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Queering Pop Culture: How Pop Culture has Influenced and been Influenced by Queer Communities

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10:15 – 11:15 AM

Queering Pop Culture (Room 1307)

How Pop Culture Has Influenced and Been Influenced by Queer Communities

Chair: Cathleen Rhodes, Department of English

Queering Pop Culture: How Pop Culture Has Influenced and Been Influenced by Queer Communities

By **Janine Kimble, Alisa Moore, Taylor Boyd** (Mentor: Cathleen Rhodes)

Presenters will explore the ways that queer communities – theorists, activists, and fans – have influenced and been influenced by pop culture. Participants will demonstrate that these relationships of reciprocity have impacted, sometimes for the better and sometimes not, not only the individual lives of queer people but also American culture and society at large as queer music and comic fans have exerted increasing influence over art forms that have historically had a complex relationship with LGBTQ subjects. Moreover, this research has implications beyond those of music and comic books, as participants will demonstrate that queer influences on and in other areas of pop culture likely work in similar ways.

The B-Word: How Hypermasculinity Keeps Bisexuals Out of DC Comics

By **Janine Kimble** (Mentor: Cathleen Rhodes)

This presentation will assess the state of bisexual representation in the DC Comics franchise and explore how the connections between hyper-masculinity in comics, a reluctance to include bisexual characters in mainstream comics, and the prevalence of stereotypes surrounding bisexuality work together to exclude bisexual characters from DC comics. Specifically, this idea will be applied to the anti-hero Hellblazer, a previously obscure bisexual character who is being given a television series only after being stripped of his bisexuality. This erasure not only enraged fans but also highlighted DC Comics' lack of bisexual characters and their unwillingness to properly showcase the complexity of bisexuality.

Storm(ing) the Gates of Queer Representation: Reading Between The Panels

By **Alisa Moore** (Mentor: Cathleen Rhodes)

The X-Men comic book character Ororo Munroe, better known as Storm, has been an icon for LGBTQ comic fans for decades. Storm provides some queer representation within comics including her implied romantic relationship with Ronin Yukio, her transformation soon after into the butch presenting, leather-clad “Mohawk Storm,” and her resemblance to drag queens. Nevertheless, Storm is not explicitly queer, and any overt queer visibility is easily lost on the average reader. This presentation explores the varied depictions of Storm and seeks to determine whether implied queerness is sufficient in comics where queerness is still vastly underrepresented.

Queer to the Core: The Emergence of LGBTQ Punk Rock

By: **Taylor Boyd** (Mentor: Cathleen Rhodes)

A/V needs: digital projector with sound and laptop

Pioneered in the 1970s, punk rock emerged as a reaction to an increasingly self-indulgent music industry and to the injustices that many punks observed within society. As a highly politicized form of music, punk has always promoted ideals of social equality, social justice and personal freedom, yet it has largely maintained a devoted following of mostly white, heterosexual male fans. Thus, queercore emerged as a reactionary offshoot of hardcore punk and sought to express its disapproval of the homophobic landscape that was 1980's America. While stylistically similar to other forms of punk, queercore is unique in its themes and lyrical content, typically critiquing a homophobic society and dealing with issues such as gender and sexual identity. This presentation will examine the history of the queercore movement, determine how it has influenced and impacted the punk scene, and will explore how the rise of queer culture within punk has influenced perceptions of the community outside of the punk scene and how queer punk has been used as a tool for LGBTQ rights.