

Representing Affect & Affecting Representation

The Second Annual Graduate Student Conference in Comparative Studies on the theme *Representing Affect & Affecting Representation* will be held Thursday, January 17th (8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.) and Friday, January 18th, 2008 (9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) at the George Wells Knight House, located at 104 E. 15th Street. The conference will feature paper presentations by more than 30 graduate students from OSU and a variety of other institutions, and will conclude at 4:00p on Friday in 020 Page Hall with a public keynote lecture by Marita Sturken (NYU) entitled “Tourists of History: Kitsch and Memory in American Culture.” For more information, please contact AffectAndRepresentation@hotmail.com.

Schedule of Events

Thursday, January 18th, 2008

- 7:30a-8:00a *Breakfast* and Registration*
- 8:15a-10:00a *Panel 1: Representing the Self: Affect and Reflexivity**
- 10:15a-11:45a *Panel 2: Constructing Identities: Mediums for Manufacturing Reality**
- 11:45a-12:45p *Lunch*
- 1:00p-2:30p *Panel 3: Cultural Affectations: Self-Construction in Space and Material Culture**
- 2:45p-4:30p *Panel 4: Dominating Narratives: Cultural Cues and the (Re)Reading of Representation**
- 4:45p-6:30p *Panel 5: Affect and Transgression: Interrogating the Construction and Destruction of Social Paradigms for Sexuality**

Friday, January 18th, 2008

- 8:15a-8:45a *Breakfast* and Registration*
- 9:00a-10:45a *Panel 6: Affective Histories of Pre-1950s American Cinema**
- 11:00-12:30p *Panel 7: The Nation and me: Questioning the Citizen-Self Dyad**
- 12:30p-1:30p *Lunch*
- 1:45p-3:30p *Panel 8: Trauma and The Other: Representing ‘Them’ and Affecting ‘Us’**

4:00-6:00p

*Keynote Lecture by Marita Sturken**
“Tourists of History: Kitsch and Memory in American Culture”
Page Hall 020

7:00p

Reception

**Indicates an event open to the general public*

Panel 1
Representing the Self: Affect and Reflexivity
Thursday, January 17th, 2008 8:15a-10:00a

Timothy J. Shaffer

“Thomas Merton’s Embodied Movement: The Insight of the True and False Selves”

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The body is more than something static. One must think of the body as being in “movement thus...accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension *of the body*.” This paradoxical movement draws from religious language in understanding the relationship between the body and soul/mind, the *movement* that blurs the lines between corporeal and incorporeal reality.

Thomas Merton wrote extensively about the relationship between the “true and false selves” and contemplation, similar to Massumi’s understanding of movement. This paper explores the ways Merton thought and wrote about this dynamic space of *movement* throughout his corpus of material. As Merton became more of a hermit, he wrote more deeply about contemplation and its ability to shed the false self and embrace one’s true self. This transition is important for understanding Merton’s lens of social engagement in the late 1960s and is a lens for understanding *movement* as expressed by Massumi.

Ken Walibora Waliula

“Telling the Truth by Lying: The Burden of Truth in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*”

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Northrop Frye claimed that writers are “licensed liars.” His postulate points to the quotidian attitude toward works of literature based on the readers’ keen awareness of the fictive nature of literature. In this essay I extend Frye’s notion of lying authors to not only include the attitudes that inform the reception of the fictive products of the writer’s mind, but also the writers’ aptitude in deliberately using lies as thematic material and as rhetorical strategy. I demonstrate how Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and James Weldon Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* resonate with each other in more profound ways than has perhaps previously been acknowledged. By comparing these seemingly incongruous texts, I seek to demonstrate that both Conrad and Johnson employ the lie as a vehicle for telling the truth.

Megan Friddle

“Abjection, Violence, and Desire: The Films of Mary Harron”

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What happens when real life becomes indistinguishable from the movies? I look to the work of screenwriter/director Mary Harron in an attempt to answer this question. In her films, the main characters construct themselves through their relations to popular culture, particularly film, photography, and other visual arts. All three of her major films—*I Shot Andy Warhol*, *American Psycho*, and *The Notorious Bettie Page*—recreate the public spaces of their historical settings. Meanwhile, the films’ characters are consumed by the split between their public and private personas. In my paper, I will explore “body genres,” or film genres that inundate/engage the viewer with an excess of sensation, as a way to understand the relationship between the film’s spectator, the film’s characters, and the film itself. I will examine the affective possibilities that make the film experience more complex than psychoanalytic models of identification between viewer and character along specific lines of gender, sexuality, and culture.

Maureen Pritchard

“Knowledge through Feeling: Interpreting the Diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky”

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With onset of psychosis, Vaslav Nijinsky began keeping a diary. In it he attempts to order his disordered thought, emotions and realities. As a dancer, his attention had always been focused on the body. However, coming face to face with increasing mental stability, Nijinsky begins to reject rational thought and looks to intuition, movement, and emotion as a way of knowing. In his writing, through word choice and phrasing, he breaks down the mind-body dichotomy, so that body becomes mind, movement becomes life, and emotion becomes thought. By attempting to sift a philosophy from Nijinsky’s writings, one is forced to work with Nijinsky in order to create a language that describes affect. His experiences and ways of describing them, when

placed in the larger dialogue of body and emotion, can offer the reader an alternative approach to scholarship on music and dance.

Panel 2

Constructing Identities: Mediums for Manufacturing Reality

Thursday, January 17th, 2008

10:15a-11:45a

Peggy Reynolds

“Visualizing Affective Phase Space or Getting Comfortable With Productive Paradox”

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The fact that affect has very real effects in the world has been well-documented. The ways in which it has become, through the deployment of image-based power, more determinative of cultural conditions than even ideology, however, is perhaps less well understood. Tapping into this source of cultural change or learning how to mediate the dynamic thresholds it constructs, might then require we familiarize ourselves with its mode of operation, its manifestation as intensities, resonances, gradients and potentialities, its relationship with the virtual and the actual, its ability to actualize and define, however fleetingly, individuals and organizational levels even as it passes through to infinity. Drawing on the work of Massumi and Benjamin and aided by images of quasi-scientific objects, we will attempt to construct visual models which make the ways in which affect becomes effective intuitively graspable.

Lydia Osolinsky

“Affect, Meaning, and the Phenomenon of Matter”

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Theories of discourse have long been critiqued for neglecting the "real," the material world often seen as beyond or outside of human systems of meaning. Recent work has attempted to theorize materiality in terms of discursive practices themselves material but ultimately return to articulation as that which determines intelligibility and therefore possibilities for refiguration. Drawing from Sara Ahmed's work on the ways contact and signification can affectively work to shape bodies, along with feminist theory and science studies accounts of material agency, this paper explores the relationship between discourse and the material from a posthumanist perspective. If affect is an attribute of neither individuals nor collectives, confining its definition to humans forecloses an understanding of the larger ways in which meaning and matter come to be. Through interaction (or "intra-action," as developed by Karen Barad), boundaries are made, with affect arising from differential mattering and holding possibility for mattering differently.

Talia Shabtay
“The Sign of the Stronger Warrior”

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This paper will explore the pliability of the materials, props, and characters which occupy daily affective experience. Some of these characters include the color red, the written word, the television, and the brick wall. Considering the ideas of media theorist Friedrich Kittler and architect/theorist Peter Eisenman will help to frame the relationships between the various elements which are a part of daily experience. In his essay, *On the Implementation of Knowledge: Toward a Theory of Hardware*, Kittler suggests that the survival of information or knowledge depends on both systems of storage of the information and systems of transport. With the expanse of digital and fiber optic technology, Eisenman compares the contemporary experience of architecture to the experience of time bound media. In this sense, architecture to Eisenman is no longer a place, but an event. How and to what effect are the events Eisenman describes linked? If, according to Kittler, the survival of information depends on its storage and movement, what, if anything, houses Eisenman's events and how do we move among them? How might the events themselves move? Exploring examples of what these events might be, we will discover a world which is at once cinematic and ephemeral.

Panel 3

Cultural Affections: Self-Construction in Space and Material Culture
Thursday, January 17th, 2008 1:00p-2:30p

Rita Trimble

“Branding Acceptance: Affective Activism and the Christian Rite”

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U.S. citizenship benefits have long favored a conventional family structure. Historically, few institutions are more firmly entrenched than churches in perpetuating the traditional family, but grassroots “welcoming church” movements to make denominations fully inclusive of gays and lesbians indicate a changing mindset. This paper is an ethnographic examination of a congregation involved in the United Methodist “reconciling” movement. Through its branding campaign and worship practices, I argue, this church is successfully branding gay/lesbian bodies, and thereby homosexuality itself, as accepted within the church. Consequently it is also branding a variety of household arrangements as “family.” Using an embodied approach, I see this branding as an intentional reshaping of a social imaginary, emerging as a result of what I call “affective activism.” In inscribing these changes upon themselves, members of this congregation, with other churches in the “welcoming” church movement, contribute to a potential shift in the larger social imaginary.

Polly Sylvia

Case Study "If You See Something, Say Something": Affect and the Branding of Fear

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In thinking of how affect shapes lives and bodies, this paper will consider the advertisements of a New York City subway campaign to explore the ways in which the information of these ads circulates affectively. "If You See Something, Say Something" has been the catch-phrase of this 'anti-terrorism' campaign, which was initiated in 2003. By conducting an 'affective' content analysis of the advertisements of this campaign, I seek to add to a growing body of literature that is looking to understand the ways in which affect circulates among populations. This paper will thus focus on these movement(s) of affect to explore their relationality to governance, particularly in thinking of the cultural politics of fear.

Angela Andersen

"Affecting Space, Representing Margins: The Shafi'i Prayer Hall In Diyarbakir"

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Architecture is a medium through which the interface between affect and representation can be felt, observed and experienced. By constructing, confining and defining a physical setting for human activity, architecture simultaneously affects movement and congregation within space and represents the impact of social and physical activity in heterogeneous communities. The eastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir is an urban architectural record of astounding richness. At the heart of the city is the Diyarbakir Ulu Cami, the Great Mosque with a separate place of prayer for the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam. This prayer hall, constructed in 1528, just a few years after the Ottoman occupation, is still used by the Shafi'is today. Enclosed within the same courtyard but architecturally distinct from the main prayer hall of the eleventh and twelfth-century Great Mosque, this small building manifests the affect of religious diversity combined with cultural traditions: the Shafi'i school was and continues to be followed primarily by the Kurds. My presentation explores why the Shafi'i Kurds required a separate place of prayer, what approach the Ottomans took regarding the Kurdish population, and how architecture within the urban fabric created sites that became a built representation of the affects of intercultural, inter and intra religious interactions.

Panel 4
Dominating Narratives: Cultural Cues and the (Re)Reading of Representation
Thursday, January 17th, 2008 *2:45-4:30p*

Peter Hogarth

“The paradox of NBA spectatorship: Ron Artest and the representation of black bodies by white America”

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This paper mobilizes the works of Stuart Hall, Colin King, and George Yancy as theoretical lenses in a discursive analysis of a significant sport event that occurred during a Detroit Pistons versus Indiana Pacers NBA game in Auburn Hills, Michigan on December 19, 2004. This event began when Ron Artest, a member of the Indiana Pacers shoved Detroit Pistons player Ben Wallace after a hard foul. The fight escalated when Artest was struck by a drink thrown from the stands. Artest jumped into the stands and began fighting Pistons fans, which prompted other teammates and fans to join in, resulting in a massive brawl between fans and players for which Artest was suspended for the remainder of the basketball season. My analysis of this case provides interesting indicators of the ideology, discourse, and the racial meanings shaping sports media in North America. Some of the questions that are central to this analysis are the following: How is the coverage of black players fighting white fans framed in the context of a predominantly black sport and white spectatorship? How does this fit with the existing scholarly discourse regarding racial representation in sports and other media? What is the fan/player relationship in a sport that consists largely of white fans watching black players? Furthermore, how does this relationship manifest itself in media coverage and player/fan discourse?

John Claborn

"Black Environmentalism: Ecology and Machinic Terror in William Attaway's *Blood on the Forge*"

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Known for its bleak portrayal of the early 20th century Great Migration, William Attaway's *Blood on the Forge* (1942) dramatizes the journey of three black brothers from a Southern agrarian culture into the harsh steel mills of Western Pennsylvania. The novel has been recovered and praised as a black proletarian gem, but no one has yet addressed its apparently environmentalist message. Drawing on recent work in affect theory and ecology, I trace the novel's environmentalism through three of its main characters: Smothers, Big Mat, and Melody. Each of these characters offer varying perspectives on the novel's melding of race, class, and ecology. In reading the novel as a black environmentalist text, I hope to demonstrate the

centrality of ecology to the writing of certain modern African-American writers and to show how such a text can challenge contemporary, (white) mainstream environmentalism by interweaving racial, class, and ecological exploitation.

Bethany Rose Banister

“La Calisto: the Idea of an Author and Interpreter”

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The issue of examining past performances and their texts demands the interpretation of the historian in order to recreate (textually or visually) an absent “performative practice.” It requires creating with the imagination a present realisation of a past event—or a “reader” to interpret the past for the present. The purpose of this paper is to examine the reception and cultural understanding of Francesco Cavalli’s *La Calisto* from its first production to a contemporary twenty-first century production and audience. This paper seeks to answer the question of how the socio-cultural messages of the text have been interpreted and received by each culture, and how these variations in reception have effected our appreciation and understanding of the work. Can a work truly be realised and accepted outside of its original reception context, or must we reinvent the messages to meet our contemporary ideologies.

James Schurrer

The use of the Gothic in *Native Son* to Affect Social Change

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Within *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas occupies a space in which his life is perpetually affected by the restrictions placed upon him by white society. Lashing out in protest, Bigger’s violence is symbolic of his desire to break free from the “White-Trap” that surrounds him.

Traditionally read as an African-American Gothic novel, I argue that Wright subverts the trope of white-demon (whiteness as representative of the perpetuation of slavery) by locating whiteness *within* Bigger. Specifically, by casting Bigger as influenced by whiteness, I assert that this rescripting represents not only a new path for the African American Gothic, but primarily a new view on the affects of social traditions such as anti-miscegenation law. Finally, I will consider the implications of the liminal space that Bigger Thomas occupies and what affect this position on the strict racial binary present within society.

Panel 5
Affect and Transgression: Interrogating the Construction and Destruction of
Social Paradigms for Sexuality
Thursday, January 17th, 2008 4:45-6:30p

Adrienne C. Hill

“A Hard Truth to Swallow: Discourses of Sexuality and Authenticity in Showtime's *Queer as Folk*”

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This paper explores the ways sexual activity emerges as a site for debates over authenticity in the Showtime television series *Queer As Folk*. In interviews and episode dialogue, producers and writers cite the presence of sexual activity on their show as evidence that it accurately portrays queer life. My paper demonstrates that the producers of *Queer As Folk* relied on a simplistic equation of sexual activity with authenticity to elide more troubling questions surrounding the politics of queer representation. Through this equation, they dismissed questions raised by critics regarding the show's racial homogeneity and its misogynistic portrayals of queer women.

Chet Domitz

Imposing Horizons – Community Building and the Imagery of Social Revolutions

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This paper compares artwork from the French Revolution with imagery from two social revolutions of the contemporary era: the feminist revolution and the gay rights movement. Anne-Louis Girodet painted *Sleep of Endymion* (1791) on the eve of the Terror in the wake of Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1785). The latter served as an *exemplum virtutis* that valorized ideals of stoicism and self-sacrifice. In contrast, *Endymion* depicts a mythical figure in the throes of sensual pleasure. Building on scholarship by Whitney Davis, I demonstrate how *Endymion* registers the ecstasy of remaining in the margins by one's own volition. Such a state is the product of a refusal to participate, and suggests plenitude and the utter lack of want. In such instances, pleasure becomes a form of politics. Theoretical grounding for my argument is provided by Jean-Luc Nancy's elaboration of Sartre's statement on communism as “the unsurpassable horizon of our time.”

Kevin Arnold

“Male and Male and Male: John Rechy and the Scene of Representation”

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My current project examines the question of affect in the context of gendered representation and in the early work of John Rechy, an under-recognized and poorly understood American writer. In this essay, I argue that Rechy makes use of a unique structure of representation that highlights the complexities of intersecting (and disjunctive) systems of gendered and sexual representation and which is not analyzable within received queer, feminist, or deconstructive frameworks. Working within (rather than against) hegemonic discourses of masculinity and desire, Rechy’s work circulates around a non-symbolizable core of *fantasy* as both the animating conditions of desire/representation and the limits of that representation within discourse itself. Refusing to “look outside” representation to other modalities of the subject (queer theory) or to “destabilize” representation (deconstruction and performance theory), Rechy’s work highlights the affective dimensions of discourse around sites of unrepresentability.

Shannon M. Cochran

“*He’s the Pimp of the Year*”*And Decade: Pimp Iconography, Manliness, Spectatorship and the Negation of Black Female Subjectivity in *The Mack**”

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I analyze how female identity and performativity construct masculinity and how cultural perception and reception shape and reinforce it. I examine the undertheorized 1973 film, *The Mack*, to suggest that many films that are categorized and revered as “Black” films are based on specific ideals of gender and sexuality, which become normative in Black cultural productions. Even though the film professed a politically and racially conscious theme, it is its “pimp” iconography that has endured in Black popular culture for over thirty years. I investigate contemporary appropriations of the film to identify how it has impacted contemporary hip-hop culture in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality. My analysis adds to existing discourses involving the impact that visual culture has on the lived experiences of women. Thus, this particular film maintains a sociological place in the contemporary representation and treatment of women’s bodies.

Panel 6
Affective Histories of Pre-1950s American Cinema
Friday, January 18th, 2008 9:00-10:45a

Charles Burnetts

“Capra, Sentimentality and the British Christmas”

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The cinema of Frank Capra is often called ‘sentimental,’ with the latter term employed in its pejorative and/or descriptive sense. My paper will approach ‘It’s a Wonderful Life,’ in its frequent applicability to an equally sentimental time of the year, Christmas. I will analyse the discourses that situate this text as a touchstone for the joys and sadnesses of this time of the year and will speculate on how its mode of address and textual tropes reflect, rehearse and shape the affect of a Christmas audience.

The paper will discuss how this film is recognized in film studies as part of a longstanding tradition of melodrama. Television studies have also discussed the critical stakes of communicating nostalgia, the family and the ideal provincial society to family audiences during popular religious holidays. This paper will extend this discussion in order to analyse how Capra’s mythology persists as the preferred mode for a Christmas television audience, focusing in particular on the British Christmas.

James Paasche

“The Affective Vernacular of ‘Jimmy the Assistant’

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American Cinematographer magazine began as a forum for cinematographers to discuss their craft and their relation to the film industry in the 1920s. Most of the content of the magazine at that time focused on the drive towards professionalism. However, within this professionalized discourse appears an anomaly, a feature column entitled “*Jimmy the Assistant*.” “Jimmy” is a wisecracking character, an assistant cameraman who speaks in the everyday vernacular of the working class. His use of affective language to speak for the common man sets the column apart from the serious discourse of professionalism that pervades most of *American Cinematographer*. “Jimmy” writes his own column; the actual writer of the column remains anonymous, even though the variance in tone, language, and spelling suggests that the same author did not always write the Jimmy column. But the style of the Jimmy column is not its only distinguishing feature. Jimmy does not shy away from discussion that might land a named writer in trouble because of his opposition to the dominant practices or views held at the time. Thus, the “*Jimmy the Assistant*” column can be read as an alternative discourse contained within an official one, a space for affect within the professional.

Jason Sperb

“Affecting Reassurance / On Race, Utopia and the Online Fandom of Song of the South?”

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This paper examines the continuing presence of Walt Disney’s infamously and now self-censored racist film. The possibility of its re-release in early 2007 set off huge debates on various online internet forums. While many attempted to reiterate why *Song* was problematic, most passionately defended the film and argued for its resurrection. But why? While some unpleasant comments clearly perpetuated current racist attitudes, many fans specifically defended the film by foregrounding the positive emotions the characters and songs evoke. While politics and race do and should retain a primary presence in any discussion of *Song*, the feelings of joy and reassurance that the film simultaneously generates along with its political elements, significantly problematizes any simple notion of why Disney fans defend what they do. In the presentation, I contribute to studies of affect and fan cultures by holding in tension the racism of the film with its utopic affects—to see both as alternately “real” experiences for Disney fans—as a means to better understanding fandom’s political responses.

Travis Vogan

“Exceptional Excess: Prize Fighting Films, Jack Johnson, and Documentary Affect”

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Upon Jack Johnson’s 1908 heavyweight title-winning prize fight against Tommy Burns, theaters across America suppressed films of the match. Fight films’ suppression became even more widespread after Johnson’s successful 1910 title defense against Jim Jeffries—a bout that provoked racially-motivated violence throughout the country. Focusing primarily on Johnson’s fight Jeffries and the controversy surrounding films of it, I will use responses to Johnson’s prize fighting films to locate how these texts exceeded their status as representations and how Johnson’s domination of white opponents increased these texts’ affectivity. In this sense, I will locate Johnson as an exceptionally excessive signifier within these historical and discursive circumstances that amplified the nonfiction image’s already affective potential. In addition to examining these texts’ excessiveness and consequent suppression, I will investigate several unproblematic representations of the fight to demonstrate the intersections among fight films’ affectivity, their politically-charged content, and their forms.

Panel 7
The Nation and Me: Questioning the Citizen-Self Dyad
Friday, January 18th, 2008 *11:00a-12:30p*

Justin Acome

“Representing Conflict in Northern Ireland”

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This essay addresses the question of why political discourse in Northern Ireland is wedded to simplistic conceptualizations of national identity. Despite apparent complexities of national identities, Northern Irish political discourse remains committed to binary representations such as Protestant/Catholic, Republican/Unionist, etc. I employ a model of representation to question how and why this simplification is created and sustained, and in so doing I illustrate a process where lived realities are constructed. I argue that elites strategically represent material facts to construct realities that meet particularized interests, and that these representations meet with varying degrees of success. I suggest that different political contexts warrant different representations. The determination of what representations may be more or less fruitful is, in turn, reliant on a given affect that may predominate in a particular socio-political context. Specifically, some representations may be better suited for quelling acute violence; other representations may offer more meaningful reconciliation. The intractability of communal conflicts may be rooted, that is, in contradictory representational discourses of national identity.

Esin Duzel

“The Question of Political Agency in the Military Coup Movies in Turkey”

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Comparative Studies

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In the Turkish Cinema, a self-defined sub-genre widely called "September 12 films" emerged over the last couple of years. The impact of the most recent and brutal military takeover on September 12, 1980 on social, cultural, and political life of the country has not been an often visited theme in literature and scholarly investigations. Nevertheless these newly emergent series of movies triggered considerable discussion around the social, political, and psychological effects of the junta regime. In this presentation I will contrast the ways in which i) the political actors were portrayed in, ii) the affective relationship with the imagined audience were established through the recent visual narratives with the junta period movies, in order evaluate how the limits of representations of political agency have transformed in the course of transition to neo-liberalism in Turkey since the late 1970s.

Monika Bhagat

“Competing Imaginings of the Nation: The Construction of India and Pakistan”

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The 1947 Partition of British India was the violent division that created India and Pakistan on the basis of religious belonging. More than a simple demarcation of new borders and boundaries, the Partition endures as a traumatic event that is constantly relived and revived by citizens of the twin countries as well as its diaspora. Using a variety of primary and secondary sources, this paper critiques conventional Partition historiography by revealing various ambiguities, ironies, and unknowns that were rampant in the years leading up to this arbitrary and contrived instance of nation-making. This historical and theoretical analysis enables a richer understanding of the history of the Partition and its effects, opening a fruitful arena for discourse on the past as well as a mode of exploring the ways in which it continues to haunt the present.

Panel 8
Trauma and The Other: Representing 'Them' and Affecting 'Us'
Friday, January 18th, 2008 *1:45p-3:30p*

Phil Newman

“Imaging Torture and Imagining Affect: Political Discourse and the Represented Other”

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The photographs from Abu Ghraib prison showing tortured, naked Iraqis and grinning American soldiers, have become international icons of America’s conduct in the global war on terror. The photographs of naked prisoners chained to metal cots with panties covering their faces, of naked prisoners stacked in a human pyramid, of forced simulated sexual contact etc. spawned international uproar and resistance to the United States’ occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. The images don’t reveal any collectively spontaneous sadism, but instead a calculated and orchestrated series of poses and performances meant to represent the “essential” Arab Muslim. The images present racialized and gendered depictions of Arab Muslim men as effeminate, hyper-sexual yet repressed, backward, sub-human etc...and reveal visual representations of the other which appear very similar to concurrent American popular political discourses about the nature of “terrorism,” Islam, and the Middle East in general.

In this paper I will discuss certain narratives of “the Arab” other represented in the images of torture and humiliation at Abu Ghraib. I will revisit Said’ classic “Orientalism” for historical context of Occidental cultural othering. Additionally I will examine the correlation between the images of torture and the American political administration’s apocalyptic rhetoric via Mark Juergensmeyer’s notion of cosmic war. I will continue with an examination of the Mary-Ann Tetreault’s “politics of gaze” and Kristeva’s notion of the abject as affective response to images of torture before concluding with a brief word on the possibility for empathetic intervention and hope.

Mandy Davis

“Politicizing *The Oldest Orphan*: Representation and Reconciliation after the Rwandan Genocide”

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In this paper, I look at Tierno Monénembo’s novel about the Rwandan genocide, *The Oldest Orphan*. I explore the ways in which, by engaging history and power, the novel attempts to politicize the genocide, to see it in its context as a political moment and movement. This is in contrast to understandings of the genocide as nearly inevitable, an outpouring of “natural” or “African” aggression. In this sense, I believe that Monénembo intervenes in the essentialized

representations of Africa as without history or politics, as primitive, violent, and irrational due to its emotional drive. By insisting on such a politicized view of the situation, Monénembo demands the use of intellect, instead of simply affect, in reading the story. In doing so, Monénembo seems almost to defy the reliance on affect in representing Africa. Thus, not only does the novel shed light on the ways in which the use of affect is tied to ideological projects of representing Africa, but it also demonstrates how those representations hinder chances of a more lasting reconciliation in the region.

Theresa Erin Enright

“The Ethics of Vulnerability: Conviviality, Affect and Multiculturalism”

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This paper aims to read this ethic of vulnerability and openness to others in light of both its spatial and temporal dimensions. Drawing initially on Baruch Spinoza’s conception of affect, I aim to examine how an affective politics can be a useful in theorizing multiculturalism, conviviality and grief, and how Spinoza can help us to understand the precarious relations to otherness that so often lead to violence and pain. It is my hope that writers in the Spinozan tradition, namely Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Brian Massumi, can help us to theorize multiculturalism in a manner that challenges liberal rights-based discourses of identity, citizenship and belonging. By focusing on the primary way in which a body encounters other bodies and environments, and the way that these affective relationships relate to memory, history and time, it may be possible to illuminate aspects of a quotidian multiculturalism that is, as of yet, largely undertheorized.

Damon Berry

“The War on Terror: An Examination of a New Colonial Effort”

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This represents the first effort in my eventual work in the intersections of race, religion and terror. In this paper I use Rey Chow and Franz Fanon to examine “The War on Terror” and “Jihad” as common discourses that are used by competing elements to draw the boundary between what is itself and what is not itself. Each stereotypes the other to define the enemy in the starkest terms of abjection and, though the word is not directly applied in this paper, affect is mobilized in objectification, revenge and the “need” for protection. The “Islamic terrorist” can only ever be that object. The “Infidel” can only ever be that object. That place “over there” can only be a place of barbarity where the rules of “reason” and “goodness” are not discovered. Both point to what Slavoj Zizek has referred to as “... the exotic authenticity of the Balkan Other...”— a kind of geographical racism. Out of the felt/composed needs set forth subsequent

action is taken, and in spite of the non-existence of the stereotype the effects of this stereotyping are quite real, producing substantive political consequences-- like war.

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