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Happy Birthday Chinua Achebe

70th birthday celebration for Bard's very own Nobel Prize winner

RAFI ROM

Bard College did what real colleges are supposed to do last weekend. That is, bring celebrated academics, artists and activists from across the globe to celebrate the college's most world renowned professor, Nobel Laureate Chinua Achebe. Achebe, who in a letter former President Jimmy Carter called "a personal hero," has written five novels and scores of poems and short stories, including the famous *Things Fall Apart*. For his 70th birthday, Bard hosted a two-day conference featuring such "world stage" participants as writers Toni Morrison, John Edgar Wideman and Ngugi wa Thiongo.

Olin Auditorium was jam packed with friends of Chinua Achebe, making the conference not only an intense two-day academic discourse but also a symbolic family reunion, as many of the attendees were African exiles. And although many of the faces in Olin's four hundred seat theater were new to Bard, the organizers' lax ticket

checking policy allowed many Bard students to attend as well (50 tickets were officially set aside for Bardians).

Many of Achebe's Bard acquaintances, including poet John Ashbery, Romanian novelist Norman Manea and our very own President Leon Botstein, also took the stage to salute Achebe and add their own input to many of the conference's themes.

Besides the unanimous praise for Achebe, the speakers also built very interesting arguments about various themes Achebe's work brings out. Oversimplified, race and language dominated the conference. Questions that seemed to capture the participants included whether the English language is inherently racist, if writing in English over native African languages unites or divides readers, race in America, and the importance of international literature at the "world stage."

Nelson Mandela, elected president of South Africa in 1994,

echoed that last statement in his videotaped opening speech. Achebe "is the one who has brought Africa to the world," he said. "He speaks for us all, he speaks the culture of Africa and enriches all humanity with his visionary talent."

On that note, participants began tackling these issues in the first panel on "Education and Political Representation." Overall, the educators seemed optimistic that education can diminish racism, which is not surprising as three of the four panelists were current or



Dancers from Ohio. Native Ohio dancers perform a native Ohio dance. .p: Doug Baz

former college presidents. Said former president of Spelman College Johnetta B. Cole, "I honestly believe that white folk have the capability of moving beyond racism." Yet one conflict the panelists grappled over is the persistent

racism even in the "white colonial intellectual" portrayed in Achebe's works.

The panelists spent quite some time grappling with the definition of art. President of Smith College

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From the Editors...

We address concerns surrounding sexual harassment article

Dear Readers:

Concerns have been expressed to us over the article on sexual harassment in the last edition of the Free Press. As a student newspaper, our intent is never to hurt any student and we are extremely regretful if any member of our community has suffered as a result of the article.

We have met with administrators and students about the effects of the article, and now realize that we took inadequate steps to address the sensitivity of the situation. We acknowledge that we must balance our duty to inform the community with our duty to protect the rights of individuals.

The Free Press feels compelled to inform on issues affecting the community. However, on a small, closed campus like Bard, we realize the guidelines of privacy and journalistic integrity must be carefully considered. Our intent in publishing the article was to raise awareness of sexual harassment in order to encourage discussion of the issue in general at Bard, as well as encourage discourse on Bard's policies and definitions of sexual harassment (found on Page 44 of the Student Handbook), and the steps taken to address it in this latest circumstance.

Though we feel the article is accurate and brought the issue of sexual harassment at Bard to the forefront, it has become clear the article has had a negative impact on some members of our community. We have seriously failed in our commitment to serve them.

We are a young newspaper still crafting our policy, and we are learning from the results of the article. Anyone with specific concerns is encouraged to email us at bardfreepress@egroups.com or reach us at x7079.

Respectfully,

Last minute addition:

Florida recount completed.

W. takes 327 vote lead, with Palm Beach, says Associated Press.

Another by hand recount of Palm Beach on Saturday.

Media, Republicans Fuck Up

Protesters ready to take the street after Gore renegs

VINCENT VALDMANIS

Voters in the Florida county of Palm Beach protested yesterday over confusing ballots that may have caused Gore supporters to mistakenly vote for Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan. Hundreds of people appeared in front of the County Government Center shouting "Revote! Revote!" and "Gore got more! Gore got more!" Of particular concern to demonstrators were the more than 19,000 votes that county officials threw out because voters had selected more than one candidate on the ballots.

Buchanan received 3,407 votes in Palm Beach County, nearly 20% of his total support in Florida. Protesters (and Democratic Party officials) say the ballot design, which placed the punch hole for Buchanan between the holes for Bush and Gore, was unfair. Votes in Palm Beach County will be recounted Saturday and two law suits will be filed in State Court next week.

An election day memo written by Theresa LePore, Supervisor for Elections in Palm Beach County, reveals that state election officials were aware of the problem. "Please remind all voters coming in that they are to vote only for one (1) presidential candidate and that they are to punch the hole next to the



Praying for Florida. Bard students demand a moment of silence

arrow next to the number next to the candidate they wish to vote for."

Meanwhile a judge in the 15th Judicial Circuit in Palm Beach County granted an injunction last night that prevents the final result of the presidential election from being certified by state and county officials. The decision was based on violation of state laws regulating ballot formats. The ballot was confusing and "printed in such a way that Plaintiffs were deprived

of their right to freely express their will."

Other voting irregularities are surfacing in the Sunshine State. 12,000 Floridians were notified by the Division of Elections that they had lost their right to vote because of out of state felony convictions. Later it was discovered 8,000 were misidentified and subsequently alerted in time for Election Day.

Michael Moore urged the country to "raise holy bloody hell" and "set aside our differences regarding Gore and Nader and demand, IMMEDIATELY DEMAND, that Bush sep aside and not claim the Presidency based on this insane, ancient Electoral College."



From Communist Empires to Rogue States

Academic Michel Feher discusses post-Cold War Foreign Policy

RAFI ROM

In a lecture outlining his recently published book *Powerless By Design*, Michel Feher argued that the post-Cold War foreign policy of democratic western powers known as "The International Community," is fraught with contradictions and dilemmas that effectively render this policy valueless. The varying effects of western intervention (or lack thereof) first in Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and later in Kosovo and Chechnya, has left western allies in a deep conundrum: to what extent should western states intervene in the policy of other nations?

The international community's doctrine is "connoted" on three aspects; the sovereignty of nations, world citizenry, and what is widely known as the "CNN effect." These three elements often conflicted each other, seriously complicating the new post-Cold War policy in what media calls "ethnic conflict," which denotes a level of savagery and tribalism.

From 1991 to the present, this definition of the international community went through varying degrees of respect for nations sovereignty, including a strict interpretation, a policy justifying invading that state sovereignty on behalf of democracy and human rights, and another that aimed to minimize the suffering of civilians through somewhat degrading humanitarian and diplomatic means. The various meanings all conflict each other, leaving President Clinton with "nothing to say" about the current status of the international community at the September 2000 United Nations summit.

Feher stated that the international community is a creation of the Gulf War. He said, "the way the Gulf War was formed...had very

little to do with this advance of democracy and human rights." Instead, it is part of the New World Order, which ideologically would break the East West divide by binding all countries to international law. State sovereignty is the basis of this law, which prohibits one nation to encroach on another.

To rationalize intervention in Iraq's assault on Kuwait, Feher said the United States, along with Britain, labeled Iraq a rogue state under this international law, very different from the "ideological menace" of the Cold War. Yet that alone did not mobilize domestic support, so the Bush administration "recklessly promoted [that]...the ultimate goal was to bring democracy to Iraq and even to Kuwait." This proclamation started a pro-democratic uprising in both nations, yet Bush never intended to back such movements for fear of international stability, thus giving "free reign to Saddam Hussein to repress." This collapsed the New World Order, which did not reappear until 1999 with NATO intervening in Kosovo.

Next, Feher discussed the effect of the media, particularly cable TV on natural and/or manmade disasters. The horrifying images flashed on the screen are made to make the viewer "feel bad" and deem "something" needed to be done. Such vague decisions by a constituency that has "no agency other than the fact they are really horrified about what they see" was the moving force in what became the next stage of the international community doctrine.

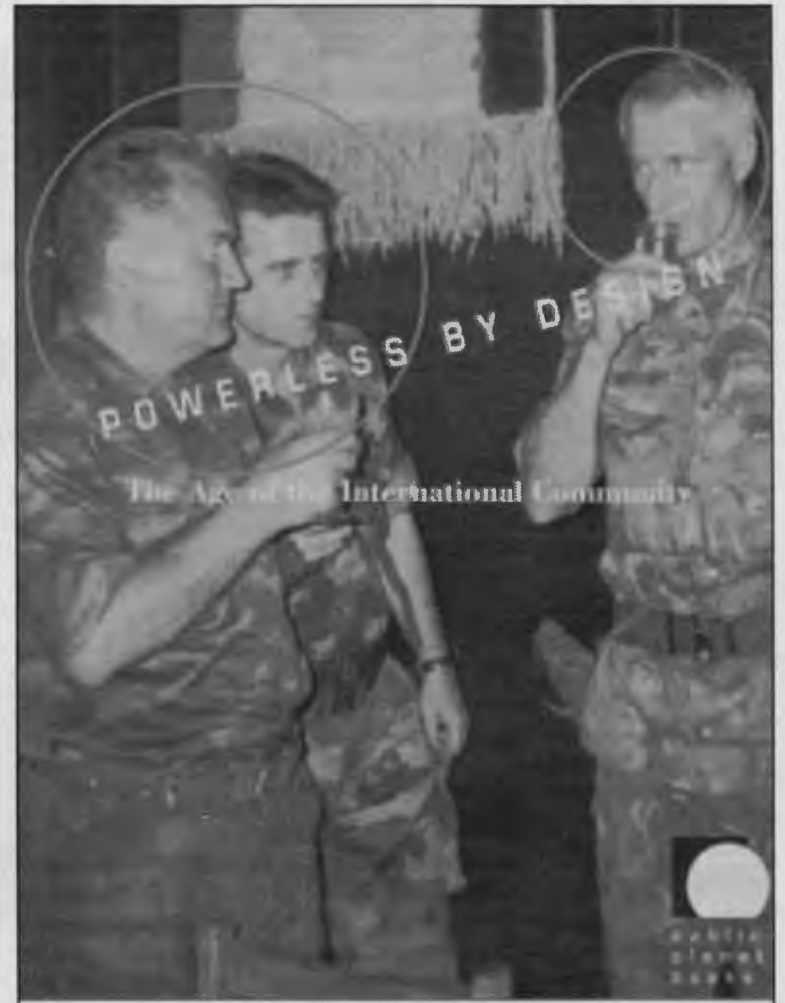
With the end of the Cold War, many countries were faced with imminent change and pressure to join the "liberal world", which often drew conflict in many nations. Western policy (and media) labeled this conflict as the

"age old ethnic war," which painted these nations as "driven by the rule of blood." Because the western "cable TV viewers" wanted the atrocities aimed at civilians to stop, the policy makers created a new way of intervention, broken into three steps; the sending of humanitarian aid "to limit the violence," sending "seasoned diplomats" to convince the factions to stop killing one another, and thirdly, to "reconstruct some kind of state."

This "impeccably liberal" policy used in cases such as Yugoslavia has inherent flaws. "If you have a political war waged by an 'ethnicist regime'," Feher stated, "then the doctrine of the international community is wrong, misguided and 'passively complicit'." This doctrine, which led to genocidal tactics in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, had to be changed.

The Western alliance found their chance when Milosevic began his ethnic cleansing in Kosovo as he did earlier to Bosnia and Croatia. NATO began bombing assuming that he would quickly back off, but he did not, forcing the western alliance to change their policy on the international community, to one Clinton described as "democracies duty to prevent evil and aggression." This new policy forced the US and its allies to intervene in East Timor as well.

Although this new policy drew heat from both the anti-imperialist left (Western democracies can not interfere on human rights as they have such horrifying records) and the isolationist right, who viewed this as trampling on national sovereignty, Feher said "liberals in the west were amazingly relieved by the operation in Kosovo. The same interventions to protect human rights as they have been protecting the free market."



Yet with the Chechen conflict going on today in Russia, and the lack of intervention as both US and Britain say this is an internal affair with nothing outside influence can do (not even withdraw IMF money, which is funding the war), this Western alliance reneged once again on their definition of the international community. It is "back to the old international community," Feher said, leaving government officials in the west completely silent as they have no straightforward policy.

Michel Feher is the Founding Editor and Publisher of Zone Books in New York. This lecture is the

second in a four part series during October and November sponsored by the Human Rights Project. On Tuesday, November 21, at 5:30 p.m., Thomas Dumm, professor of political science at Amherst College and coeditor of the Johns Hopkins University Press *Theory & Event* electronic journal, will discuss "What Does It Matter Who Is Speaking?: Censor, Census, and Address." The talk will be held in LC115. For more information contact Bridget Conley, conley@bard.edu, x7322.

Speaking Out: Clearwater Action Activist Supports Hudson River Clean-Up, Condemns General Electric

VINCENT VALDMANIS

New York's Supreme Court recently threw out the Attorney General's case against GE that would have required it to pay compensation for the Hudson River clean-up. Last night New Yorkers held a candle-light vigil on the banks of the Hudson from Manhattan to north of Albany.

What do you think about the

Supreme Court's action?

Clearwater Action Lady: I think it's shortsighted on their part. I think it's important to make polluters pay, but the most important thing is getting the river cleaned up. I don't think this is about punishment, I think it's about focusing on solutions - what ever they are. We don't have time to be punitive, and so although I'm disappointed in the decision, it's not where I care to put

my focus. Even if it took working out a financial compromise with GE - this is really going out on a limb for an environmental director to say - if that's what it would take to get the river cleaned up, and it meant we, as a society, had to share in the cost of the solution, I would support that if it moved the process forward. I disagree with the decision, I think it was shortsighted in that I don't think - you know, if it was an administrative law judge, or whoever made the decision - was taking the big picture into consideration. I do think GE should be held responsible for additional costs dredging, anywhere, if that material is so contaminated that it has to go to a toxic waste landfill or be treated or handled as a hazardous material. I disagree with the decision, but I don't think it's the important issue. The important issue is doing what it takes to find solutions that will work sooner rather than later. **What's the reason for politicians' reluctance to take a public stand on GE and the clean-up efforts?** I suspect that it's not reluctance so much as the question hasn't been

asked loudly enough and often enough and they haven't seen the political opportunity in dealing with this issue. There are so many issues that come up. Although, given the fact that this GE campaign started in the beginning of the summer - it is a multimillion dollar ad campaign, you can't open a newspaper or turn a television on without seeing the information - you would think that if they [the candidates] were clear, that they would take a position. And it may be their lack of clarity and that is our job: to educate. We citizens, by asking this question every where [the candidates] go, can accelerate that education and then force them to take a position.

What can Bard students and residents of the Hudson Valley do to try to get something done soon? The first thing is to educate yourself and educate others. The only way we can combat a multi-million dollar advertising campaign filled with misinformation, outdated information, and out-right disinformation - intentional disinformation - is person by person. It's going to

be a massive grass-roots campaign. If I can talk to twenty people, and out of that they each talk to five more people...by having the truth and facts and correct information and science on our side, we can counteract these glossy ad campaigns that are full of holes. The one good thing about the GE ad campaign is that it has taken an issue that had become boring [and brought it the forefront] - people were tired of hearing about PCBs, "Oh man, you environmentalists have been talking about PCBs for 20 years. Get off it already!" By GE doing this ad campaign, people are thinking "what are they trying to sell me?" And now they're asking those hard questions: Is the river cleaning itself up? No. The pollution is just being disbursed. Is it worse to dredge? Will that just stir things up and harm the ecology of the river? No, GE knows perfectly well that there are technologies to remove the sediments using suction so that they're not re-suspended, so that the PCBs are safely removed, treated, and destroyed.

THE ROOT CELLAR
 tea, coffee, vegan food,
 comfortable atmosphere,
 new shipment of food
 BASKET OF THE OLD GYM
 Just in*
 (and long-awaited organic tampons...)

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 thebardfreepress.vol2.issue5

Shop This: Red Hook Resists Hannaford Take-Over

Community debates effects on character, design issues of proposed super grocery store

VINCENT VALDMANIS

Red Hook residents turned out in droves at a recent public hearing to voice concerns over a proposed Hannaford Brothers supermarket to be built on a 17-acre site just south of the town center. Lawyers from Hannaford Brothers presented their drafts to the Planning Board for a store of at least 47,000 square feet and a parking lot for 250 cars at the October 31st hearing. The majority of town residents at the meeting spoke against the proposal, citing worries ranging from generic design and traffic problems to the project's invitation of future urban sprawl.

Hannaford Brothers Co. was acquired by Delhaize America, Inc. in July. The combined companies have annual profits of more than

\$14 billion and operate over 1,400 stores from Maine to Florida. Hannaford's proposed Red Hook store would be located on Rte. 9 approximately two miles south of the lights in Red Hook.

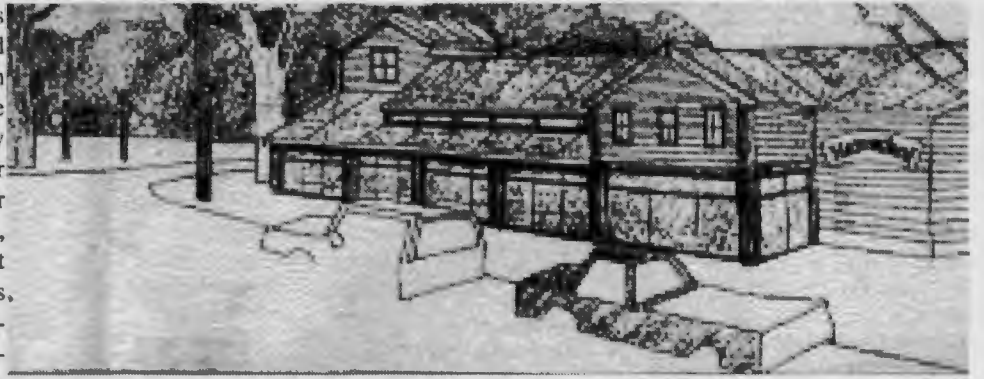
Darcy Bordwin, the director of a Red Hook group in favor of "smart-growth" called Save Our Town, stated her frustration with the town Planning Board. In light of the petition she had presented with over 1,000 signatures against the Hannaford store, she felt it was clear the decision should be made by town-wide referendum instead of by the Planning Board. "What does Hannaford want?" she asked. "They want [the originally planned] 60,000 square foot [store] because they want to make maximum profit off our virgin town."

Other groups, including the Red

Hook Business League and Scenic Hudson spoke against the plan. Ray Curren, Senior Planner for Scenic Hudson, said the project "represents generic, one-size-fits-all commercial development." He suggested the store be built to a smaller scale at 30,000 square feet and that it be placed at the northern end of the site location, closer to the town center.

Many residents questioned the need for another supermarket in the area and felt it would endanger Red Hook's bucolic character. Barbara Bielenberg, the director of a local historical preservation group, said the Hannaford store would threaten St. Margaret's Home. The 19th century building was at one time an orphanage and is located on the proposed Hannaford site. The company has no plans to preserve the house, but would build the parking lot around the structure.

Red Hook resident Bob Desmond was one of the few to speak in favor of the Hannaford store. He said



Save our town plan. Please, save our town.

existing zoning laws will maintain the rural character of the town, and the store is necessary to provide consumers with the variety and low prices they expect. He cited a Consumer's Reports article that named the Hannaford in Kingston the best supermarket compared to the Super Kmart and Super Wal-Mart in that town. "If you're going to have a new store, Hannaford is the store to go for," he said.

Concerned Citizens of Red Hook & Rhinebeck, a community group in opposition to Hannaford's planned Red Hook store, handed out leaflets at the door demanding "Hannaford: Make Rhinebeck your Home." The group is suggesting Hannaford consider the abandoned Jamesway site 2.5 miles to the south next to the Grand Union in Rhinebeck instead of the Red Hook location. The group points out that the Jamesway site already has a large parking area, is approved for

zoning up to 60,000 square feet, is approved for a sewer hook-up, and already has traffic patterns in keeping with traffic flow caused by such projects.

Hannaford officials refused comment on the suggestion. "The issue at hand is approval from the Planning Board for our proposal," said one representative. "Arrogance!" shouted one particularly vocal audience member in response. "What arrogance!" As the night wore on, heated exchanges took place between the Hannaford lawyers and the people sitting near the historic preservation groups. Chairwoman Marcella Appell appealed for calm at several moments throughout the evening.

The public comment period has been extended to November 20th.



The crime scene. The scenic hudson plan.

Achebe Conference Coverage Continued...

2 day bonanza with activists, writers, artists, and other people.

continued from page 1

Ruth J. Simmons said, "to be no more than an artist is a wonderful thing." Yesterday, Simmons was appointed President of Brown University, the first African American and first female to become President of an Ivy League college.

Botstein, who feels art is more than just "an aesthetic flight," quickly replied, "so long as it is really art." All panelists concluded that artists have the capability to influence the lives and actions of others.



Hello This is Chinua Achebe p Doug Baz

To further demonstrate the spectrum of art, three very different poets read from their works. Professor John Ashbury began the reading with his work representing the "aesthetic flight" without a direct action implied. To varying degrees, poets Jayne Cortez and Michael S. Harper symbolized the artist more intent on affecting others' actions. "Find your own voice

and use it," Cortez repeated in a mantra-like fashion in one of her poems.

The poetry reading was not the only artistic salutation to Achebe. Amidst the two-day academic conference there was another reading, dance performances and art exhibit. On Saturday, acclaimed writers Sonia Sanchez and Nobel Prize Winner Wole Soyinka read from their works.

Both nights of the conference ended with performances by the Odenigbo Dance Group, which specialized in Nigerian masquerade dances. Dressed in elaborate costumes and masks and accompanied by musicians performing West African music, the dancers performed four dances. They ended with the Ohafia-War Dance, an energetic and amazingly complicated piece with the performers acting as ancient warriors.

Nigerian Obiora and Ada Udechukwu's work was displayed in Fischer. Titled *Ride Me Memory*, the exhibit featured paintings and drawings by the two multi-talented artists. Both have published plays and poems as well.

The Friday afternoon session found five diverse panelists discussing "Images of Africa." Gil Noble, host of WABC's "Like It Is," spoke of the media's impact on civil rights. "For millions of people across the nation to get a perspective of what's going on has been

deprived... We have reached a plateau of smooth dialogue. We have learned what to say and what not to say... We mute our anger."

In a short but intellectually packed hyperactive speech, Michael Eric Dyson, professor and Baptist preacher, echoed these concerns at the artistic level. By moving from "stereotype to archetype," he said, diversity is still kept narrow. "There are anti-types... The republic of the image is an enormous space... The articulated notion of positive blackness" lacks the subversive quality capable of erupting such a response that the preceding panelist said is missing in contemporary African American society.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, playwright and novelist from Kenya and current professor at NYU gave a history of African literature written in English. Ngugi in the past has criticized Achebe's decision to write his novels in English.

When Achebe spoke the following day in a conversation with Toni Morrison and Leon Botstein, he explained his reasoning for writing in English. Nigeria's population speaks 200 different languages, and writing in English "unites the many diverse peoples." "It is precisely because this 'man' overthrew me with this language that the reply had to be made in English," Achebe said. "English is not an enemy, lan-

guage is not an enemy. Language is a tool."

Morrison finds the English language to be "historically oppressive." In Friday's panel "The Writer on the World Stage," Morrison set up her argument questioning inherent racism in English. "I am talking about not the plot, not the narrative, but the construction of language. I

Botstein also questioned the pressures of being at the world stage. Morrison, whose work can be found in most supermarkets and airline terminals, finds such pressures disruptive, but insists that her creative work is meant to question a lot. "It's very much a private enterprise," she said. Achebe agreed, saying "Taking on an audience is a



Achebe-Botstein-Morrison. Three people who have a lot to say. p Tomas Kacer

am deeply involved in how to... control metaphorical language that could be literature free of restraints, that is imposed with 'race language'."

Morrison feels African writers such as Achebe have achieved the status of writing in English without its "loaded" characteristics. "They did not feel it necessary to approve or disapprove," she said.

What Morrison feels has dominated American scholarly works an extremely biased a racial discourse. Building off Noble's earlier assertions of racism in media, Morrison also pointed to the denigration in the status quo questioning the "ability of African Americans to speak."

hindrance... I am my own reader first and foremost, I am my own editor, my own critic."

But Achebe feels these pressures do not exist in Nigeria. "There is no celebrity business," he said. Morrison agreed that in her very different town in Ohio where she grew up, celebrity issues were not important.

Achebe ended the conversation with Morrison and Botstein with an observation that perfectly summed up the entire conference. In his quiet, pensive matter, Achebe said, "If you're facing the wrong direction, no matter how far you'll go, you'll never arrive."

Voting Laws are Classist and Racist

Millions of Americans can not vote for prior convictions-13% of Black males can never vote

RAFI ROM

Everyone has heard about the 3,500 votes Buchanan may have mistakenly received and the thousands of double punched ballots in Palm Beach, Florida. Yet there is another group of people who also feel Florida's voting system is fraught with errors. This is the growing population of black males who can not vote.

Known as disenfranchisement laws, it is legal for a state to deny someone the right to vote if they are currently serving time or have been convicted of a prior felony. According to a study conducted jointly by the Sentencing Project and Human Rights Watch, 4.2 million Americans cannot vote because of these laws. A third of that number, 1.8 million, are black males. That means 13 percent of all black men in this country cannot vote.

In some southern states, including Florida, the study showed that one in three black males cannot vote.

There are currently two million people in prison. At the national level 25 percent of them are black, while only one in a hundred are white. In some southern states like Alabama, one in three prisoners is

black. All states but three-Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts-do not allow prisoners to vote.

Why exactly do these laws exist? Reuters reporter Mary Gabriel wrote, "Like the dark days of segregation, when laws were manufactured to keep blacks out of the voting booth, some today are reviewing the rules governing voting rights for felons." Some feel that if convicted of a felony, one should not have the right to vote. But this argument is fraught with holes, as many of those disenfranchised committed minor offenses. Congressman James E. Clyburn said, "Imagine living in Alabama, a state that permanently disenfranchises anyone with a felony. If you are convicted of passing a bad check or shoplifting, you lose your voting rights forever."

These laws will continue to have detrimental effects on this country by continuing to isolate Americans depending on their class or race. One study showed that in an estimated 10 to 20 years, 10 million people will not be able to vote. This is in a country where only 100 million people vote. And if this year's election is a sign of things to come, those 10 million votes could swing the election.

In fact, some feel that it already

has. Editor of the *Black Electorate* wrote, "Democrats may want to consider the contribution that the 'tough-on-crime' policies of the Clinton-Gore administration and New Democrats made to taking Blacks out of the voting process in the last eight years." Keenan Keller, minority counsel for the House Judiciary Board said in a Reuters article, "In certain swing states, the number of folks who are disenfranchised could actually have a direct impact on the election."

By the numbers, it may look like this is a problem of the South only. That is not true. In California, juveniles convicted of a felon can not register to vote when they turn 18. This law was overwhelmingly voted in as part of a tough on crime legislation last February. It even did well amongst democrat voters.

New York also has voting disenfranchisement laws. And so does the federal government. When applying for federal aid with the FAFSA, one question asked is whether you have been convicted of a felony. This serves as a factor to decide aid. New York also has some of the strictest drug laws in the country, which convict more and more non-violent offenders, disproportionately blacks or other

minorities, making the right to vote even harder.

As the importance of each and every vote becomes crystal clear as the Bush lead in Florida has narrowed down to 229 votes last night, it makes undemocratic voting regulations all the more pressing of an issue. If someone is incarcerated, their punishment should end the day they leave prison. Such laws that continue punishment unfairly target large blocs of this country.

Currently, there is a bill stalled in the House for over a year that proposes to end the disenfranchisement voting laws. Hopefully, the close presidential race will raise the issue of this and other undemocratic laws at a national level. The complete debate and bill of HR906 can be read at http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/judiciary/hju62486.000/hju62486_0.HTM

But it is also important to act at a local level. The Bard Prison Initiative is currently working to end these laws. For more information on how you can get involved e-mail bpi@bard.edu.

Election Stats

The Florida Drama

Palm Beach County
19,000 Votes Discounted
Buchanan Ballot Confusion

Voters denied ballots; told "precinct has changed"

Florida Highway Patrol set up checkpoint 2.1 miles from voting booths in predominantly African-American area

Osceola County
Hispanic voters were required to produce two forms of identification; one was required
Some voters in Osceola County also confused by ballots

Tampa
Polls closed while people were still in line

Miami
Some translators refused in voting booths for Haitian-Americans

The NY Numbers Dutchess County Election Results

President:
Red Hook totals:
1,949- George Bush (R)
1,913- Al Gore (D)
493- Ralph Nader (G)

U.S. Senate:
58,262- Rick Lazio (R)
42,707-Hillary Clinton (D)
900- Mark Dunau (G)
83- John Clifton (L)

U.S. House:
22nd District totals:
16,960- John Sweeney (R)
10,942- Kenneth McCallion (D)

Red Hook totals:
2,107- John Sweeney (R)
1,731- Kenneth McCallion (D)

New York State Assembly:
97th District:
22,578- Joel Miller (R)
18,239- Joseph Ruggiero (D)

New York State Senate:
41st District:
71,961- Stephen Saland (R)
31,089- Gene Flagello (D)

The Barrytown Results

President:
75 George Bush
224 Al Gore
143 Ralph Nader

U.S. Senate
89 Rick Lazio
258 Hilary Clinton
41 Frank Dunau

U.S. House
97 John Sweeney (R)
232 Kenneth McCallion (D)
89 Kenneth McCallion (G)*

*McCallion was endorsed by both the Democratic and Green Parties.

Vote for Nader? Look What Happened Chumps!

RAFI ROM

Guess what? Ralph Nader is the biggest politician of them all.

Conceding defeat even before the Green Party primaries, Ralph Nader has had an unfair advantage against Al Gore in courting the far left votes. He has made promise after promise, all of which are ideals most true liberals feel as well.

And that's the problem. In the near split congress, and in the preceding republican led congress, such liberal reform is impossible. There is no chance for any such sweeping reform to happen under the current political situation, nor will there ever be. That is the nature of democracy. Revolution

and democracy do not go hand in hand. Revolutions lead to dictatorships (the U.S.A. was essentially already democratic before the American Revolution).

By promising to cut military spending by two thirds, nearly double the minimum wage and proposing every sort of social welfare program in the book, Nader was able to sway many good-meaning liberals to his side. Yet, Gore, who had to run a real campaign, could not make such promises. He instead chose to base his campaign on what many Bard students criticize Bush for not doing: policy.

If Nader actually ran an idealistic yet real campaign for president, actually proposing policies that had a chance of passing in congress

(and of course still made his ideals known), then liberals who voted for Nader instead of Gore needn't feel guilty. Instead, he ran on rhetoric.

His anti-corporate rants resonate similar rhetoric used by Bush to court other, conservative voters. Bush simply replaced the liberal ideology with a conservative one. And he even changed his rhetoric when he appeared on CNN's *Larry King Live* on election night.

CNN!! *Larry King Live*!! This corporate media giant takes more heat from international media watch groups than any other. Yet Nader's general criticism of all corporate media conveniently switched to only "some" when given the opportunity. That is as political as you can get.

With such a tight election race in Florida, there is no doubt that Nader voters potentially cost the election for Gore. You may justify that by saying many Nader supporters would not have voted at all, but that's simply not true. In fact, all polls show the majority of Nader votes would in fact have gone to Gore if Nader was not on the Green Party ticket.

My criticism of Nader does not extend to criticism of third parties. I wholly believe third parties can be very effective at a local level. Yet the Green Party chooses to pump its

money into a symbolic Presidential campaign, instead of really pushing state and local initiative, especially on the East Coast. Look at the Barrytown results-143 people voted for Nader, yet the Senate candidate for the Greens recieved less

than a third of that vote. Hilary Clinton, just as moderate as Gore, sucked up the rest.

To all those who voted for Nader in other states, including New York where Gore's lead was incontestably large, you still voted for a man as political as all those he ran against. Your "symbolic" vote was for a liar. He made promises he could not keep. And you believed him.

Unlike Nader, Gore, who had to run a real campaign, could not make easy promises. He instead chose to base his campaign on what many Bard students criticize Bush for not doing: policy.

Editorial Notice

All opinions expressed in the *Opinions* section of the *Bard Free Press* are those of the author alone and in no way represent the views of the Editorial Staff or the paper.

Responses to any piece appearing in the *Opinions* section are welcome. Send your thoughts to us via email at bardfreepress@egroups.com

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Is Likud to Blame for Current Palestinian Crisis?

SHANKAR GOPALAKRISHNAN

In the last few weeks, Israel and Palestinian authorities have exploded in a massive wave of protest. Yesterday another two Palestinians and an Israeli Jewish woman died, bringing the toll to over 170 lives (of which about 160 are Arabs, including some 30 children). Needless to say, there has been considerable news coverage of these incidents. The majority of it in the United States, though, has historically been less than skeptical of the Israeli government's stance, and the coverage this time around seems to be no exception.

The general narrative we hear is that Ariel Sharon, an "Israeli hardliner", visited Haram el-Sharif Mosque on Temple Mount, and this triggered Palestinian protest because it was seen as an invasion of a Muslim holy site. This reduces the conflict to a question of religious values and allows the conservative press to portray the uprising as a fanatical religious movement.

Firstly, however, Ariel Sharon is

many of the women before they shot them. A subsequent government investigation said Sharon's behavior was "impossible to justify" and placed "indirect responsibility" for the massacre on him. The only action taken was that Sharon was removed from the Defense Ministry; he later became Foreign Minister.

To much of the Israeli left and to the Palestinians, Sharon has thus become a symbol of the Israeli far-right's disregard for Arabs' humanity. His visit to the Haram el-Sharif mosque was perceived by some as an attempt to show that this force could still hamper the "peace process". Given general Palestinian frustration with this process, Sharon's visit and claim to Israeli preeminence was probably considered too much.

This frustration, in some senses the major cause of the present uprising, springs partly from anger at Israel's perceived failure to fulfill the 1991 Oslo accords. While both sides accuse each other of reneging



Fuck Tanks! This Palestinian threw stones at an Israeli tank. James Earl Jones should also be stoned for those shit-eating Verizon ads.

lements in the occupied territories, though these settlements are internationally illegal and a violation of the peace accords. During 1998 alone, some 3200 new settlement permits were issued. These settlements break up Palestinian territory and hinder Palestinians' sovereignty; at a recent UN session, the French ambassador called them "the heart of the difficulties facing the peace process".

Similarly, Inter Press Service (IPS) reported a few weeks ago that Israel insists on retaining control over the area's water supply; some four-fifths of the West Bank's water goes to Israel, leaving the Palestinians with a quarter of the water that Israelis in the area receive. Major Palestinian towns thus do not have water for months at a time. This problem also extends to other natural resources, most of which are still in Israel's hands.

It is also worth remembering that the United States, which has proclaimed itself an "honest broker", mediated these peace agreements. The U.S. is Israel's only ally, has supplied it with weapons for decades, and has consistently taken Israel's side in voting against UN resolutions that every other nation has favored. There are few countries less qualified to serve as an "honest broker"; that the Palestinians have accepted American mediation is more a sign of their desperation than of their trust in U.S. impartiality.

The U.S. may be indispensable, partly because Israel would probably not accept mediation by any other power. But the fact that the

mediator is allied to the more powerful side, and has consistently blocked mediation efforts by more objective interlocutors, makes it difficult to believe in the credibility of such a peace process.

As a result of all this, in the Palestinians' view, the new accords that were offered this summer would have allowed the Israelis to retain an economic stranglehold on their state, left East Jerusalem and the settlement areas in Israeli hands, and bequeathed them a defenceless state with limited ability to pursue any independent policy. It is not surprising that they rejected them. The Israeli government, however, appears to believe it has done enough by granting the notion of a state, or at least enough to have the Palestinians agree to the status quo.

Hence the current uprising. Major protests began the day after Sharon's visit, when a number of Palestinians at Haram el-Sharif threw rocks at police. The police responded with rubber bullets, injuring some 200 people. Police also interfered with evacuation of the wounded, in some cases shooting medical personnel as well. By the end of the incident four Palestinians were dead. B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, criticized the firing and said that it demonstrated "blatant disregard for the lives and welfare of Palestinians".

As protests spread, world opinion outside the U.S. has become almost entirely condemnatory of the Israelis' methods. The Palestinians have appealed for a UN protection force, a move likely

to be vetoed by the U.S., and for the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Israel, however, holds the Palestinian leadership responsible and calls on it to "end the violence". In addition Israel has blocked moves to establish a UN commission of inquiry, as called for by international organizations, though it has okayed a U.S.-led commission. Meanwhile, Israeli forces continue to shell Palestinian villages and conduct rocket strikes on protesters and Palestinian buildings.

As the protests go on, certain facts stand out. According to B'Tselem's statistics, Israeli forces have killed more people in these weeks than Palestinian "terrorists" have in the past six years. Since the beginning of the first intifada in 1987, the total number of Palestinian civilians killed is roughly six times the number of Israeli civilians who have died from Palestinian violence in the same period. Physicians for Human Rights pointed out that the recent death toll is partly because Israeli forces aim for the head, implying both that they are not under threat (the chest is a much bigger target) and that they intend to kill.

Yet it seems that many still try to maintain "even-handedness", to imply that both sides are equally powerful and equally responsible for the deaths. That both sides have committed atrocities is indisputable. That these atrocities deserve condemnation is also indisputable. But that condemnation cannot come at the expense of ignoring the balance of power in the area, and of the need to pressure the Israeli government to grant Palestinians their fundamental rights as a nation and as a people. Despite the rhetoric, this is not a war: it is a popular movement that is being repressed.

In their mission statement, B'Tselem says that their readers "may decide to do nothing, but they cannot say 'We didn't know.'" Given the information that has been splashed around the world media in the past six weeks, the same is true of all of us. The silence in the U.S. until now has been deafening. That can be changed if we choose to do so.



I bounce on a Murder Rap: Representation flip version stealth, Russian weapons dimension gat nicely true. The funk word manifests Israeli.

considerably more than a "hardliner". During the 1950s he led hit squads that performed revenge attacks on Arab villages, including a 1953 bombing of a Jordanian town that killed 69 villagers and several children. In 1982 he was Secretary of Defense during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon; he directed the month-long siege and shelling of Beirut, in which nearly 17,000 civilians died. At the end of the siege, Israel-backed Lebanese militia entered a refugee camp and massacred another 2,750 unarmed Palestinians in 36 hours, raping

on their commitments, media coverage typically concentrates on the alleged Palestinian violation of the peace accords, including their failure to disarm several of the militias operating on its soil and their failure to crack down on those who speak out and operate against Israel. To the Israelis, these violations justify their failure to withdraw from all the territory specified in the Oslo accords.

The Palestinians, however, point out that Israel violates the accords in several other ways. It continues to construct Jewish set-

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Harassment Article a Vehicle for Self-serving Sensationalism

ANNA RIVERA

I am writing in response to the article that was published on the front page of the 10-27-00 edition of the Bard Free Press, entitled "Albee Sexual Harassment Allegations Investigated" by Matthew Richards. Having read Mr. Richards' article on several occasions, I feel that it is my responsibility as a member of the Bard community to express my discontent with the type of news reportage that has taken place within the confines of this article.

I must state before I continue that it is not my intention to write about the allegations of sexual harassment, but to write about the

liberties that were taken amongst our peers in the sake of self-serving sensationalism. It is one thing to write an expose on the administration's errors in handling sensitive matters on campus, but it is another to write a piece that goes under the guise of this topic while having ulterior motives on a separate, equally volatile issue.

I firmly believe that if this article was truly meant to be an "investigation" into the allegations of the Albee sexual harassment case that there should have been an honest and forthright look into both sides of the complaints. The article only brings out the perspective of one view in

a many-faceted and complex issue. The only attempt that Mr. Richards has made to express the side of the other members involved in this situation was a brief one-liner at the very end of his article, stating how the three males that stand accused were either unavailable or made no comment. This fact should have been stated sooner in the article and should have been made clear to all readers. It was placed at the very end and left the readers to form a one-sided opinion of the situation.

Another point is that Mr. Richards was expressly asked not to write an article on this issue by Bard administration because of

the extreme sensitivity of these incidents, as was also the case in the hate crimes that occurred late last semester. I do not believe that the Bard administration had any intentions of forming a cover up on these incidents; I do believe however, that they did have the best interest of all parties involved when requesting that these incidents not be publicized while an investigation of the allegations was still being pursued. Instead he continues to "investigate" these allegations and uses the cover of the "Albee Sexual Harassment Allegations" to launch his attack of Bard administration.

Keeping all of the aforementioned things in mind, I think that it is only fair for all readers to re-evaluate their perceptions on the way that the news has been reported in the past and think about whether or not it has been justly, honestly and truthfully been portrayed to us. I myself cannot say that it has, and still strongly believe that this article leaves much to be desired in regards to factual information being relayed to its consumers. I mean honestly, this isn't an episode of Murphy Brown.

Revolution is Something that Starts...WITH YOU!!

"Revolution" means a sudden, radical or complete change. Thus, a revolutionary is someone who creates a total change in something.

When the word "revolutionary" is heard it immediately conjures up images of a fanatical person (or group) advocating the violent overthrow of government or the institution that symbolizes oppression. We picture someone delivering zealous speeches, passing out leftist material, engaging in social resistance, and living underground as being revolutionaries. On one level, all of the above is true. Yet, there is another level to being a revolutionary that precedes Molotov cocktails, subversive activity, and fiery rhetoric. That revolution is the one that begins with you!

The revolution that starts within

you is the most important revolution you will ever be involved in, because it requires making a radical and complete change internally. It means changing the way you think so that you change the way you act.

Revolution is about struggle, and our greatest struggle is resolving the contradictions in ourselves. Revolution is also sacrifice—meaning we must be willing to give up something in order to build something new.

The revolution that starts with

you is about preparation. When you enter a war you have to be prepared for ongoing battles, or expect to be crushed. Revolution starts

with consciousness because consciousness must precede progress. Preparation begins with defining your own reality—knowledge of yourself mentally, spiritually and emotionally;

knowledge of the enemy in all its visible and hidden forms. The revolution doesn't start with simply denouncing the government, but it starts with politicizing your mind,

because once the mind is politicized it can't be misused or manipulated.

The revolution starts when you stop straddling the fence—raising a clinched fist in the air while the other hand is stuck in bullshit. It starts when you clean yourself up and rid yourself of those vices that have been historically used as weapons against you, to keep you in a blind and inferior state. Revolution starts when you value and affirm yourself as a human being and stop making excuses for your bad habits and weaknesses. It begins when your top concern becomes what it is you're doing, not what someone else is doing.

Revolution begins when you find a higher purpose in life beyond material and superficial things. It

starts when you stop complaining and take the initiative to do something. It starts when you declare, "This is where I make my stand."

Revolution starts with self, and making a commitment to strive forward regardless of the odds, obstacles, or challenges. It starts when you realize there can be no revolution unless you evolve first.

Pro-WTO? Pro-UN Iraqi Sanctions? Pro-Stupid!

A response to the so-called "two-sided" Bard perspectives on Globalization, Iraq, and activism at large

JEFF FERGUSON
MICHAEL CHAMEIDES

Two hundred and fifty children are dying every day—500,000 in the past ten years—because of the U.S.-led sanctions on Iraq. The power of U.S. corporations to reap profit off disintegrating labor standards, the sale of genetically engineered crops, and the perpetuation of environmentally disastrous industrial practices grows unchecked throughout the developing world, largely because of the U.S.-driven free trade policies of the World Trade Organization.

While some Bard students find it necessary to take responsibility for the privileged position that they occupy within a social and political structure of inherent inequity and fight for social change—quite often outside of the clogged and compromised 'legitimate' channels of the system itself—other students have taken an anti-activist stance, defending the status quo against social change. In the past few weeks, Ty Lilja and Matthew Richards both wrote articles belittling activists, Lilja writing in favor of the sanctions on Iraq and Richards in favor of free trade and the WTO. In their arguments, the authors craft a narrative of unknowable and irrational, emotional activists, chided and oh-so-gently rebuked by the objective, reasonable, and intelligent authors.

Both Richards and Lilja argue that Bard students with certain political stances—presumably activists—are misguided, and perhaps a little stupid. Richards contends that students against the WTO have "los[t] touch with reality," and that their politics can be reduced to "conspiracy theory" springing from (dangerously fertile) "imagination." Further, recalling the time-worn anti-activist tripe that activists are 'communist dupes,' he suspects that anti-WTO activists have fallen for the "propaganda" of the WTO's "enemies." Lilja asserts that protest movements, because they are protest movements, require a "very

simple message," and uses this assertion to imply that protestors themselves are simple, because they are protestors.

Both authors create a relationship of necessity between political activism and ignorance. Lilja makes the pithy observation that a nuanced political analysis "just doesn't make a very good poster," thus using the holding of a protest sign as a stand-in for all aspects of political activism—metonymy disguised as a logical argument. Richards states that if anti-WTO activists "studied world trade more extensively and rigorously, they would probably lose their strong feelings in opposition to it." Here, again: opposition to the status quo arises from irrationality and emotion, and is dispelled by the clear light of scholarly inquiry.

In contrast to the childlike activists, the authors stake claim to a detached, non-political perspective, and claim to have objectively examined 'both' sides of the issues and—unlike activists—arrived at a reasoned position. Richards backs up his detached critic/emotional activist dichotomy with the exemplary anecdote of an 'International Economics' class that progressed from being "very suspicious of the WTO" to "almost unanimously in favor" after a few short months of study! Similarly, Lilja reports that he felt "no obligation to write something strictly in favor of the sanctions," but that "the correct approach was to study the conflicting claims," and come up with an "honest and accurate" assessment.

Without going any further, as critical and media-savvy readers, we should be skeptical of these claims to objectivity. No one is

completely objective: being anti-activist is a political position. The attempt to establish objectivity is a rhetorical device: it should be read as the attempt to secure a position of authority and de-legitimize the arguments of the opposition.

Richards and Lilja misrepresent activists, whether willfully or out of laziness (or perhaps distaste) and then accuse activists of oversimplifying the issues and living in a fantasy world.

From this authoritative vantage point, the authors oversimplify and falsely paint activist positions. Richards argues that anti-WTO activists are against trade itself. This misrepresentation, along with the conflation of "trade"—the buying and selling of commodities—with "free trade"—the enforced dismantling of 'barriers to trade' like labor and environmental standards—is either disingenuous or indicative of gross confusion and ignorance on the very subject the author advises activists to study 'more rigorously.' Lilja contends that anti-sanctions activists support Saddam Hussein. "Why... are Bard students supporting a regime that committed a genocidal campaign... and saying that they oppose genocide?" In the past year, activists have written 12 articles and held 10 teach-ins about these issues, and never indicated that they support Saddam Hussein, or are against all forms of trade. The students who organize on these issues are not hard to get ahold of, or in any way reticent on these topics—quite the contrary.

Richards and Lilja substantively misrepresent activists, whether willfully or out of laziness (or per-

haps distaste), and then accuse activists of oversimplifying the issues and living in a fantasy world. Richards and Lilja are right, the protest movements they describe are simplistic and confused. They exist, however, only in the fertile imaginations of Richards and Lilja themselves.

The authors' claims to objectivity and reasoned analysis seem to be crumbling. We can see that they are politically anti-activist and that they factually misrepresent the truth. When we investigate the authors' evidence for their positions, notions of objectivity become even more problematic. Richards completely avoids giving evidence for his position, leaving his support of the WTO an empty shell of semi-coherent anti-activist rhetoric. Lilja does much better than Richards, in as much as he gives a few pieces of evidence to support his claims. It is useful to enumerate his citations: (1) the UN website that has the text of the Oil for Food resolution, (2) U.S. State Department websites, and (3) the website of the Iraq Foundation, a 'Human Rights' organization funded by the U.S. State Department.

To test whether this revealed a bias in readily available information, or in the author, I devised a very modest and obvious research program. I used the

Yahoo! search engine to conduct an internet search on the phrase "UN Sanctions on Iraq." Of the thirteen websites that come up, one of them is indeed a State Department site. Another two are commercial news agencies. Nine of the thirteen are anti-sanctions sites. The very first website that comes up, "Voices in the Wilderness" <www.nonviolence.org/vitw/>, leads quickly to a page containing detailed information on World Health Organization reports and other critiques of the sanctions regime from highly legiti-

mate sources. The structure of Lilja's argument is revealed to be rather circular: "The protestor's critique of the U.S.-led sanctions is faulty, and to prove it I will refer to the official U.S. State Department documents." Perhaps the approach of "selective information and outright denial" is not the exclusive province of protest movements, as Lilja claims.

It is not difficult to find reasoned and credible anti-sanctions positions. The most obvious internet search will procure an abundance, from a variety of perspectives. The same, apparently, cannot be said of the pro-sanctions position. Yet, despite Lilja's resolution to objectively "study the conflicting claims," he felt constrained by his prior, pre-research, agreement "to write an article in support of the UN sanctions," and was thus obliged to exclusively quote the U.S. government. Richards, in turn, could easily have found credible and substantive arguments both for and against the WTO, but chose instead to simply give voice to an unexamined aversion to protest activity, very thinly veiled indeed as a 'critique' of anti-WTO activism.

Both Richards and Lilja demonstrate a disturbing distaste for the realities of the struggle for social change. From the abolition of slavery, to the legal recognition of organized labor, to the Civil Rights movement, to the struggle for women's equality, U.S. citizens have found it necessary to fight for social change outside of the institutionalized channels ostensibly provided for that purpose. There is no reason in the world to believe that this is somehow no longer necessary. To turn one's back on that aspect of the ongoing struggle for social justice is to deny that such struggle is necessary and endorse and embrace the structures of power and inequality that surround us globally, and here in the U.S., at Bard, support us.

Don Caballero, Putting the Rock Back in 'Post-Rock'

With *Fantastic American Don LP*, instrumental rock all-stars reinvent their trademark sound...yet again

CHUCK COMENOS

Mocking the humdrum, low-key introspected melancholy of their contemporaries, Don Caballero has since 1992 been almost solely responsible for keeping the word 'rock' a verb amongst 'post-rock' fans. Signed to Chicago's Touch and Go label, the band has in eight years evolved from a great instrumental metal band to something far more unique and fascinating.

The band's lineup is deceptively traditional. Damon Che's belligerent approach to the drum kit drives the entire beast and is largely responsible for the band's distinct sound and popularity. His creative use of the drums is perfectly complemented by guitarist Ian Williams, who ignores consonance and dissonance altogether and concentrates solely on texture. Pattern Morris helps rhythm and harmony realize a mutual understanding by filling the midrange with fast, treble heavy picked bass lines.

Don Caballero's first studio endeavor, entitled *For Respect*, was released in 1993 and presented the band as metal-for-those-who-were-sick-of-metal. Stripped down and loud, the album, although without much of the experimentation that later made the band famous, marks an important point of reference to which the group's later work often nods. Their second album, 1995's *2* is where the band really started shedding its insecurity and doing something different. *Dark and dissonant*, *2*, aside from being one of the best metal albums of the nineties, allowed all the members of the band to begin developing their trademark sounds. As they toured in support of this new album word spread about the strange group of men; and their even stranger music. The album was metal and jazz skillfully mated; talented musicians



Proptimus Prime: Don Caballero's new LP gets fly props version. Pictured above are Mike, Damon, and Ian. image from southern.com

accenting complex rhythmic compositions with syncopated drums and compelling guitar work. Although this album was received extremely well by fans and critics, it was three years until Caballero's next studio endeavor, 1998's *what burns never returns*, was released. When it did appear, though, fans found that, again, the band had completely reinvented itself, this time making an even greater transformation by leaving behind much of its metal influence to better develop the experimental aspects that had been hinted at on the previous album. William's guitar lines had almost completely deconstructed themselves into chirps and whines while Che and Morris took the rhythmic complexity up yet another notch to keep it all strangely cohesive. Rarely does a rock album experiment so boldly and

achieve such accessibility as this album did. what burns never returns solidified the band in the eyes of a quickly growing audience and showed a great many that just because you're smart, it doesn't mean you're boring. Those who knew the album existed loved it, and a cult-like appreciation for this unknown band that had twice reinvented itself quickly started.

Now it's the year 2000 and Don Caballero has decided to release another album, this time naming it *American Don*, and, again, trading in many of their characteristically Caballero-like mannerisms for something subtly different. This difference is not just because guitarist Mike Bandfield is no longer on the team; there also seems a lull in the band's once voracious appetite for chaos. Whereas the Don once, very consciously, tried to

dismantle the pleasantries of kicking ass, on this new album they smile and shake your hand almost as if none of that had ever happened. Important in this evolution is that recently both guitarist Williams and bassist Morris have added digital delay pedals to the mix, and the liberal use of both is at least partly responsible for the band's new texture. No more power-chords here, the new caballero plucks and taps itself along completely transcending its riff-obsessed adolescence. This is sometimes good, sometimes not so good. While songs like "fire back about your new baby's sex" and "let's face it pal, you didn't need that eye surgery" twang with all the zeal of the lost Caballero, songs like "the peter criss jazz" and "ones all over the place" articulate an apathy that some might find unbecom-

ing. Mr. Che in particular has put an end to his youthful fascination with chops and taken a mature, more, dare I say, "groove" oriented approach to the mathematics of the beast. Gone are the days of percussion-fueled time signature changes: mature Caballero won't have such showy displays of ability. Instead the songs seem more concerned with keeping clean and low-key, a new approach that is well communicated by songs like "a lot of people tell me I have a fake British accent", where the same four/four groove lasts almost all of the song's five minutes.

There is no doubt that this new approach to songwriting will bother Don Caballero purists, who might fearfully note that the new album sounds dangerously close to the multitude of other boring instrumental albums that seem so popular recently. While there is a chance that the band has given up trying to separate itself from the rest of the pack, I feel that to make such a hasty judgment denies the band members the credit they should receive for having managed to avoid this pitfall so far. *American Don* is still better than ninety-nine percent of all the other music being produced today (independently released or not), and has at least four or five amazing tracks. Although maybe not quite what some of us were looking for in the newest recording, this album has once again raised my expectations for any band that considers itself innovative or experimental. Anyone who considers themselves a lover of rock music should go as far out of their way as necessary to get their hands on a copy.

American Don is out now on Touch & Go Records. Don Caballero plays the Knitting Factory in NYC November 16.

Granddaddy Beats up Radiohead too their new cd reviewed, also

TOSH CHIANG

The Sophtware Slump, Granddaddy's most recent release, is a great example of a band polishing its style off. And in an era saturated by hybrid electronic/rock groups, it's nice to know that some still do it right. All too often we hear bands that use too many textures and electronic gizmos; what comes of this sounds like mud. And if any of you caught Pixel Tan while waiting for Melt-Banana in the Old Gym last month, then you know what I mean. But anyways, Granddaddy's *The Sophtware Slump* is crisp and refreshing and, at times, it's even a testament to what can be achieved in the indie-pop rock genre.

The only problem with this album is the first song, a sparkling track but just too damn long. By minute four I ask myself, "Why the hell didn't they cut it now!?" It's just too tedious-stretching on to nine minutes. But still, it's the only song on the album that I sometimes skip-it just angers me that Granddaddy plays so well on the rest of the album. Most of the other



Who's Joe Granddaddy?! These guys are a full-out, turbine engine power boosted onslaught of 100% pure, undiluted, rockin, "smackin' your rock-hungry ass six amazing ways to Sunday" intensity! Shit Baby, God-Damn!

songs on the album are wonderfully surreal, well done. The drum rolls, even though they're just drum rolls, on "Hewlett's Daughter," are kick ass bursts of beats. And the melodic, new wavish hooks on "The Crystal Lake" make the song a real jewel; it should have been on a *Morning Eclectic* compilation. Another good tune is "Jed's Other Poem," which uses one hell of a

heartfelt synth progression (it feels weird to say that about a synth but here it's true). The unique tones Granddaddy uses on this album are also vintage and well placed, and the album in general is excellently produced.

Vocals and poetical lyrics also contribute a great deal to *The Sophtware Slump*. Concerned with our increasingly electronic lives in

the year 2000 (as the title may suggest), leadman Jason Lytle has a lot to say. His voice is soft, breathy and yet projecting; he sings how he should in this band. "So You'll Aim Toward the Sky" is an excellent example of Lytle's adeptness here, specifically with the ballads that mark the album.

The Sophtware Slump is a bit reminiscent of Radiohead's *Kid A*--though Granddaddy's album predated Radiohead's new sound. And like *Kid A*, *The Sophtware Slump* is ambient yet catchy, though maybe more energetic and coherent. (I'm trying to get all you uppity Radiohead kids into this band if you can't already tell. And for those who are already familiar with

Granddaddy, their new LP should come as no surprise in terms of its quality).

Though Granddaddy first busted onto the scene with the lo-fi *Complex Party Come Along Theories*, they didn't get much significant praise--unless you count their being compared to Pavement--

The unique tones Granddaddy uses on this album are vintage and well placed...

until the release of 1997's *Under the Western Freeway*, an album which cemented their reputation in the minds of many critics and led to their deal with V2 records. Recently they've also been compared to Elf Power and Super Furry

Animals; both of whom have new albums out now. In fact I'll sneak in a vote for Elf Power's *The Winter is Coming*. But aside from that, you'll just have to settle for the excellent craftsmanship embodied in *The Software Slump*.

Godspeed You Black Emperor! and the Art of Imperfection

Kranky and Constellation release long-anticipated Lift Yr. Skinny Fists like Antennas to Heaven on Double CD and Double LP respectively. Album shows developing maturity for the nine-plus piece minimalist rock group

TYLER DROSDECK

With all of the construction going on right outside my window, just about the only pleasant experience I've had recently has been listening to *Lift Yr. Skinny Fists like Antennas to Heaven*, the new Godspeed You Black Emperor! record. The sun goes down in the late afternoon, but the rumbling of drills and machinery continues for at least an hour. Those hours have produced inside me a greater appreciation for this group than I have ever felt before. There is something comfortingly utilitarian about the music that the nine (or more) members of this group create: mumbles of voices that pass by and the low rumbles of construction that push through the slit in my window help define the experience of this music. And to say so is not to be unfaithful to the nature of Godspeed's music, I don't think. Much to these talented ensemble's credit, they usually succeed in their lofty aspirations.

Some have called this musique concrète, and I guess that's what it is--the work stands as nothing more than a document really, like a photograph, a slice of time caught in its motion. And this being so, I'm not going to try to label this record as "the best record of the year" or compare it to Radiohead's *Kid A* because I would be ignorantly missing the point of everything Godspeed is trying to say. We should not forget that Godspeed, as a group, is as human, as much of a living, breathing entity as is each of its members--and so just as inclined towards, and susceptible to, imperfection.

Predictably, Godspeed lives for the excitement of live performance. Since their humble beginnings as a two-piece in 1993, the band has expanded to its present size. As such, they have developed a live

sound that, like their recordings, shifts between lulling drones, guitar slides, and sparse wails of cello and violin to swells of powerful, determined rhythms. In interviews, they have made the claim that their music is designed to be played at loud volume and after playing their new record as loud as possible it's hard to disagree. With so many musicians playing at once the group finds some near-miraculous way to control their density. The band's personal outlook on their live performance addresses this issue. Guitarist Efrim Menuck, in an interview with *Making Music*, once said: "Sometimes when we're onstage it feels like I have this huge hose which we're squirting all around. Sometimes it can be directed with more precision, and others it's too powerful to control."

And, keeping this in mind, we are able to put *Lift Yr. Skinny Fists*...into a certain context: one defined by the contrast between live performance and studio recording. Thus far, this album is perhaps the best "studio" record we have of this band, for several reasons. For one, the group's studio sense has sharpened. The first and best piece, "Storm," is perhaps the clearest example of this. Over the initial murkiness of horns (which soon disappear), strings and jangly guitars reach higher and higher until they climax into a sort of twisted patriotic march led by snare drum rolls and the return of blaring horns. As is usually the case with Godspeed records, the pieces are divided into several parts. This first piece is most successful because it is the most diverse of the four, chord progressions are less predictable, and the dynamics vary more from the method of composition which marked Godspeed's previous recordings, based mostly on an idea of 'soft part then loud part'.



"Static," the second piece, highlights an advantage the group has had while recording in a studio which is the ability to incorporate a vast amount of field recordings. Studio recording has given the band the opportunity to arrange a large quantity of texts, and noises that they have allegedly recorded while on tour. Some parts suffer from the inclusion of recorded texts: the evangelist's voice in "Chart #3", for example, doesn't seem to add anything to the overall effect of the composition. On the other hand, "Murray Ostril (They Don't Sleep on the Beach Anymore," the opening to the second disc, works well. Ostril's short monologue about Coney Island sets an interesting mood of desolation for the instrumentation to follow.

In a way, this record's flaws make it most appealing.

Godspeed's last studio recording, *Slow Riot for New Zero Kanada*, was a less interesting work, it would seem, for the absence of such flaws. That EP felt more polished, less inviting to the sort of uneasiness that makes the band as exciting as it is. I've purposefully left the second disc of this album almost untouched for this very reason. In my mind, the second disc of the record, which their label claims works as a "discrete or extended unit of work", is better at taking risks. Full-on parts like "Monheim" and "Antennas to Heaven" are obvious knockouts, but the drones that weave throughout the disc are equally captivating. Caught between the subtlety of sustained drones and energy of full volume, then, Godspeed is best defined. Yes it's true that they tend to stick to a rather predictable song-

writing style and often not-so-innovative chord stylings, and therein lies the danger in calling Godspeed You Black Emperor!, as one journalist has, "the last important group of the 20th century." Godspeed lives in its own imperfection. They are about pain, they are about hope, they are about playing for too long, they are about not playing for long enough, they are about faking it, and they are about making beautiful music. They are about an experience, so go experience it. *Godspeed You Black Emperor!* is scheduled to make an appearance at Bard College on Saturday, December 9. Please go see them, and sit in front or next to them.

She's Not Cho Ordinary Stand-up Comedienne

Margaret Cho's, I'm the One that I Want, a routine about lesbians, sluts, and oral sex, plays at Upstate Films

DAN HUDAK

We've seen raunchy stand up comedy before. Eddie Murphy, George Carlin, Sam Kinison, and Richard Pryor (among others) have all talked about sex, drugs, alcohol, their families, society, and race many times up on stage. What makes each of them funny is their own unique ability to present the material in a fresh way with their own perspective. They all share another quality as well: by personalizing the material, they give the audience something to relate to and, consequently, the ability for one to laugh at oneself.

Margaret Cho's *I'm the One That I Want* falls into a similar vein. Cho opens her 100-minute stand-up routine by talking about PETA, then proceeds to discuss fashion, gays, dating, racial discrimination, her family, and Hollywood bureaucracy in what is a very lively and funny film.

But where Cho excels is not



It's Funny Because It's True: What is also very funny is the idea of bashing in Jeff Goldblum's fucking face with a bright purple iMac computer.

necessarily in the shock value of what she says; rather, it is in her actions and mannerisms as she acts

out assorted material. For example, citing lack of experience in her first lesbian encounter, she takes on a motion similar to the swimming butterfly stroke upon going down on her partner. What sells the action is not just the motion of the arms and face, it is the eyes that get bigger, the mouth that inhales in and out, and the overall body language signaling her being completely lost and unaware of what to do. This is funny on two levels: on one we are able to laugh at her discomfort in the situation, and on another, though we may not want to admit it, the awkwardness and unfamiliarity of our own first encounter with oral sex. Cho is also smart in that she structures her comedy to question the inherent values of society in such a subtle way it is easy to overlook.

When further discussing said lesbian experience, she comments on her realization that she is not a lesbian, she's a slut. She then asks: "Where's my slut parade?" Is she

saying gay pride parades are ridiculous and unnecessary? Would she really want to parade around with other sluts? Both are unlikely, but it does vaguely suggest that many groups and organizations do feel reverse discriminated against, yet the idea of conducting themselves in a way similar to what the 'minorities' are doing would be heavily frowned upon.

As the title suggests, Cho discusses herself very honestly throughout. The personalization of material is essential to any comic's routine--after all, whom else do they know better to talk about a themselves? This method is effective for Cho, but it also leads her into trouble. She talks at length about being forced to lose weight before filming her television show (*All American Girl*), about her alcoholism and drug addictions that followed the cancellation of her show, about the discrimination her mother faced coming to America as a Korean, and about how much she

loves her grandfather.

Though these segments lead into very funny material, Cho nonetheless gets a little too embellished in sharing these personal stories that break the pace of the comedy and serve as too much distraction from the laughter. Filmed stand-up concerts don't have time for moral messages and self-explorations that aren't funny. They are what one would call 'dead air', which to a comedy can be devastating.

Luckily there isn't very much 'dead air'. After bouts of being too preachy, Cho wastes no time making you laugh, and laugh hard, once again. Cho may not have surpassed what Murphy and Pryor have been able to perfect, but she is right up there. And if you do yourself the favor of thinking beyond the initial visceral stimulation, it will be even funnier.