its readers. I will discuss the text’s capacity to create communities of readers who engage in collective, cooperative reading practices, and examine the ways in which some of the poem’s dominant themes limit and contain this process of collective reading. Finally, I will question the extent to which the poem can accomplish Mullen’s task of foregrounding the erased voices of American history. While the poem succeeds in foregrounding the miscegenation that underpins modern subjectivities, Mullen’s opaque and irreducible allusions might admit readings that repeat the acts of violence, erasure, and appropriation that the poet seeks to rectify.

*Lion-heart, frate mio, and so on in two languages”: Louis Zukofsky and the Dismantling of the Hebrew-Yiddish Polysystem*

**Rachel Wamsley---UC-Berkeley, Dept. of Comparative Literature**

**Abstract:** American modernist Louis Zukofsky’s early poetry represents a conscious break with the rigidly hierarchized code-switching and trilingualism of Eastern European Jews, for whom Yiddish, Hebrew and the national language of the country in which they lived played distinct cultural and linguistic roles. With the publication of *The Poem Beginning ‘The’*, Zukofsky declares himself part of American modernism, while simultaneously incorporating his own extended translations of the American Yiddish poet Yehoash.

By mingling Yiddish and English with seemingly indiscriminate abandon, Zukofsky radically rewrites the role each language plays in the construction of a Jewish-American literary identity. Rather than ceding to the parochialism of linguistic orthodoxy or to the cultural, linguistic and literary assimilation represented by English modernism, Zukofsky invents a multilingual poetics in order to model a new system of specifically Jewish-American cultural relations. Zukofsky’s reading, translating, and rewriting of Yehoash reveals Zukofsky’s place between English and Yiddish, Americanism and Judaism, and negotiates the space between the two as one ripe for critique and satire, but most importantly for the forging of a new multivalent, multilingual poetics. Such a poetics is based structurally on Yiddish itself, an “open system” that borrows vocabulary and allusion across languages, literatures, and cultures. In so doing, Zukofsky produces a poetry that is both a conversational vernacular and elevated Modernist verse.

Through his intentional deconstruction of this Jewish linguistic hierarchy and its cultural implications, Zukofsky metonymically resolves the ambivalence of the Jew poised between orthodoxy and assimilation, breaking down linguistic boundaries to evoke the dissolution of rigid cultural distinctions, and thus allowing himself access to Judaism as a Jew, Modernism as a Modernist, and America as an American.