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Interview: Edward Said on Humanism and Emerging New Paradigms

Columbia scholar to receive award and give lecture in Annandale

KERRY CHANCE

Edward Said has remarked, "One of the most important roles played by the intellectual is that of an oppositional critic of power." From his academic and political engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to his cultural critiques locating modes of Western hegemony, Said has complicated and brought closer the roles of the radical intellectual and the political actor.

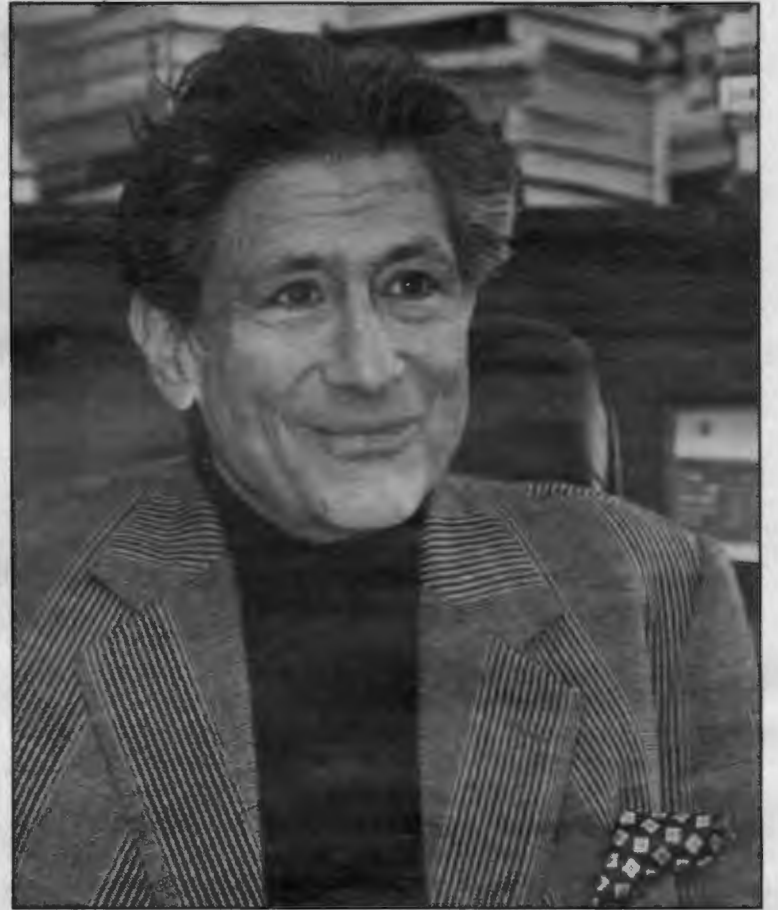
On February 14th, Bard will present Said with the Charles Flint Kellogg Award in Arts and Letters for his contributions to cultural and literary criticism. Said is the author of over 20 books, including: *Orientalism*; *The Question of Palestine*; *Culture and Imperialism*; his recent work *The*

Edward Said Reader, and others. The award presentation will be followed by a lecture by Said entitled "The Relevance of Humanism." In the following interview, Said discusses past work, present political conflicts, and his perspectives on humanism. Said has lived out his conception of the 'secular critic,' remaining conscious of the protocols of the 'dominant cultures' in which he functions, while interrogating the relations of power surrounding them.

Free Press: You said in an interview, (*The Edward Said Reader*, July/Aug. 1999) that starting with imperialism in the nineteenth century, the whole global scene has been increasingly becoming one economic unit. Considering that, and the problems with the applica-

tion of humanism's universal concepts, could you answer your own question, "What kind of humanism is possible?"

Edward Said: Well I think the difficulty to begin with is that humanism in many ways is really quite discredited because it has participated in, for example, systems like apartheid and colonialism and that were exported to the non-European world by European thinkers and powers, who thought they were doing humanism's work - civilizing the natives and bringing the benefits of Western technology to the peripheries. And of course in this process they brought things like racial discrimination and racial hierarchies and systems of exploitation, that were done in the interests of a humanism that said, 'We are the see Said on page 12...



E.Said, She Said: Literary and cultural critic sits happily at his desk..

A Semester of Realism

Bard Launches Program on International Affairs in New York City

CODY STINE

Starting next fall, Bard will be offering a program in New York City for students interested in international affairs and globalization.

Directed by Bard Professor James Chace, "Bard in New York City" will attempt to integrate academic study in international affairs with practical, hands-on applications of the subjects studied.

Students in the program will take seminars in a wide range of topics related to international affairs. At the same time, students will participate in internships at a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations in New York City, the American epicenter of global affairs.

The faculty of Bard in New York City will be dynamic, varying from semester to semester. The faculty will be comprised of both Bard professors -- Thomas Keenan, Sanjib Baruah, and Prof. Chase are among those teaching in the first semester -- and various academics and professionals

from fields related to international affairs. There will also be a regular series of guest lectures given by prominent figures in global affairs.

The curriculum will be similarly dynamic: some possible seminar topics include international justice, international journalism, ethics and international affairs, women and the new global economy, and global environmental issues. Course offerings will vary from semester to semester, as will the professors.

The program is open to upper college students from Bard and institutions around the world...but enrollment is limited to 20 students per semester.

Students accepted into the program will choose between taking four seminars or taking three seminars and an internship.

Students who choose an internship will also take a tutorial relating to their internship, and will prepare an academic paper at the end of the semester about their internship experiences. Because of the flexible curriculum, students can enroll for one or two semesters.

Students in the program will be housed and will take classes in a building on West 58th Street in see *Bard in NYC* on page 3...

B & G Agrees to New Contract

The deal, described as fair, includes a wage increase, medical coverage options, and more vacation for Buildings & Ground workers

GILLIAN MEANS

B&G workers won big when they finished eight-month long negotiations with the College during Intercession. Union leaders believe this agreement will make it possible to get everything they want when the contract comes up again in three years.

Vice President for Administration Jim Brudvig considered the negotiations the longest of his career.

The union representing Buildings and Grounds workers, Service Employees International Union Local 200D, started contract negotiations with the College in May 2000. They were concluded just a few weeks before school resumed this January.

Rumors had been spreading around Bard that B&G employees were on the verge of striking. Brudvig said, "I too heard they were disgruntled about the process taking so long."

After union members rejected a contract offered in December, the two sides went back to the table and tried a different approach.

"We used the resources of a state mediator for one day and through that mediation process we were able to get a contract," said Brudvig. Workers ratified it not long afterward.

Michael Lonigro, Organizer for the Local 200D, said he set higher

than normal expectations for this contract and anticipated it would go past the expected date.

He said, "The bargaining unit and members on campus deserved some action." The approach worked; the union aimed high and "made a lot of strong gains."

Those gains were:

- A wage increase over three years far above the national average;
- Improved longevity pay, back-dated to the time of hire, so that workers earn more the longer they have worked for the College;
- Single employees being allowed to buy out of their health plans for an additional \$600 a year if they have other medical coverage. The money the college saves will go toward other workers' family health insurance;
- Establishment of a "humanitarian sick bank," which allows workers to transfer sick time to seriously ill coworkers;
- The ability to use sick and vacation time in two-hour increments;

- An extra week of vacation (totaling five weeks) for workers having been employed for over 20 years; and
- An additional paid holiday, Veteran's Day.

This is a better than average settlement, according to Lonigro. He expects the next negotiations (in three years) to bring the fulfillment of all the workers' demands. Speaking for the College, Brudvig commented, "We're pleased it is a good agreement and that a long process has come to an end... It [the contract] offers them real increases and some help on the benefits side of their compensation packages."

Lonigro emphasized that such significant advances could not have been made without the support of Bard students. If ever needed, students should feel free to call on the union.

Lonigro emphasized that such significant advances could not have been made without the support of Bard students. If ever needed, students should feel free to call on the union.

The contract could be best summed up by both sides as "fair."

Catastrophe strikes Gujarat, India

Earthquake leaves millions devastated, international community works to pick up the pieces

SHANKAR GOPALAKRISHNAN

On the morning of January 26th, at approximately 8:45 am, a massive earthquake struck the western state of Gujarat in India. Releasing energy approximately equivalent to 300 times the explosion at Hiroshima, the earthquake's epicenter was less than 20 kilometers away from the large cities of Bhuj and Gandhidham, and only a little over a hundred and fifty kilometers away from the state capital of Ahmedabad.

Tremors from the quake, the largest to strike India in fifty years, were felt across the entire subcontinent - roughly equivalent to feeling tremors from a Los Angeles quake in Arizona.

The quake was the first significant one to strike the region in nearly two centuries. Building codes were not designed for quake-proofing and were in any case inadequately enforced. Within minutes buildings in Bhuj, Ahmedabad, Bhachau, Gandhidham, and multiple smaller towns had collapsed. A schoolchildren's Republic Day march in Bhuj was crushed to death as a cascade of concrete rained down on them, killing some four hundred children and twenty of their teachers. Communications systems went silent as buildings cut off telephone wires and downed radio towers. Nearly half of Bhuj, the largest city in the neighborhood of the epicentre, was flattened within a few minutes.

The lack of communications meant that the state and federal governments were not initially aware of the scale of the earthquake. At noon emergency meetings were held in Ahmedabad and Delhi as the level of devastation became apparent. Relief efforts were hampered, however, by the crippling of the local administration; officials were almost all either hurt themselves or searching for relatives and loved ones. As damage assessment was taken over by the state government later in the afternoon and it became clear that this was the most devastating earthquake since Independence, relief actions slowly began to coordinate.

By evening the Indian armed forces, traditionally the last resort for relief efforts, were in action, with South-Western Air Command airlifting doctors and medicine to

affected areas. The Union Cabinet met at 5 pm to review the extent of the disaster and ordered transport of 4,500 Army troops to the affected region to assist rescuers. With the local administration all but destroyed, the armed forces were to become the nerve center of search and rescue and relief operations.

By the end of the day, the quake was also international news. United Nations' staff officers in Delhi pledged the services of their agencies in the relief effort. Within 24 hours of the quake search and rescue teams from Mexico, Turkey, Japan, Russia, Switzerland, and the UK were on their way to India, though the Indian government had not formally requested international help.

In the following days the relief effort expanded to become one of the largest in Indian history. A total of some 23,000 troops were eventually deployed to help. By government estimates, 448 Indian voluntary organizations were active in the rescue and relief efforts, and aid poured in from the rest of the country in an unprecedented rush of charitable giving. Assistance was eventually received from 44 different countries, including India's regional neighbor and historical rival Pakistan.

The rescue efforts produced several inspiring successes. Army rescue teams saved some 420 people from collapsed buildings, and international teams found another 23. Nevertheless, those saved were only a drop in the bucket in terms of those who had died.

Devastation

The latest government total stands at 16,428 bodies found, of which some 14,000 were in Bhuj district alone. The estimated death toll now stands at 25,000 - 30,000, though the Defence Minister caused controversy last week when he said the toll may climb to as high as 100,000. The minister subsequently withdrew his statement.

After the end of the rescue phase efforts have begun to focus on rehabilitation of quake survivors and on rebuilding their lives. The UN Office for Coordination of



Humanitarian Affairs estimated that some 1.25 million people have been rendered homeless by the quake. In alliance with the Red Cross the Indian government has been building tent cities and other temporary housing for up to 600,000 people. In the cold Gujarat climate at this time of year, the lack of shelter is rapidly becoming the most pressing need.

Food and aid distribution has been concentrated in the cities, which by government estimates are now secure in terms of food and water supply. Outlying villages, some of which are still cut off from main roads, have received less aid, and there have been increasing efforts to locate areas that may have been left out.

Other indices of life have also been slowly returning to normal. According to government estimates 92% of electricity feeders (transformers) in the Bhuj-Kutch district have been restored. Power supply has been restored in 892 of the 925 estimated affected villages. Piped water has been restored to nine major towns and 811 of the vil-

lages. Tankers are attempting to fulfill water needs in other areas in the earthquake zone.

This week the last international search and rescue teams gave up hope and returned home. A brother and sister couple, found by Border Security Force rescuers this weekend, are believed to be the last quake survivors.

Criticism

As the weeks have passed since the quake, criticism has also built up, most of it directed at the Indian government. Relief agencies and news media have accused the government of being slow to react to the quake. They also point to the disorganized distribution of aid and relief in the affected areas, including the huge piles of aid that are stuck at airports and transport stops due to inadequate transportation. Some papers in the Indian press have also been sharply critical of the government's distribution plans, pointing out that they have paid too much attention to cities and too little to outlying areas.

In a speech last week, Prime Minister Vajpayee defended his government's record, admitting to delays in the first day but arguing that the aid effort had mobilized remarkably fast. Other relief agencies have also come to the government's defense. A Red Cross spokeswoman last week said she believed that "if

the same disaster happened in Europe you would have a similar situation." An Israeli medical officer agreed, saying, "Usually a government can never take proper care in such a huge disaster." Government officials have agreed that coordination is a problem, but offer as defense the "mind-boggling" nature of the devastation and destruction wrought by the earthquake.

Other criticism has focused on the extremely inadequate enforcement of building standards. The Ministry of Urban Planning and Development last week put out an angry release saying that it had notified state governments of the need for quake proofing over two years ago; the new guidelines were largely ignored. There has been talk at both the Central and State levels of prosecuting builders who violated housing regulations. Such efforts have remained in the background, however, as the relief effort has taken centre stage in the media and political spheres.

Rehabilitation

In the meantime efforts to rebuild go on. The area's medical facilities were so completely wrecked that it is anticipated that Red Cross, Israeli, and Indian military field hospitals may serve as main medical centres for several more weeks. Some aid agencies have been making plans to remain in the area for up to a year to assist government efforts at housing and rehabilitation. Some 7,500 schools have to be rebuilt, hospitals and primary health care centers have to be reconstructed from rubble, and housing has to be reconstructed for the homeless.

The quake is estimated to have damaged over 3 billion dollars worth of property. There have been long-term predictions of damage to the Indian economy as a whole both from the devastation of the quake itself, which struck one of the industrial and agricultural heartlands of the country, and from the massive funds that have had to be diverted to relief efforts.

Finally, in an area often forgotten in the midst of emergencies, some relief efforts have begun to address the psychological consequences of the disaster. A few psychiatrists and therapists have begun to try and treat those who lost loved ones. One local psychiatrist described how many quake-affected children will now no longer sleep under roofs and display the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

But there were not many psychiatrists in Bhuj district in the first place; now it is unlikely that there will ever be enough. Even with the massive flow of aid and reconstruction, some wounds from this quake will never heal.

The latest government total stands at 16,428 bodies found, of which some 14,000 were in Bhuj district alone. The estimated death toll now stands at 25,000

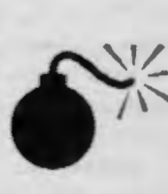
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Bard Students Trek to Thailand

Working in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, TLS volunteers in Chiang Mai province

AMBER BUCHHOLZ

This winter vacation, eleven Bard students, led by Prakirati (Biek) Satasut and joined by TLS director Paul Marienthal, worked in partnership with Habitat For Humanity to build a house in Chiang Mai, a remote region of northern Thailand.

"I thought this would be a good thing to do for my country," said Biek. "I especially liked the 'hands-on' aspect of Habitat For Humanity. The psychological effect for everyone involved is much more positive than giving money or handouts. We worked hard to raise the money to go, and once we got there we worked even harder to build the house."

Hard almost seems like an understatement. Talking to Biek about the process of grant writing and fund raising, tireless seems like a more appropriate word. Still, Biek is modest about his role.

"I just want to get the word out there that I'm so thankful to everyone who made this possible," he said. "Every little bit helped. For example, every dollar Bard students spent on our 'Brownies for Thailand' fundraiser helped us to contribute about \$300 to a project to help feed schoolchildren, run by a monastery near the town we were working in."

The Bard volunteers were only able to spend three weeks in Thailand, so time was short. After a seemingly endless plane trip, followed by a twelve-hour train ride into the mountains, the volunteers virtually put down their luggage and picked up a shovel the moment they arrived in Chiang Mai.

"Everyone on the trip was wonderful. Everyone was focused on



Sweatin' it: Bardians build house.

the task at hand, and kept a very selfless and diligent attitude. On top of the exhausting work, like digging a foundation in soil that was basically rock and clay, the students had to deal with adjusting to their surroundings. I think it was different for me, because I was born there, but other students had to struggle to establish their place in a completely foreign environment."

The project was a complete success, however, and an even larger plan is in the works. "Next year, we're going to build a whole frikken school, man!" said Biek, his eyes lighting up.

Biek has partnered up with Vincent Valdmantis, and the two of them are planning to organize next winter's trip independently of Habitat For Humanity. Valdmantis has already launched a massive grant-writing campaign, and Biek is working closely with his connections in Thailand, including a construction company who he hopes will help draw up the blueprints and donate labor to the project. The school will be located in the Chiang Rai province, another rural loca-

tion, near the border with Laos.

"They desperately need a school up there," explained Biek. "Once we build one, the government will send up some teachers and the local kids can get an education."

The schoolhouse will serve children from nursery school up to sixth grade, an age where many children have to abandon their studies to help their families. Other children will have the option of traveling to a nearby city, where they can trade work for room and board at a monastery while they continue their education.

Biek and his fellow volunteers are planning a presentation of their trip that will be open to the entire Bard community. Biek is also looking for about five more Bard students to volunteer for the trip next winter, so anyone interested in either making the trip, or just finding out more about what the experience was like, is encouraged to attend.

Information for the event will be available soon.

New Status for College

American Council on Education re-ranks Bard

VINCENT VALDMANIS

Bard has seen its selectivity ranking increase to its highest level ever in an annual study of college freshman. The American Council on Education now lists Bard as "very highly selective" in a stratification cell that includes Amherst, Dartmouth, and Middlebury colleges.

Selectivity ratings in the study are based solely on SAT scores of first year students. A combined test score average of 1250 is the base threshold for the "very highly selective" category. The UCLA-based American Council on Education last ranked the 1,500 participating institutions in its study in 1977. At that time, Bard was placed in the "highly selective" category.

"It's no big deal really," said

Dean Stuart Levine, "because the reclassification takes place on grounds we don't believe in." The College does not require SAT scores on its application and national rankings mean little to Bard students. Responding to the annual freshman survey, only two percent of incoming first-years said national ranking was one of the reasons it was important to go here. Nationally, 22 percent of first year students say a college's rank is an important factor in their final decision.

Slightly over half of the four year colleges in the study changed stratification cells. Bard's previous category contained 78 institutions; along with Bard, ten other colleges moved to the "very highly selective" category. Fifty-one institutions are in this cell.

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R E D H O O K

New Developments in Housing

Construction continues on Main and North Campus

GILLIAN MEANS

With the opening of the New Toasters and the continued construction of the Green Dorms, the beginning of the semester has introduced new problems and solutions in housing.

As far as making the New Toasters livable, Vice President for Administration Jim Brudvig said, "It was right to the eleventh hour." Many students had to stay temporarily in the Ravines until the rooms were completed.

Even now, work remains. Some exterior construction, such as on the stair towers, will be completed within the coming weeks. Part of the process is to have the architect go through the dorms and make a "punch list." It is a list of problems and features to address; Brudvig expects it to be a short one.

In the last weeks of January, there were a number of glitches, but not all as extreme as some may have heard. For instance, it is true that some of the furniture had to be dismantled to be fit in the rooms, but bookcases and closets were not

sawed down to fit through the doors.

Brudvig said of the final weeks of construction, "It was like a three-ring circus." Workers were scattered attempting to bring it all together. The coordination was truly incredible, though, according to Brudvig. He credits the Melaney Corporation and Richard Griffiths, Director of the Physical Plant, with having organized what Brudvig believes was, everything considered, a 'successful' project.

Completion of landscaping and the road behind the New Toasters will have to wait until the weather improves, though. They are aiming to have them done before May 1 this year.

The next dorms to come up are the Green Dorms, officially called the Village Dorms. Phase 1, which will create 112 new beds, is on schedule for opening before the Fall 2001 semester. Spring 2002 is expected to bring the completion of Phase 2, adding some 85 more spaces.

With new dorms going up, how-



Green Dorms: Marked progress on mid-campus housing.

ever, old ones are being taken offline. At this point, Albee is not expected to be a part of room draw for next year. It is scheduled to be a part of the new science building, which is still in the planning stages.

Brudvig emphasized that, in case something does go wrong with the Village Dorm construction, they would have a contingency plan. Albee and the Studio Dorms are on

the current list of possible emergency housing options.

Fans of Albee do not have to worry about it being incorporated into the new science complex yet, though. Funding and design are still in such early stages that a start date has not even been set.

Bard in NYC

...continued from page one

New York. Classes will be held in the late afternoon to allow students to participate in internships during the day (The Nation magazine, Lehman Brothers, the Council on Global Affairs are among the possibilities).

The program is open to upper college students from Bard and institutions around the world, and is geared toward students with a background in social studies. Enrollment is limited to 20 students per semester. Admissions will be rolling, but preference is given to Bard students who apply before March 20. Most financial aid will be applicable to the Bard in New York program.

An informational meeting will be held sometime in late February. For more information, students can contact Dean Jonathan Becker or Prof. James Chace.

Bard Brings the Noise in Wash.

Community travels to DC, uniting against GW

VINCENT VALDMANIS

Bard students made a show of force last month at the inauguration of George W. Bush. Among the thousands in Washington to protest were approximately one hundred Bardians, including administrators and professors, as well as distraught students. Vans were arranged for departure from the Hudson Valley



region and plans were prepared already at the end of the semester, despite truncated preparation due to the extraordinarily late outcome of the presidential race.

Laila Thompkinson, a Bard sophomore, said the security presence in Washington was remarkable. Measures taken to ensure a g a i n s t u n s c h e d u l e d disruptions of the day included aerial surveillance by Army helicopters, the deployment of Federal Marshals, FBI agents, 1,600 state troopers from Maryland and Virginia, and every Washington D.C. police officer. Secret Service agents, some dressed as protesters, mingled with the crowds. Earlier in the week the Secret Service conducted a practice attack on the Presidential motor-

cade in anticipation of what was expected to be the largest inaugural protest since Richard Nixon took office in 1973. There were four arrests.

Elsewhere in the country, 10,000 demonstrated on the West Coast. Bard student Ken Macleish protested in San Francisco and was struck by the atmosphere of solidarity between demonstrators.

Earlier in the week the Secret Service conducted a practice attack on the Presidential motorcade in anticipation of what was expected to be the largest inaugural protest since Richard Nixon took office in 1973.

"There was a broad variety of people there, definitely more than at typical progressive demonstrations," he said. "There wasn't a lot of tension."

As in Washington, protesters represented a wide spectrum of groups, from Green Party voters to anarchists to Democrats to feminists and gay rights activists. Inaugural protesters around the



country were united in their anger with the outcome of the election.

"Although we represent different constituencies we are finding that we share a number of concerns, especially outrage about the trampling of the electoral process and the disenfranchisement of voters," said Les Souci, an organizer of the group Voter March, which is pushing for campaign finance reform and a Voter's Bill of Rights.

Several major activist groups called for nonviolent action, including the National Organization for Women and Al Sharpton's National Action Network. Despite the call for a "Day of Resistance," however,

protestors succeeded little in peacefully disrupting the proceedings of inauguration day.

Nevertheless, Bard students who went felt it was an important gesture. Protesters were often seen carrying signs reading "Hail to the Thief," referring to Florida's vote-count debacle and Bush's victory decided by a divided Supreme Court. With the outcome so close and the electorate split, it was important, they pointed out, to show Bush's apparent lack of a popular mandate and not let the world forget of the extraordinary narrowness of the 2000 presidential election.

Students Journey to Kenya to Research Ecology

National Science Foundation Grant enables research in the African savannah

AMBER BUCHHOLZ

Over intersession, Bard students spent three weeks in Kenya conducting research funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The trip was preceded by a semester-long training course, under the guidance of new ecology professor Felicia Keesing, on the ecology of the African Savanna. The students arrived in Nairobi on December 28, before heading to the Mpala Research Center in central Kenya's Laikipia District. The seven sophomores and juniors were chosen in September for the trip; Laura Gordon, Meagan Leatherbury, Derrick Mead, Gillian Means, Erin Norman, and Margey Shaw.

During their stay, students had the opportunity to conduct their own research projects on a wide array of topics, ranging from the eating and burrowing habits of small mammals to the

interaction of insects and birds with their habitats. The results of the students' projects will contribute to the scientific community's understanding of Kenya's ecosystems. The NSF grant provides funding for Keesing to conduct research on the students as they pursue their independent projects in the savanna.

The trip not only enabled participants to research the environment, but also provided them with the opportunity to gain perspective on some of the dynamics of Kenya's social systems. Although some found it disturbing to observe that much of their culture still reflects remnants of colonialism, overall the students were grateful for the time they spent getting to know people from all walks of life. As one participant on the trip, Gillian Means, put it, "The science is why we went, but our best memories are of the people there."



Pictured: Margey Shaw and Meagan Leatherbury ham it up.

FL. Pollution Study Focuses on 'Gators

Reproductive biologist Louis Guillette uncovers alligator infertility on the rise

GILLIAN MEANS

Louis J. Guillette spoke Saturday in Bard's Distinguished Scientist Lecture Series about a subject especially pertinent to the Hudson Valley at present. "Alligator Tales: New Lessons about Environmental Contamination" focused on the effects that numerous commercial products can have on ecosystem, animal, and human health.

He was inspired early on by Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us*, a geographical study of the formation of the earth, moon, and oceans. The influence has been long lasting. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in 1981 and is now a professor of zoology at the University of Florida.

For the past decade Guillette has been researching alligators and other animal victims of anthropogenic contaminants. His focus is reproductive biology, and he used the example of exposure to synthetic estrogen compounds decreasing fertility and increasing embryo mortality in alligators.

Displaying data he had gathered from the alligator studies, Guillette showed that even one part per trillion of many contaminants could cause detrimental effects on reproduction at the very least.

He pointed out that we have banned the products that outright kill, but we let slip many of those that have chronic effects. Testing isn't always possible due to ethical concerns or lack of technology (some contaminant levels that can cause harm are so low they cannot be measured by most devices).

Guillette emphasized that more



Tenured 'Gator Wrestling: Guillette takes a sample from a Florida alligator to determine the effect pollution has on the reproductive cycle of the beast.

research is needed, that his is associative proof, but solid.

The take-home message? One, if you want to reproduce at some point, don't risk "eating freshwater fish."

More importantly, though, he encouraged audience members to stop and consider the products they use. Some of the same contaminants as have been discovered to decrease alligator and human fertility and retard development in children are ingredients in common perfumes, cosmetics, and soaps.

"Ask, 'Do I need this?' I don't want to go back to the Middle Ages..." but the risks are out there. For more information, go to www.tmc.tulane.edu/ecme/eehome or www.zoo.ufl.edu/jpg.

Displaying data he had gathered from the alligator studies, Guillette showed that even one part per trillion of many contaminants could cause detrimental effects on reproduction at the very least.

Seeing Through the Sanctions

Bardians over Baghdad: Three Bard students travel to Iraq to observe the effects of U.S. sanctions

ALI TONAK

In order to actually observe the effects of the sanctions on Iraq and to talk to representatives from the Iraqi government, who have been successfully blocked-off by the American media for the last ten years, three Bard students traveled to Baghdad. Vanessa Norton, Emma Kreyche and Ali Tonak were part of the International Action Center's (www.iacenter.org) fourth Iraq Sanctions Challenge. The International Action Center was founded by former attorney general Ramsey Clark during the Gulf War and since then has been working in solidarity with the Iraqi people.

The delegation took with them close to two tons of medicine for the people of Iraq and during its seven days in Iraq these three students went to two elementary schools, an university, a water purification plant, a sewage treatment plant, a women's center, a pharmaceutical plant, a children's

hospital, and a food distribution center. They also met with certain people from the Iraqi government such as Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Trade in order to obtain information on the effects of the sanctions on Iraq.

The sanctions challenge also visited the city of Basra which was heavily bombed during the Gulf War. There they observed the effects of weapons containing the heavy metal Depleted Uranium. The damages of Depleted Uranium have been known for years but have just recently caught the general population's attention due to dozens of European soldiers who are starting to die from numerous cancers caused by the radioactive D.U. they came in contact with during the bombardment of Kosovo.

The effects of D.U. became much more apparent to those on the trip when the abnormal births and tumors were observed at a hospital

in Basra. Amongst the 50 delegates from 15 U.S. states and eight different countries was an activist and researcher from New Mexico, Damacio Lopez, who has dedicated himself to research on D.U. for the past 15 years after the death of his family due to D.U. effects from testing sites in New Mexico.

The radioactivity readings taken by Lopez in Iraq showed approximately a 20-fold increase of radiation than would be found at any other D.U. site. This incredible disparity has been associated with D.U. nuclear power plant waste products being used in weapons. This misuse has been stated before due to Israeli manufacturing of weapons from British nuclear waste.

Half of the delegation (including all three Bard Students) left Iraq and traveled to Amman, Jordan in order to visit the Wahadat Palestinian Refugee Camp and met with representatives from the Palestinian struggle such as Lelia Khaled of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Palestinian Women's Federation. Khaled had hijacked a plane in 1969, in order to bring the world's attention to the suffering of the Palestinians.

The delegation also met with

The effects of D.U. became much more apparent to those on the trip when the abnormal births and tumors were observed at a hospital in Basra.



The Price of Politics: An Iraqi child dies from D.U. exposure in a hospital in Basra, Iraq.

Caswer Cuba from the Palestinian National Council, who stated that George W. Bush needed some time to understand what was going on in the Middle East and that afterward the peace negotiations would resume.

Emma, Vanessa and Ali will be giving presentations with slides from their trip to Iraq at SUNY-New Paltz, Vassar College, Newburgh and other towns in prox-

imity to Bard College. They will also be giving a presentation at Bard on March 5, time and place to be announced.

Journalist Murdered in Ukraine

Citizens protest for the removal of the President

AMBER BUCHHOLZ

Kiev, Ukraine- Thousands of protesters have gathered in their capital city to demand that Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma be removed from office. The protests evolved from a series of scandals that date back to last fall, beginning with the alleged kidnapping of a prominent journalist in September.

Georgy Gongadze, an outspoken critic of Kuchma's and founder of the web newspaper "Ukrainskaya Pravda" (Ukrainian Truth), disappeared while walking home on the night of September 16th. Six weeks later a body, believed to be that of Gongadze, was found in a forest north of Kiev. Identification of the body was complicated by the fact that it had been decapitated, and later disappeared from the morgue

while DNA testing was being conducted. Although the tests revealed a 99.66% probability that the body was that of the disappeared journalist, government officials continue to avoid admitting Gongadze's identity.

Adding to the scandal was the implication that President Kuchma had ordered the disappearance and murder of the journalist himself. On November 28th, opposition leader Oleksandr Moroz released a tape, allegedly recorded in the President's office, on which Kuchma's voice can be heard telling his Interior Minister to "get rid" of Gongadze. Several more recordings were later released in which the President discussed deals made with the heads of several prominent corporations, trading millions of dollars for "protection" and political favors. One tape

revealed the comment that a certain judge "should be tortured" for an unfavorable ruling. Although at first Kuchma denied the veracity of these recordings and claimed that they were completely fabricated, he recently admitted that it was his voice on the recordings, adding that the tapes were edited to sound incriminating and that his words were taken out of context.

Public reaction to the events has been largely hostile toward the President and his officials, and has culminated in a dramatic protest movement throughout the country. Beginning in December, a small number of protesters began to gather in Kiev to demand Kuchma's resignation. As the movement gained steam, people began to pour in from all over the country, establishing a tent city in Independence Square and marching down Kreshatik Street, the city's main thoroughfare. People have been gathering outside the President's office, chanting the slogan "Ukraine Bez kuchmi", or "Ukraine Without Kuchma". On one occasion a human chain was formed across several neighborhoods, connecting Independence Square with the President's office, a distance of almost two miles. The protests were at first peaceful, but have become increasingly vehement, as demonstrators have attempted to push their way through police lines, and frequently



Taking to the Streets: Young and old protest corruption in Kiev.

burn effigies of Kuchma while threatening to oust him from office, "at any cost." According to recent estimates, the number of protesters has surpassed 10,000 people, and continues to grow every day.

International reaction to the events in Ukraine has been varied. Although relations between Russia and this former Soviet Republic have been chilly in recent years, Russian President Vladimir Putin flew in last Sunday to meet

with Kuchma, and although the meetings have largely focused on energy issues and the economy, Putin publicly announced that, in relation to the current wave of scandal and protests, he "continue[s] to

support the democratically elected president [of Ukraine]."

A delegation of high-ranking officials from the European Union is scheduled to arrive in Kiev on the 13th, including Louis Michel and

Javier Solana. The delegation is expected to encourage Kuchma to launch a "full and transparent" investigation into the events surrounding the disappearance of Gongadze, and to offer to provide independent analysis of the alleged voice recordings. Richard Boucher, official spokesman of the U.S. State Department, also publicly urged "the government to deal seriously with this case."

The protests were at first peaceful, but have become increasingly vehement, frequently burning effigies of Kuchma while threatening to oust him from office, "at any cost."



Ralph, What Have You Done For Me Lately?

A look at the effect Ralph Nader had in determining last year's presidential election.

MATT DINEEN

"YOU VOTED FOR RALPH NADER? Then what the hell were you doing protesting Bush's inauguration? After all, you are responsible for his victory!"

No, this was never actually said to me, but it wouldn't have been a shock after the scapegoating of Greens even before Dubya was (s)elected (p)resident.

I still do not regret voting and campaigning for Ralph Nader and the Green Party now that King George II is our ruler. Before I discuss why I, along with two million other Americans, voted Green, I want to address Nader's effect (or lack thereof) on the election results. The 2000 election was bizarre. There were numerous factors that contributed to the final outcome. When considering all of these factors you will realize that the so-called "Nader factor" was miniscule, perhaps even non-existent.

First of all, let us not forget the important fact that Al Gore did win the popular vote. Even though thousands of citizens who have religiously supported the Democratic Party in the past decided to vote for third parties, namely the Green Party, Prince Albert did receive more votes than Bush. The message this sends is that the vote of the people, over 50% of whom choose to not vote anyway, does not count. This fact, along with the peculiar events that took place in Florida, brings into question the legitimacy of the archaic Electoral College.

Even the most rabid anti-Naderites have admitted that the only place where Nader had any effect was in Florida where he received just under 100,000 votes. However, to say that Nader was

responsible for Bush's victory in Florida after taking into account the racist disenfranchisement of Florida's black voters, the confusing ballots, the corruption of Florida's state government (led by Bush's brother), and the conservative partisanship of the Supreme Court is beyond absurd. "If he just ran in the Democratic primaries then our savior Al Gore would be President now." Interesting.

So back to the question at hand: Why did I vote for Ralph Nader and why do I not regret that decision? Many students at Bard struggled between voting for either Gore or Nader. For most of these folks voting for the Republican Bush was never an option. Similarly, for me, voting for Gore was never an option. The internal debates that I engaged in were "Nader or McReynolds" (the Socialist Party candidate) and "Nader or don't vote at all." Coming from a radical perspective I see the two party political system as more inherently threatening to genuine democracy than a conservative Republican president. "The system is like the Titanic," Bard professor and Green Party candidate Joel Kovel recently remarked. "Choosing between the Republicans and the Democrats is like choosing to be in either the bow or stern as the boat goes down. The point is to get off the boat!" The Green Party gives us an opportunity to liberate ourselves from "the boat" without being completely alienated from the American political process.

A different point of view is held by our college's president. When several students attended Leon Botstein's open house prior to the election last semester to discuss the "Nader vs. Gore" issue he made a

revealing remark. Botstein was a supporter of Gore's campaign ostensibly out of fear of a Bush presidency. The majority of the students that attended the open house though were Nader supporters. Botstein claimed that, "We are essentially on the same side, it's simply a disagreement about tactics." In a sense he was correct. He did not want Bush to become president so he voted for Gore, just as we didn't want Bush to become president so we voted for Nader. However, he ignores the larger issue, which is that we voted against the two party system while he voted in favor of it.

Nader was highly criticized throughout his campaign by the media and Democrats for claiming that the Democratic and Republican parties are "exactly the same," and "ignoring their differences." His critique of the two parties was grossly oversimplified and misunderstood though. Nader and the Green Party focused on how the similarities of the two corporate-controlled, ruling parties are greater than their differences, hence the need for a viable third party that represents the interests of the people.

The election truly was the Green Party, along with many other third parties, against the Republican-Democrat monopoly. This was explicitly evident during the presidential debates. The Bipartisan Commission on the Presidential Debates was formed last year. It is controlled by representatives of the Democratic and Republican parties along with its main sponsor: Anheuser Busch...yes a beer corporation. In past elections, including 1996 when Reform Party candidate Ross Perot was in the debates,

any presidential candidate that had a 5% approval rating was invited to debate the "Republicrats". In 2000 the newly formed debates commission raised that number to 15% assuring that only their two candidates would appear in the debates. At the time of the debates Ralph Nader's approval rating lingered around 5%, which should have assured him a slot to debate Bush-Gore. Nader fought hard to be included in the debates with no luck. The debates commission did everything they possibly could to prevent Nader from not only debating, but also being physically present at the debates even though he had tickets to all three. The final debate was held in St. Louis, MO, which is by no coincidence the location of the Anheuser Busch corporate headquarters. If Nader was allowed to debate then the public would have viewed him as a credible candidate, issues that Bush-Gore agreed on would have been discussed, and the entire election would have been dramatically different.

Back to King George II, there is absolutely no doubt that his cabinet choices and early attacks on women's rights and the environment are deplorable and will be challenged by the growing protest movement in which the Greens are involved. Let us not have any illusions though about how much superior a DLC-style Gore/Lieberman administration would be for the nation. Please consider the record of the Clinton administration and the fact that Gore is farther to the right than Mr. Bill himself. For the past few years we have been bombarded by the Clintonoid rhetoric of this "booming economy" and how great the administration has been

for our country, but let's consider its real "accomplishments." The enactment of NAFTA (and other "free trade" atrocities), the dismantlement of the welfare system, an increase in the already bloated military budget, countless imperialist interventions abroad (Iraq, Sudan, Yugoslavia, etc.), the "Effective Death Penalty and Anti-Terrorism Act" (which limited the rights of death row inmates to seek fair trials, etc.), the 1996 "Telecommunications Act" (which gave a few giant corporations who helped write it greater control of the public airwaves), an increase in the racist drug war which has expanded the prison industrial complex, among others. That is the true "Clinton Legacy" in which Gore played a major role.

The Green Party does not deny the fact that the current system makes it difficult for third parties to positively impact national politics. It is true that a popular third party runs the risk of unwittingly assisting the candidate that they are most different from politically. Unlike other third parties, however, the Greens are exploring practical ways of "evening the playing field." Ralph Nader is already working on creating a People's Debates Commission to replace the current business-controlled one. The party is also working with the Center for Voting and Democracy (<http://www.igc.org/cvd/>) to create other reforms, namely Instant Run-off Voting. This would allow voters to "rank the candidates in order of preference." This would eliminate the "spoiler factor," give voters a wider choice, and decrease negative campaigning.

There were hundreds of Green see Nader Impact, page 5...

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Revisited

SHANKAR GOPALAKRISHMAN

In the final issue of the Free Press last semester, Aaron Catz wrote a piece defending Israel against the allegedly unfair accusations that others had made and continue to make (including my article in the previous issue). It has been a month and a half since then and affairs in Israel have changed quite a bit; but despite that I feel that a response to Catz's position is necessary.

My dispute with Catz's article is at two levels: factual and logical. On the first level, I would argue that his article contains a number of factual inaccuracies and errors, both minor and major, that severely compromise his argument and indicate some of the positions from which his argument emerges.

For instance, he begins the article with the claim that the "Israel is the only party ... threatened with genocide." Yet Israel has by far the most powerful military of any Middle Eastern state, is one of the eight countries that is known to possess nuclear weapons, has the only chemical and biological weapons store of significance in the entire Arab region, and, by its own

admission, is under no real military threat at all at the moment. In fact, the argument that Israel is threatened with "genocide" is a canard that has repeatedly been used by the Israeli government to justify military action. For instance, in a 1972 retrospective, Israeli General Matityahu Peled stated that "The thesis that the danger of genocide was hanging over us in June 1967 and that Israel was fighting for its physical existence is only bluff, which was born and developed after the war." If that was the case in the 1967 war, when Israel was fighting three armies, it is surprising that Catz believes it is now threatened with genocide when in conflict with a ragtag group of civilians armed almost entirely with stones.

More interesting is Catz's claim in the same sentence that "Israel is the only party to this conflict whose very national survival is at stake...". Considering that one of the parties in the conflict has no state at all, this seems rather incongruous. Granted, Palestinians can flee Israeli repression into neighboring states, as hundreds of thousands did in 1948; but that does not change the fact that their entire territory,

homeland, and future possibilities for a nation-state are being held hostage by Israeli policy. In essence Catz's statement and ones like it seem to imply that the Palestinians are not a nation at all, an assumption that appears extremely often in conservative Israelis' rhetoric.

The other major claim of fact that Catz bases his argument is the idea that Israel has been responsible for the improvement in living standards in the Occupied Territories. Given statistics from sources on the ground, it is difficult to see how he derives this claim. According to the Washington Report, between 1967 and 1991, Israel not only did not build a single new hospital in the Gaza Strip but also did not allow anyone else to do so. In the West Bank, where policy was somewhat freer, the majority of medical outlets were created and administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Administration (UNRWA) and by private non-governmental organizations. UNRWA also provides most of the educational services in both the occupied territories and in the refugee camps in other countries, though in the latter with some assistance from

the national governments concerned. As a final reflection, UN statistics reveal that, between 1970 and 1992, Israel's per capita expenditure on infrastructure and water treatment in the occupied territories was fifteen dollars. In the same period the average yearly per-capita infrastructure expenditure in Israel was \$1500 and in Jordan was \$400.

Catz, finally, makes a number of other judgments about Israel's "utmost restraint" and kindness in enforcing its occupation. That Israel could have been more brutal than it has been is not in dispute, though the cases Catz cites for comparison are rather debatable ("UN helicopters" did not kill hundreds in Somalia; several major massacres there were committed by American helicopters under American command). Nevertheless, Israel's "restraint" has followed the classic tactics of occupiers everywhere: a war on the poor through economic blockades and siege warfare, extrajudicial assassinations of political and militia leaders (some thirty or forty in the last few months), the deliberate targeting of children and civilians, and the "settling" of occupied lands

and division of populations to make it more difficult for the oppressed to rebel. In this way it bears a strong resemblance to apartheid South Africa and other states where a minority is or was ruling over a majority. Israel's tactics are in most ways not much less brutal than these nations, and presumably Catz would find them worthy of condemnation. Why then should we except Israel?

To me at least, these errors make it almost impossible to accept Catz's argument. But, in a sense, despite their apparent importance, these factual problems are almost irrelevant. Even if every claim that is made in the article or by Israel's supporters were true, even if Israel was a "humane" occupier and made some efforts to develop the occupied territories, even if its troops was not shooting at unarmed civilians, still the occupation would be unjustified. The argument that Israel's minimal development and human rights efforts vindicate its rule skips over the entire issue of freedom, self-determination, and the fundamental right to control one's own nation. Building roads is not a replacement for allowing a

continued on page 11...

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Botstein Unbound

Botstein provides perspective on the future of education

AMBER BUCHHOLZ

Free Press: In your recent article in *The New York Times*, you said that the average American high school student spends 41% of the school day on the core subjects, such as reading, history, math, and science. What, then, are students spending the other 59% of their day doing?

Botstein: The rest of the time is spent on electives, subjects the high school has developed in order to alleviate, in a way, the boredom of many American students. Subjects like psychology, for example, or computer science; they are not such a bad idea, but the problem is that not all the teachers hired for these subjects have a strong background in what they are teaching. They also take time away from instruction in the core subjects. They give an appearance of being a more advanced curriculum, but really are a way of admitting failure about not being able to train the American high school student in the fundamental skills and knowledge that one really needs, to go on in life.

For example, in the United States, despite all the buzz about technology and science, there are few Americans actually getting their degrees in math and science than there were five years ago. Now, that doesn't have anything to do with an absence of interest, it has to do with the fact that math and science teachers are often so terrible in our public schools that students are only taking the minimum requirements to graduate. The solution to this is not raising the requirements for graduation, because there's no one there to teach it well enough. The solution is hiring scientists and mathematicians who can impart the subject matter in a way that keeps students interested.

Free Press: Can you prophesy a little bit about how you think the Bush Administration is going to shape the face of public education?

Botstein: I don't have any contact with the Bush Administration, so I can only infer from what I have read. My assumption is that they will concentrate on testing and accountability: What Texas has done is implement a plan in which performance is measured by segmenting out groups, usually along racial lines. Schools are measured not by aggregate performance, but by the rate of change and progress of individual groups, in order to make the measurement of school performance as fair as possible. All this seems perfectly reasonable, but the trouble is, the test mechanisms are terrible, and drive the curriculum to 'teach by the test'. The Bush Administration also seems to be focusing on 'early reading': they want to make it a federal policy that all students learn to read by the third grade. It sounds like a perfectly reasonable thing to talk

about, but they've steered away from the big issue, which is how to reform teacher recruitment: teacher training, teacher certification, improving compensation. They've also gotten away from the funding problem. On one hand there is money wasted, and on another hand there isn't enough money overall being spent on public schools. There is a huge problem with infrastructure, from textbooks down to the buildings themselves.

The Bush Administration has also put in this question of vouchers, both through the front door and the back door of their policy. The voucher question is, for many liberals, a difficult one. Unfortunately, it has gained a lot of popularity in inner cities, because the least well-served segments of the population know very well, they have an instinctual knowledge, that they don't get the best teachers, they have the worst schools, they get sub-standard funding. They are looking for ways to get out of this mess, and they don't have a very high regard for the government delivery of service. Those people who are desperately concerned with improving and preserving public education, myself included, have to realize that our natural allies are not necessarily doing the right thing. By this, I mean the teacher education institutions, the state education bureaucracies, the certification agencies, the massive bureaucracy that has developed. Vouchers, I think, are a fraud, and not a viable alternative.

Free Press: If the voucher system does become inevitable, would you recommend for parents to stick with the public school system, or in light of your recent comments in *The Times* that public schools are "wasting our children's time", can you understand why parents would seek a private education for their children?

Botstein: I don't think it is inevitable, I don't think it is going to happen. The voucher system doesn't have broad support, in spite of all the talk, and economically it's not viable. In theory, if you had the funding that traveled with the child, that would be the best system. We would have competition within the public schools, like magnet schools. For example, your child or my child can be sent to a school outside of our school district, and therefore the schools that don't do well will be put out of business.

Let's say you are the principal of Public School #1 and I am the principal of Public School #2. Students at your school do very well, and students at my school do horribly. More and more parents take their children out of my school and enroll them in your school. Eventually the state will put me out of business and ask you to take over my school, because obviously you know how to run things. Then you

would reform the school, and the teachers who were not doing well would essentially lose their jobs.

It really becomes a system where there is genuine choice, where people are responsible for themselves and parents feel they have more choice over where they send their children, within the public sector. This way, education "choices" can't be a closet door for segregation, which a lot of charter schools and privatization are about, and there is still a guarantee to the child that he or she can get an education that is of a good quality. This brings up another problem with charter schools, they have a record of very uneven performance.

Free Press: What would be your criteria for judging the performance of teachers?

Botstein: The progress traveled by every pupil. What we now should be doing, is measuring the starting points and outcomes. If you come into a classroom and I come into a classroom, we may have a different level of reading ability or math skills. Therefore, what is more important than assessing where the students are at the end of the year, based on standardized grade level tests, is the rate of improvement in the child. I am not a believer in grade level testing. All ten-year-olds don't read at the same level. That's not a fault of the public school system so much as a fact that some students are more precocious than others. The key to quality education is continuous progress.

Free Press: What ideas do you have for improving the general quality of teachers? What incentives should be offered to make it a more attractive profession?

Botstein: I believe among other things that all public educators should be exempt from income taxes. This would be one way of dramatically increasing the salary of teachers and thereby attracting more people to the profession.

Another thing I would like to do is abolish the certification process at the state level. The way the system is now, if you're a physicist, for example, or another sort of professional in your field, you couldn't get a job teaching public school because you haven't met the state criteria for certification. Most of the professors here at Bard couldn't get a job teaching public school. That's ridiculous, it's a tragedy, and it is keeping many valuable, knowledgeable people out of the field of education.

Third is the way that teachers are treated. We need a less uniform control over teachers' time: how the teacher runs the classroom, what materials to use. Teachers aren't treated like professionals. Also, the conditions are work are very demoralizing. Some schools are quite literally falling down. All of these things are conspiring to make it a very unattractive profession.



TLS Seeks Applicants

The Trustee Leadership Scholars Want You!

In the past the bulk of new TLS students have been incoming First-year students. Only one or two spots were opened to students already enrolled. In order to expand opportunities for everyone we are opening 6-8 spots on the roster for current Bard students.

We are looking for students who are organizing and leading projects now -- students whose projects will take off given the administrative support of the TLS office and increased access to college resources. If you are now in the forefront of an active cause and a student in solid academic standing, contact us at the TLS Office, Ludlow 102 (basement) for an application.

The Trustee Leader Scholar program provides an opportunity for motivated students to develop their organizational and management skills. The program revolves

around community service projects which currently include: the recent Habitat for Humanity trip to Thailand, the Community Garden, internships at the battered women's shelter in Poughkeepsie, art/science/writing/theater workshops given to the children at the Astor Home in Rhinebeck, alternative spring break work trip to Virginia, the Rhinebeck Connections tutoring program, disabilities awareness education at Mill Road School in Red Hook, SAVE (voter's rights advocacy), and on and on and on. Bard students participate in TLS projects everyday.

Do not hesitate to call us with questions about applying or about volunteering for TLS projects. We are at extension 7056.

Paul Marienthal, Director
Jenny Fowler, Assistant to the Director

In Defense of Mr. Nader

The Money Train Must Stop!

HOWARD MEGDAL

For as long as Ralph Nader has been spreading the truth about our corrupt, "one party with two heads" system, scurrilous, attention-seeking journalists, myself included, went for the easy story attacking Ralph Nader. We said things that were often patently untrue, and twisted his actions out of context. It seemed as if we had some sort of vendetta against Ralph Nader. I mean, it wasn't as if there was a dime's worth of difference between Al Gore and George W. Bush, as we have seen early on in the Bush administration, a virtual clone of the Clinton years in areas like abortion, the death penalty, and the environment. We all knew that.

Why then the slanderous attacks? I personally was a part of the endless "money train," and didn't much care for Mr. Nader's attempted exposure of the truth. I had been told that in exchange for *The Outside World's* endorsement of Al Gore, I would get a night in the Lincoln Bedroom with any two of the Gore daughters. In retrospect, I can see that it was wrong to trade political endorsements for sex.

I feel the need as a result to go forth into the Bard Free Press and other progressive publications and tell people that far from being the man who we in the establishment press sought to demonize, Ralph Nader is a good man. The lies must

stop. Most galling perhaps to me was the vicious charge that Ralph Nader had blown up a puppy. This is typical of the media "gotcha" mentality with anyone who threatens the comfortable two-party way of life. That Nader had actually blown up a full-grown dog, and not a puppy, was never acknowledged by the *New York Times* in print. That the dog was shaped exactly like a Political Action Committee (PAC) was entirely ignored.

As well, our continuing obsession with Mr. Nader's procuring child prostitutes for his sexual pleasure was described in the *Washington Post* as "dirty". The *Post* seemed perfectly willing to sell its hard-earned reputation down the river by failing to mention that in 109 of 112 solicitations, Mr. Nader and the young whore talked first, and on five occasions Mr. Nader did not even consummate the sex act. Who's covering up now, Bob Woodward?

Now it is apparent that the Los Angeles Times intends to characterize Ralph Nader's decision to spy on the United States for Libya to protest the World Bank as "treason." I don't know how long the other establishment media outlets can keep this up, but I for one can guarantee you the readers that when the inevitable "Ralph Nader's Enema Collection" story appears in *The Outside World*, we will be certain to get his side of the story.

Nader Impact

party candidates nationwide that ran campaigns at the state and local levels. The party is growing and by next election year thousands if not millions of citizens will again vote Green against the two party system and in favor of social justice and the environment. For that we will never be regretful.

Life after Pavement

Stephen Malkmus Flies Solo

By Jonah Weiner

Pavement is done with for good, and while some fans may have tried to read some shreds of optimism into the word "hiatus" (used for a while to describe the band's post *Terror Twilight* condition) it's harder to do so in the face of Stephen Malkmus's less ambiguous proclamation that he doesn't "see any reunions happening any time soon." What is reason for some optimism about life after Pavement, though, is the Malkmus 'solo' project, which has so far produced an EP, a full length LP on Matador (out today) and a sold out concert at New York City's Bowery Ballroom late last month. His new band is called "The Jicks" (the name is a joke about fictional inbred bandmates, with Stephen as Stevie Jick, bassist Joanna Bolme as Jo Jo Jick, etc) and is essentially a three piece, with Malkmus still presiding over songwriting, singing, and guitar playing. Bolme and drummer John Moen are from Portland, Oregon, where Malkmus has been living for the past year or so.

If you ask Malkmus, the new

record (titled *Stephen Malkmus* just in case people didn't know the reason they were buying it) isn't very far removed at all from Pavement records and, notwithstanding some important qualifications, he's pretty much on the money. While thematically dissonant in a similar way, it's generally a lot catchier (in the most sugary sense of the word--see "Phantasies") than Pavement and, hand in hand with that, certainly less raw, (since a lot more produced) than every Pavement album but the Nigel Godrich (*OK Computer*)-produced *Terror Twilight*.

For maybe largely personal reasons, I can't help but find a strong similarity between Stephen Malkmus and Frank Black. Where the latter's patent lyrical fascination with aliens could be seen increasing steadily through the Pixies discography--from *Bossanova's* "The Happening" and *Trompe Le Monde's* "Motorway to Roswell"--to almost any song you take on the solo *Cult of Ray*, Malkmus' own lyrical patent of subconscious-style pop-referencing jumble is still here,

and it too has followed a Pavement-sustained trend away from ultra-disaffectedness and slacker-cool irony towards something still playful but done a bit more in earnest. "Church on White" is an extreme example of this earnestness, and "Jennifer and the Ess-Dog," a ballad about a romance between a teenager and a thirty-one year old guy in a "Sixties cover band," has been getting a lot of attention, mainly for its linear narrative and the absence in it of Malkmus's trademarked lyrical ellipses and sneers. In fact, Malkmus says that he's heard the song compared to John Mellencamp's "Jack and Diane," and doesn't suggest he has any real problem with that. Both Mellencamp's and Malkmus's versions of up and down American romances are more than a little boring; Malkmus complicates the standard slightly but with nothing better than a kind of reformed Generation X-er appeal (evoking a "Volvo with ancient plates" and a golden retriever with a "frayed bandana 'round his neck") and luckily he keeps the attempts at straight narrative, literalistic storytelling limited to that one track.

Describing the sound of the new record, Malkmus offers two supposedly divergent descriptions of the record, saying that it can be received as either his "first venture as a solo artist" or as "a continuation of the 'esprit du Pavement'"

with relatively slight changes in instrumentation. All it takes is thirty seconds of the album's first track, however, for the former, insofar as it implies a move into completely foreign territory for Malkmus, to fall out of the running. There is a subtle but certain move away from Pavement on Stephen Malkmus, but in

a strong sense it follows the exact same trajectory as that move mapped out above, away from all-consuming, everything-taken-with-a-grain-of-salt, pranksterism; the trajectory effected along Pavement's career right up to *Terror Twilight*, which Malkmus described at the time, interestingly, as "essentially solo stuff," and which count-

less reviewers described as uncharacteristically sincere, clear, and enthusiastic.

The result of this steady 'rehabilitation' on *Terror Twilight* was an undoubtedly less jagged, less catchy, less immediately driving album. There was no "Cut Your Hair" or "Stereo," but no real "Zurich is Stained,"

either. Pushing jam-rock and psychedelic influences, the album was the final nail in the coffin for many fans, who saw it as the unlistenable culmination of what was for them another way of reading the Pavement-long trend: in this construction a move away from more

see Malkmus on page 7...



"XEN CLIP NOTES"

A Brief History of DJ Amon Tobin / by Evan Robertson



Amon Tobin's work, despite allusions to roots in samba, jazz, pop, rock and house, is more or less consistently reviewed as drum n bass, which is exactly wrong. I hate that trans-genre fallback as much as the next, so we'll have to settle for an understanding of Tobin's Ninja Tune pledge, and anyone of a passing familiarity with that label can acknowledge the particular uselessness of classification here. I'm sorry I even brought it up.

In 1997 the Brazilian-born DJ (expatriated to the UK in the '80s and there ever since) released *Bricolage*, his first album. The record served to redeem electronica in general by indicating that DJ Spooky wasn't the only one reading books in his free time. I'd much rather see Tobin quote Levi-Strauss than listen to that Subliminal Kid babble about interstitial space. Of Tobin's repertoire, *Bricolage* is the most obviously grounded in

straight up techno, but it still strains at the bit. Rather than effecting 'a forcing outward of established boundaries'-a played description if there ever was one-Tobin keeps it all in the sandbox, his skill coming from the reinvigoration of sounds that by the late '90s might have been considered generic. It is in this sense that tracks like "Mission," "Yasawas," and "Creatures" (featured in the Cold Crush Cuts compilation) act older than their age, speaking more intelligently through a limited vocabulary.

Tobin's second work, *Permutation* (neglecting here the mini-album *Piranha Breaks*) is something of a paean to the cut and paste controls. Here, track titles ("Reanimator," "Melody Infringement") do little to obscure the debt Tobin feels he owes to his samples. As per Barthes' theoretic of textuality, Tobin considers his

music a "tissue of quotations," with himself as the bricoleur, cutting up samples as one would regular chickens (see *Permutation's* opener). *Permutation* not only affirms the clarity of Amon Tobin's music, but also its design element, its intellectuality, and what less affecting perspectives than mine might term its 'rigor'. Also, by this point any previously-felt drum n bass influence had been almost entirely dissolved into the mix, leaving only vague traces in "Sordid," "Escape" and "Sultan Drops."

Sure the first track off his new *Supermodified* album is featured on

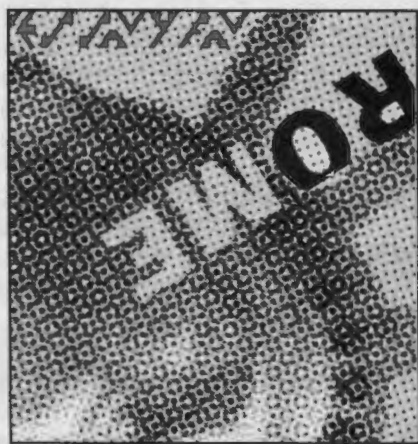
a BMW commercial, but only indie kids whine collectively about selling out. And pardon the pun but here Amon Tobin has managed to construct, out of smooth-as-glass fragments, a stunningly engineered ride. You can't believe I said that. But *Supermodified* does kind of play to that cheese-filled id that wants nothing more than the security of slick. "Marine Machines," "Saboteur," and

"Deo" are all tracks which serve up the digital hi-fi like the latest Chris Cunningham commercial: encouraging of the surface as well as the subtlety. Another case in point is

the web site built around the album. Found at amontobin.com and designed by UK design firm Hi-Res (award-winners for their Requiem for a Dream site), Tobin's site confirms hypertextuality as an aesthetic. More importantly, there is the instant streamable mini-sampler, which assigns Tobin-produced loops to computer keys with Flash programming, and allows you to partake of the process.

But how can you sample he-who-samples? This and any other residual questions of authorial authority that may or may not arise can be put aside, especially when you realize that you just can't make the sounds cohere half as well as Amon can.

MUSIC



artist **Les Savy Fav**
record **Rome (Written Upside Down)**
label **(Southern)**

When Les Savy Fav and Love as Laughter played the Old Gym last year in a back and forth set-up that turned out more an MC battle than a rock show, it was clear to most who had won out. And by waiting impatiently for Love as Laughter to finish whatever song it was they were playing so that Les Savy Fav could start up again, you weren't necessarily putting Love as Laughter down, so much as responding to the all-out assault that is a Fav performance—figuratively and literally, as lead singer Tim Harrington (physically a cross between Socrates and Freddy Kruger) is not beyond screaming at his audience while swinging the mic stand at it like a wrecking ball. Even though the dynamics of Les Savy Fav shows have been in certain ways weakened by the band's trimming itself down to a four-piece, their recent EP *Rome (Written Upside Down)* comes out of the change just fine. New to the band on this disc is a drum machine and a sequencer, which blips and bleeps in counterpoint to riffs which spiral around them like barbed wire, as well as some other electronic touches, like a sampled "sex phone lady" and a faux-turntable scratch thrown at Harrington's lines on "ICTimer." The title track, "Rome," is the album's most realized. Here the rhythm is set unwaveringly by a central, repeated, four-pitch guitar phrase, subtly disjointed by a muffled electronic drumbeat; the initial charge of this riff is sustained and complicated throughout the song, as it is played against the more expansive energy of less clearly structured guitar howls. "Rome" best proves the point that, slimmed down indie-punk band that they are, Fav's music is most interesting when it sounds big; the fact that it's still able to sound big with half the guitar section cut out is no small thing. *Jonah Weiner*



artist **Low**
record **Things We Lost in the Fire**
label **Kranky**

Perhaps the most important thing I can say about this record is that it takes risks. Low's production has significantly changed since producer Steve Albini joined the boat with 1999's *Secret Name*. Albini has given a life to the percussion and vocals that the earlier efforts were never able to capture. Along the way Low has added more and more guest players who, for this record, include horns, strings, and keyboards.

This in itself is a risky venture for Low who, prior to *Secret Name*, relied almost entirely on sounds culled minimally from guitar, bass, and drum arrangements. Earlier records like *I Could Live in Hope* (1994) and especially *The Curtain Hits the Cast* (1996), were testaments to the band's ability to capture a great body of work from such simple means. But somewhere along the way—my guess is, about the time of the inferior *Songs for a Dead Pilot* EP (1997)—Low came to the realization that it was time to change.

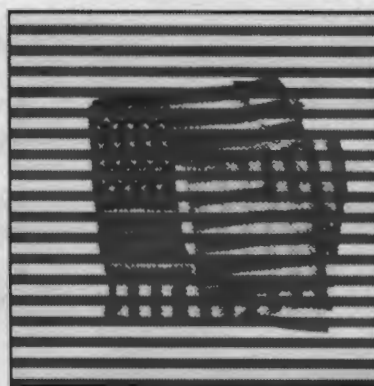
The risks Low began to take in their approach to songwriting are extended into *Things We Lost in the Fire*. As with *Secret Name*, the old formula is still present, but it's been somewhat diluted and the finest moments seem to be when Low departs from it completely. Sometimes this takes the form of simplifying arrangements of songs. Such is the case with "Lazer Beam" and, one of the albums most stunning duets, "Kind of Girl." Other times it means incorporating unfamiliar instrumentation such as the beautifully lethargic piano on "Medicine Magazines".

And though tracks like "Whitetail" make you want to say "I've heard this before," the album is usually able to succeed in what it aims at. Though Low may never match the genius of *The Curtain Hits the Cast* or the beauty of *Secret Name*, that's really not the point. The bottom line is they're still writing pretty songs and even more willing to take risks. And surely there's more to come. *Tyler Drosdeck*



artist **White Stripes**
record **DeStijl**
label **Sympathy for the Record Industry**

Hailing from Detroit, The White Stripes have returned with a second batch of refreshingly riffed garage rock and blues. The brother-sister drum and guitar duo is keen on displaying a wide variety of talent through simple frameworks. Singer-songwriter Jack White's slide guitar is impressively executed and Meg White's drumming is a perfect accompaniment. Standout songs like "Apple Blossom" and "Sister Do You Know My Name" are poppy and surprisingly elevating. And yet other songs are soul-stirringly gritty and driven; "Lets Build a Home" and "Why Can't You Be Nicer To Me" make me want to take shots of whiskey in a Louisiana shack while smokin' cigarettes and yellin' at the damn 'gators. With reference points from Matthew Sweet to the White Album to Led Zeppelin, the White Stripes sound packs some punch and passion. The LP is even dedicated to bluesman Blind Willie McTell and the Dutch artist Gerrit Rietveld—the second stressed the purifying of art in a movement known as, believe it or not, De Stijl. All in all the record is a good buy and you should fucking buy it. And don't be scared of the avant-garde looking cover: the band may look weird as hell, but they still rock. (The White Stripes are playing the Bowery Ballroom in NYC on Feb 24) *Tosh Chiang*



artist **Tortoise**
record **Standards**
label **Thrill Jockey**

"Tortoise," the name that John McEntire and his bandmates have chosen for themselves, seems to grow a more and more appropriate title with each new release. Turtle-like in the sense of suggesting slow, steady change, Tortoise continues to poke its head into new territories as its collaborators explore new territories in their own side-projects. Of course, the constant change and evolution continues between releases, which is why this record finds itself as distant from 1998's *TNT* as that record was from 1996's *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. If "sparse" is an adequate summation of *TNT*, then we could call *Standards* their return to a more elaborate style of instrumentation.

The almost deafening rumble of drums and guitar that introduces the first track, "Seneca", is a welcome introduction to Tortoise's new sound. Soon enough it evolves into something completely different, in fact: the more recognizable sounding Tortoise, consisting of an arrangement of plucked guitars, inventive drum stylings, steady bass movement, and bizarre keyboards and electronics. The piece alternates between intricate instrumentation and deconstruction of its various parts. Over its course of development it introduces us to something that makes this record much different than its predecessors. Whereas *TNT* often failed at incorporating electronic sounds to an analog-based sound, this record feels seamless in this aim. Never to disappoint, McEntire has upped the production level substantially, which means the record ultimately feels like a pretty good representation of its parts (as different as they are), each instrument getting the attention it deserves.

For all its impressive studio technique, the songwriting often seems flimsy, and occasionally runs completely awry. "Monica", for example, bases itself on an extremely cheesy guitar lick and never really departs from a boring "elevator music" vibe. Considering the studio time put into this recording, it feels as if the band should have focused a bit more on songwriting and less on 'sound.' *Tyler Drosdeck*



artist **Spoon**
record **Girls Can Tell**
label **Merge**

To be honest I'm not sure what to say about this band or their new record. Keeping this "capsule" to its 200-400 word requirement is the ultimate test of my review-writing ability. In a sense it's a confrontation between me and this band I want to say so much about and yet I don't know quite how to say it. Their last

full length (the obscenely underrated major label-released *Series of Sneaks*) was a definitive test of brevity, control, tension and release, great songwriting and all clocking in at under 35 minutes. When all is said and done, this article will feel infinitely longer than what they've managed to say for themselves in such short time. And now, nearly three years later, they're poised to release *Girls Can Tell* and once again they've got me beat in every regard.

They're a very different band after these past three years, picking up a keyboard player along the way, writing (mostly) slower and longer songs. Their sense of production has matured along with the changes to their style. And yet there is something so fundamental about this recording, something that feels like it will never go away, something that feels so new and yet so familiar at the same time. Call it good songwriting, smart lyrics, or give it some elusive term like "secret weapon" but I'll call it honesty and ambition and maybe I'll even call it a secret. And I'll play this record for my friends just like I do with all of their others and if you read this article all the way through maybe you'll come to my room and I'll play it for you, too and I'll let you in on one of my favorite secrets. *Tyler Drosdeck*



artist **Brokeback**
record **Morse Code in the Modern Age**
label **Thrill Jockey**

Originally part of a bass and drum duo that would evolve into Tortoise, Doug McCombs has been central to the innovative and influential Chicago music scene for about a decade, and counting. Brokeback is his side project, which so far includes two singles, the debut LP *Field Recordings from the Cook County Water Table*, and, in late February, a new album called *Morse Code in the Modern Age: Across the Americas*. New on *Morse Code...* is the permanent addition of Noel Kupersmith, a bassist for the Chicago Underground Trio/ Quartet.

Moving softly between straight ambient atonality, evocative synth melodies, and free jazz-style drumming, "Lives of the Rhythm Experts," the first track, sets the hyperbole of its title against some pretty understated, and for the most part hard to locate, rhythmic work. The bass is the figurehead on "Flat Handed and on the Wing," the next track, in which guitar atmospherics and a bleating coronet decorate and accentuate the bass line's irregular step. These first two tracks are minimalist-style, in the sense that they are spare but not desolate, deliberate but not cold, and by no means hard to listen to. In the atmosphere set by these two, however, the album's bouncy and swooning closer, an instrumental cover of Roy Orbison's "Running Scared," is a strange fit. An electric bass twangs to evoke Orbison's ghost while Stereolab's Mary Hansen mimics the bravado choral style of '50s Hollywood Western soundtracks. A shorter song than the two preceding it, "Running Scared" stops just when it seems about to leave its ambiguous jokiness and fit itself into the rest of the album. *Jonah Weiner*

(Re)interpreting Photographs through a Fine Arts Lens

In two separate shows, Gerhardt Richter and Robert Longo take historical photographs for their subjects, challenging notions of photographic narrative and mechanical reproduction

by Huffa Frobes-Cross



1977 takes its name from the date that three members of the German activist group Baader-Meinhoff, imprisoned for acts of terrorism, were found dead in their cells. The circumstances of and participants in their deaths remain unknown. The photographs Richter reproduces were taken by and large by photographers present to document the death scenes of these people. However, *October 18, 1977* intersperses between the pictures of the corpses and their surroundings pictures of the characters during their lifetimes.

The circumstances of the disappearance at the center of Longo's story is less mysterious. Sigmund Freud was living in Vienna in 1936 when the Nazis annexed Austria. Freud, who is Jewish, was "allowed" to leave. After his departure the Nazis repossessed his house and made a series of photographs of the still furnished but empty building. Longo has chosen to reproduce these photographs for his series of drawings.

The Freud Drawings display a house that looks consciously empty; empty like a house that has been preserved for visitation by tourists coming to see the residence of some long past famous person. In other words, there is an air of "history" or maybe more precisely "historical significance" about them. This is not just any house, photographed at just anytime but an important house looked at at a

moment of the greatest magnitude.

Longo heightens the contrast and crops severely and dramatically the original images. They are made to feel more powerful and more a part of something with a more grand sweep.

Longo's drawings seem to write the ominous gaze of the story of Nazism into the photographs they copy.

The anonymous Nazi image-maker Longo senses behind the camera which took

these photographs stares back at the viewer through these foreboding drawings. Freud's house, for Longo, is infiltrated by this presence, it has become a beginning and a preamble to the imminent trauma of fascism. *The Freud Drawings* do not so much challenge our way of seeing history through images as they effectively inscribe a now entrenched vision of what was the coming Holocaust into a set of photographs.

Richter's paintings are immediately more difficult to approach. They are not copied from a self-contained set of images that would lend their coherency to the paintings. Instead the photographs Richter copies stem from no particular photographer or physical setting but from a series of diverse connections stemming from an historical occurrence whose exact dimensions is still very much in question. However, in one very

obvious way Richter's paintings lend themselves to an easy understanding. Every painting is in black and white. Unlike Longo, Richter has chosen a medium in which color is the norm, as a result, a lack

Longo's drawings seem to write the ominous gaze of the story of Nazism into the photographs they copy.

of color is not simply entailed by the method by which the image is created but is capable of arising as a possibility among many others within the confines of painting. One can then see paint being forced to repro-

duce not just an image, but a photographic image. All the anonymity, objectivity, and passivity of the photograph clutches these paintings and they in turn implicate photography in all the subjectivity, aggressiveness, and forgetfulness of painting. In relation to the Baader-Meinhof case this two way incrimination continues questioning the heroism or even empathy of the dead prisoners, while simultaneously interrogating the finality, or truth of the story of these people as it is told through newspapers and historical writings.

Richter has painted in the language of photography while Longo has translated a photographic writing into a drawn one. And as a result Richter's paintings place the photograph like a bomb inside the history of painting, while Longo's drawings quietly wrap a specific history around the perimeter of the photographs they copy.

Stories emerge through and around photographs constantly. A photograph is a break in a series, in what seems an otherwise continuous flow of time, or history, or vision: it is the break within which narratives begin to be written. Two stories broken up in radically different ways by the photographs which surround them and tell them have been taken on by two artists who recently showed in New York City. Robert Longo and Gerhardt Richter have both chosen to reproduce the

photographs connected with these stories and place them within the hands of the history of manual reproduction. Longo has drawn his greatly enlarged images in charcoal while Richter has made a series of oil paintings all small enough to hang comfortably together in one room at the Museum of Modern Art.

Both these stories hinge upon traumatic events through which the central characters are forced off the scene. Richter's series *October, 18,*

Malkmus

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crafted, clearly formed songs to shapeless and self-indulgent wanking. The positive critical corollary to this, expounded in magazine reviews surrounding the album from Rolling Stone to Raygun, was essentially an image of literate college-rockers casting off adolescent thrills for a newfound maturity, the product of this possibly their most realized album to date. I think the best reading of the album combines a bit of the two responses.



Stephen Malkmus, then, distinguishes itself from the bulk of Pavement in a way similar to that in which *Terror Twilight* did, but with one major difference, which is that on the former the 'rehabilitating' earnestness is communicated through a decidedly and unequivocally poppy medium. So we have no drawn-out songs, no really jarring stray from verse-

chorus-verse structure, but at the same time a sense of less edge. Or maybe it's less attitude. But who needs that? some might ask, and thankfully the solo record does at its best points offer something better: something put across in the loopy guitar work (as close to Built to Spill as one can imagine Malkmus playing) that elevates "Church on White" at its end; something involved in the way Malkmus sweetly croons the word "divine" (the way only he can 'sweetly croon') at the end

of "Deado"; and something about the small synthesized Jamaican steel drum melody that pops in and out of "Vague Space."

Stephen Malkmus and the Jicks play Irving Plaza in NYC on March 30th. A three-song single for "Discretion Grove" and the Stephen Malkmus LP are both out on Matador now.

A Brief Look at *Snatch* (ha ha)

Guy Ritchie reinigorates the post-Tarantino gangster genre

Guy Ritchie's newest film is a frenetic, creative, and above all coherent pulp amalgam of low-level London crooks, sadistic mob men, bumbled heist plans, seedy locales, and ultrablooded, ultrafunny humor, given momentum by an 83 carat diamond that everyone wants to get their hands on. In trying to break the film down, critical responses to *Snatch* have declared it one part Pulp Fiction and one part *Trainspotting*; but even though pointing out these two obvious influences may speak to the film's attitude, its candor, and its pace, it doesn't hit the mark square on the head exactly either. For sure, there are wicked cool quips delivered in thick English accents, as well as thoroughly desensitized, unwavering looks at violence at its most drawn out, most unglamorous, but absent is the implicit moral agenda of *Trainspotting* and the thematic resonance of Pulp Fiction. The former was a character-concerned drama with emotional ups and downs (something *Snatch* certainly is not) and the latter, through its brilliant infusion of insane intelligence and (unsentimental) morality with the stock pulp setup, achieved a transcendent obliteration of the 'gangster genre' (something *Snatch*

certainly isn't interested in doing, at least not on the thematic level). To make these distinctions is hardly to suggest or entail a criticism along the lines of "All style, little substance," though, which has been another critical m u r m u r . Because while *Snatch* is a complex and clever interweaving of several different perspectives around a central noir plotline (a la *Two Days in the Valley*), a nonlinear manipulator of time (a la *Run Lola Run*), and visually built around a frenzy of freeze frames, jump cuts, and disorienting camerawork (a la all of the above), it does not fall into cheap nihilism or filmic novelty-store gimmickiness-and, also in a completely uncheap way, it's



by Cleofus Murdoch

hilarious. The part missing in the Tarantino-*Trainspotting* break down, really, is a mention of the type of movie characterized by recent swaggering, playful and well-crafted Elmore Leonard adaptations. *Snatch* is Get Shorty on amphetamines, in other words, with an added fetish for shock.

Crouching Tiger and Ang Lee's Alchemist's Trick

by Jonah Weiner



True to the form of the Hong Kong action movies it takes as its model, Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* builds a patently simple (and perhaps more or less simplistic) plot line around intense, exaggerated, and highly choreographed fight scenes, which provide the film with its real center of gravity and attention. Many audiences have called the film a "children's movie," a categorization brought about no doubt by the romantic and heroic motifs of doomed love, friendship, loyalty, and redemption that the script takes for its thematic material, and no less by the fact that the film's moments of bloodshed—indeed, of physical contact, even—can be counted up on the fingers of one hand. I agree with these audiences, as far as it seems that in likening

Crouching Tiger to children's movies one can get closer to putting a finger on the something methodic, genuine, and charming (in the least patronizing sense of that word—is 'spellbinding' any better?) it has about it.

In terms of pace, tone, and spirit, *Crouching Tiger* has much in common with *Dreams*, Akira Kurosawa's similarly spellbinding (though in ways more devastating) subtitled and surrealist-expressionistic film; the narrative simplicity and visual poetry of which also resonated deeply. But whereas visual poetry in *Dreams* meant landscape shots of brilliantly colored fields, silent snowstorms that almost completely blanched the screen, and a long, near-motionless tracking shot of fox-masked dancers moving slowly through birch trees, in

soar over twenty-foot tall walls, skip across water, and, in one of the film's most breathless scenes, balance high atop swooshing and bending bamboo trees, swinging swords at each other with all the strange grace and vertigo of popped jacks-in-the-box.

Speaking of this choreography (and of the film's special effects, as the two are inseparable) a certain kinship can be drawn between *Crouching Tiger* and *The Matrix* (both films share the same choreographer), but with the important exception that the choreography and physicality of the latter, pervaded by violence and hormones to the point of vulgarity, contained only a slim and smothered bit of the implicit peacefulness—at once expressionistic, ambiguously play-

ful, and dance like-of the former. *Crouching Tiger's* earliest fight scenes are pure dreams: they occur at night, in empty courtyards and across rooftops under which the majority of the living are fast asleep, and are staged against the backdrops of either hypnotic pounding drums or near-perfect quiet, as the soundtrack, which includes the already spare and sorrowful cello arrangements performed by Yo Yo Ma, is taken wholly out of prominence. These scenes—the first appearance of the film's surreality—set a strong tone for *Crouching Tiger* with profound restraint, conveying this tone in nothing more than a close up of two characters' quickly locking and unlocking legs, or in the forward propulsion of one character as he silently chases another from rooftop to rooftop in a manner more akin to gazelles than human beings; the camera, as affected as we are, peers down at a ninety degree angle just overhead.

Aside from its expressionistic approach to action and violence the film also, as was mentioned above, draws its feel of simplicity from the themes it touches upon and from the way functions of the plot are clearly built around the spectacle, around the fights. The overarching theme in *Crouching Tiger* is that of individual struggle against the force of tradition and code, and different themes play off of this general tension: Jade Fox (Cheng Pei-pei) is a woman gifted in martial arts who, abused and turned away by the prestigious all-male Wudan school, lives the subversive life of a criminal; Jen Wu (Zhang Ziyi) is an aristocrat's daughter who falls in love with Lo (Chang Chen), an outlaw

and bandit, their love doomed by relative social standing and an imminent arranged marriage; Li Mu Bei (Chow Yun-Fat) is a famed warrior who decides to leave the life of violence but, indebted to his master by a code of honor, is sucked back in; Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh) loves him, but is prevented from acting by indebtedness to her husband, killed in battle.

There is no doubt, then, of the subordinate position assigned to the film's narrative in respect to its action, but what is so interesting about *Crouching Tiger*... is the commerce and interplay between these two parts. Whereas in the stock Action Film the plot is often nothing more than so much facilitating filler between action sequences, Lee here imbues the scenes of action with morality and concerns not unrelated to the movie's thematic material. One great example of this is the sequence in which Jen chases after Lo on horseback, shooting arrows at him that he narrowly dodges. This sequence must be, if not the first, certainly the best seduction-via-chase scene ever staged in a film (interestingly, it mimics and foreshadows, in a mix of playfulness and seriousness, what will be the ultimately contested terms of their relationship). And while the relationship between action and theme is not in all cases as easy to put into words as it may be in this one, it has everything to do with Lee's alchemist's trick—the effects of which leave no corner of the film untouched—of stylizing and choreographing violence into a beautiful and challenging representation of its opposite.

Terrorism or National Defense? The Debate Continues

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people to direct their own affairs.

In his paragraph on the issue Catz asks rhetorically, "What is the real cause of the Palestinians' outrage?" He goes on to wonder why the PLO leadership chose to reject Barak's "super generous" concessions, though those concessions would have allowed Israel to divide and retain control over large portions of Palestinian lands through many illegal settlements, said nothing about control over water, allowed Israel to retain de facto control of east Jerusalem, and

most importantly denied the Palestinian refugees the right to return to or any compensation for their original homes. Essentially it is "unreasonable" that the Palestinians demand to have a state with a contiguous territory and the minimal ability to control, use, and defend its resources and land qualities that have come to be almost synonymous with the modern definition of a nation-state.

Catz's final argument is that focusing criticism on Israel is unbalanced and implicitly anti-Semitic. But in arguing this he ignores political realities.

Once again the Palestinians, in the view of these particular supporters of Israel, apparently do not deserve the fundamental rights of a nation.

Catz's final argument, after he seeks to vindicate Israeli behavior, is that focusing criticism on Israel is unbalanced and implicitly anti-Semitic. But in arguing this he ignores political realities. Yes, to choose one example, events in Sudan are horrifying, though atrocities are by no means the monopoly of Khartoum. However, to my knowledge, the US role in Sudan's extended war has been limited to assistance to militarist elements in the SPLA, which has undoubtedly exacerbated the conflict, and to blocking some African mediation attempts. This is a very different role than the wholesale financing, arming, and defence of a government that we see in the US-Israeli relationship. Many believe that Israel has been able to continue its repressive regime largely because of America's steadfast assistance.

Hence it makes sense for us here to focus on the Israel-Palestine issue, as opposed to other conflicts with a more marginal American role.

In any case, while we debate these issues, events in Israel are continuing their downward trend. The death toll now stands at 383 people, of whom 52 are Jewish, 318 are Palestinian, and 13 are Israeli Arabs. According to B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, a total of 11,049 Palestinian civilians and 308 Israeli civilians have been injured in the months of violence. The economic blockade of Palestinian territories remains in place, with UNRWA reporting that 123,000 families are now in need of emergency assistance. UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen also reports that 85% of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are now dependent on UN food aid. The Palestinian movement itself has shifted somewhat, with less public protest and more resort to underground forms of violence such as the car bombs that exploded yesterday.

Finally, of course, on Wednesday 59% of Israeli voters chose to have Ariel Sharon as their Prime Minister. Given Sharon's history this sends a very dark message to Palestinians and the world. Sharon is widely reviled for having orchestrated the 1982 invasion of

Lebanon, during which Israel laid siege to Beirut and attempted to take control of the city. Some 17,000 Lebanese civilians died as a result of shelling and illegal phosphorus bombs during the two month long siege, which the Canadian ambassador compared to the devastation of Berlin in 1945. The siege was capped off with the massacre in Sabra and Shatila, when Israel's Lebanese Christian allies slaughtered an estimated 2,000 unarmed Palestinians in an orgy of violence that was accompanied by rapes and mutilation of the dead. A subsequent Israeli government investigation tried to cover up the Israeli role, but nevertheless found Sharon "indirectly responsible" for the massacre.

Such is the ilk of Sharon and his allies. Such is the ilk of the people who now form the Israeli government. Again, atrocities and hate speech (which is far from a

Palestinian monopoly) on all sides deserve our condemnation. Perhaps the only point on which I agree with Catz is that peace is vital to the survival of all sides. But peace cannot be generated on a dehumanizing ideology that labels one side a "nation" and the other a society of terrorists and fanatics.

In any case, while we debate these issues, events in Israel are continuing their downward trend. The death toll now stands at 383 people, of whom 52 are Jewish, 318 are Palestinian, and 13 are Israeli Arabs.

Many in both Israel and elsewhere believe that we will never have peace until the right wing in Israel and the United States accept that the Palestinians are a nation and a people like any other: one that desires such things as a stable home for their children, compensation for stolen property, access to water, medicine, and schools, and fundamentally the right to control their bodies, their homes, and their affairs. Peace built on injustice will never last.

Redefining boundaries: Said questions nationality and media representation

...continued from page 1

bearers of an advanced culture and we should have the benefits of that even if it means subjugating lesser people.' The whole concept of 'lesser' civilizations and so on is, unfortunately, one of the burdens that humanism has to bear.

Then you have the great period after the Second World War, the decolonization and the elimination of the classical empire. You have then an emergence of a new world. I mean first there was the Cold War and the division of the world into the forces of the so-called free world, and the forces of communism and totalitarianism, or what came to be socially called the Third World. Then, with the end of the Cold War, you have a world which is basically dominated by one single power and what has been called globalization.

This means that we now have a universal system of global capitalism, and more important from my point of view, we also have a world of instant communication, where people can tune into any place.

Now I think an invigorated humanism is absolutely necessary in other words if we still believe that every individual human being is an agent of her own destiny, and that can only come as a result of education. And above all, and this is my main point in all of this, the development of a critical stance where you are able to take in the history that is very quickly being effaced by these very rapid systems of communication. Only in that way, by developing a critical sense of what the present is can you maintain a humane search for co-existence, for justice, for peace, everywhere.

Free Press: As the East/West opposition continues to change shape, do you see the need for some kind of new political configuration and/or new paradigms within which to work?

Said: Yes. I think all those, unfortunately they seem to be even more reified now, you know Huntington's notions of a clash of civilizations, the sense of nationalism you see everywhere. India, Pakistan; Europe, non-Europe; Africa and Europe; in the Middle East, for example, Israelis and Arabs. All of polarized Nationalist units are, although they seem to be merging in a post-modern world, are really regressions to a much earlier period of Nationalism in which cultural conflicts are aggravated, and are turned into new forms of belligerence.

I mean, look at the debate in our society about immigration, and in Europe the same thing, this idea that there is a fundamental kind of pure nationality which is being defended, by making sure that North African immigrants in Europe don't enter. This kind of hysteria, and the trade, of course, in immigration is all about the reemergence of barriers. And I think that is not only a regression, but a very kind of dangerous, in my opinion stupid, acceptance of these divisions.

Whereas, in fact, the realities

are that no matter where you look, certainly in this society, everything is mixed. You can't talk about a pure American, although God knows the Bush Administration and people like Lynne Cheney, who used to be the head of the Foundation of the Humanities, are all about defending our culture - you know, this talk about the Founding Fathers, sort of laundering the past, to have emerged from it, a kind of pure American essence.

Whereas, I would say, put that against, and you see how quickly it dissolves, say, the kind of work that Howard Zinn does in *The People's History of the United States*. I mean, this is an immigrant society to talk about American this, that, or the other thing is complete nonsense. Because, I mean, the power of the society is diversity, and we really haven't learned how to accept that as something that is a given, rather than something you try to forget, and go around, and try to find some simpler form of unity.

So I think the labels like East and West; and American and foreign - underlying all that is a kind of phony, and in my opinion very dangerous, binary polarism, of us versus them. Everything I've tried to do has been to show not only the inadequacy of that, but also the falseness of it, and the kind of damage it does to the complexity of human experience.

Free Press: How would you characterize new emerging paradigms?

Said: Well, they're obviously transnational. Richard Faulk, the Princeton political science/international law expert, talks about something called globalization from below, where you have, for example, the emergence of the environmental movement. I mean, that's not an American thing, you know, it's across boundaries. It unites people in Australia with people in South Africa with people in Sweden. In other words, concerns that are transnational - the Women's Movement, the Human Rights Movement, the movement against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the whole notion of war crimes.

What's interesting, of course, and terrible for us as Americans, is that the US has mostly opposed those movements because they're thought of as infringements on our sovereignty. And I think that is the new paradigm, that is to say the notion of citizenship, on a very wide scale, instead of just national citizenship, the sense of belonging to a complex of human groups that are really across the board, and raise questions, like why should we, in the United States, who represent five or six percent of the world's population consume 40 percent of the world's energy resources.

So that's the new paradigm, and it's fairly more complicated, and difficult to deal with, than something simple like, say, "We're Americans," whatever that means, "He's a good American," or "This is un-American," you know, that whole thing.

Free Press: Shifting gears a bit, in the year 2001, how would you describe the changes or constants in representations of Palestinians in the US media, and more specifically can you discuss the ways in which the Middle-East has been collapsed into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Said: Certainly that, but it's been done in a very kind of lazy, in my opinion unscrupulous, way. I did survey last fall, for an article I wrote, and I surveyed about 98 or 99 news broadcasts about the Intifada, and only four of them, out of 100 let's say, mentioned the fact that these were occupied territories. That and the constant reference to Middle Eastern violence, and Palestinian violence, obscures the fact that there is a military occupation, and has been since '67, and what is going on is basically an anti-colonial rebellion.

And the simple truth, that you can't have peace ... I mean on the one hand there is all this talk about the peace process, and you see Dennis Ross of Nightline, and Charlie Rose, and McNeal-Lehrer are endlessly going on about how Arafat destroyed the peace process, and how Barak was so courageous, etc., but what they don't talk about is how, in a period of seven years, the number of Israeli settlements increased, the military occupation essentially continued in far worse terms than before the Oslo Peace Accords, so in other words more settle-

ments, more roads, more divisions, more appropriations of land, making it impossible for Palestinians to work, collective punishment, the closures of the territories - all that contributed to this uprising, and make it not only understandable, but make you ask, "Why didn't it happen before?"

So, I think a major reason for that are the inadequacies of representation, where it's assumed that Palestinians are savage, fundamentally, terrorists. I mean, the constant reference in the media, particularly from Israeli spokesmen (which are never questioned) to "All this terrorist uprising." Why is it terrorism? Why isn't it thought of as anti-colonial resistance? And the UN entitles people to resist, by any means possible, military occupation.

Free Press: Over the years, your ideas about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have shifted. What is your position now in terms of finding a solution, and whether peace is a feasible goal, particularly in light of Sharon's recent election and present conditions in the Middle East.

Said: By the year 2010, and I was talking about it last night with an Israeli friend, less than ten years, there will be demographic parity between them, there will no longer be a Jewish majority, which is what exists now. At that point, the idea, first of all of separation, in

such narrow space, a tiny space, is impossible, physically not possible; and second of all, the idea that two people equal in number should be unequal in status is also unmanageable.

That's why I was so upset, as were many Israelis, with the advent of Sharon, I mean, Sharon is a regression to the palace, when an Israeli army can march into a place like Lebanon and say, "We're going to drive out the PLO and set up a new republic and we'll sign a peace treaty with Israel." I mean that kind of mentality, which has been Sharon's trademark all his life, that a few attacks will do it, (especially if you kill a few Arabs, as if to say "That's the only language they understand,") that's completely unacceptable in the world today.

Of course many Arabs, many Palestinians say, "These Jews of Israel are basically intruders, let's send them away, let's send them back to Poland and America and wherever they came from." And I say that's again humanly unacceptable you can't just as Palestinians were driven out in 1948 you can't now set about to plan the exodus and eviction and ethnic cleansing of another people. Therefore, the only acceptable idea, or vision, is some form of coexistence, where they can live together, not separated by these boundaries which are based on inequality.

Free Press: And how do you envision that?

Said: One state, a bi-national state, based on the concept of two people. I mean, Switzerland has done it, the Belgians have done it, certainly South Africa. In other words there are many models that go beyond the notion of partition, that envisage a notion of citizenship, I come back to this idea, as the common denominator, not ethnography, but allow self-determination for groups within it - if the Jews want to live as Jews in a Jewish community that's certainly allowed, I don't

see any problem with it, but not at the expense of other communities who become coolies, or don't have rights, or are driven out.

I think a bi-national single state is really needed. And were it to succeed, were it to come into existence, it would be a tremendous liberating force in the whole area, because it would obviously be based on democracy, and equality for people, men and women, and it would begin to chip away these national security states, like Syria, Iraq, Egypt, even Egypt.

Free Press: What needs to happen before this is possible?

Said: I'm all for education, and the exploration of a past, and seeing it in all of its complexity and horror, and the richness that is latent in it, that can, I won't say bring people together, it's a kind of silly formula, but makes people understand that willy-nilly they are bound together by all sorts of bonds which have hitherto been very easy to ignore, and I'm not for ignoring them.

What I say very often when I go to the Arab world, it's a disgrace that there isn't a single Arab university today that offers a course on Israeli society, or that offers a course in Hebrew, and it's even

more disgraceful that that's the case with Palestinian universities which mostly ignore Israel in their curriculum, and they live within five miles of the place, and that's been the history of the conflict from the Arab point of view, sort of ignorance of Israel

and the Israelis, as if to say "It's an artificial entity, we're not going to recognize it, we're not going to talk about it." I mean, that's catastrophically unacceptable, and Israelis on the other hand, if you visit in Tel Aviv, have no sense of what's taking place ten miles away in Rabon that's scandalous, that's a tremendous indictment of an entire generation of educators who have allowed this situation to go on.

Free Press: Over the last twenty years, the ideas presented in *Orientalism* have certainly influenced ethnography and literary criticism, to take two examples. Where do you see the most interesting or even successful incorporation of your ideas?

Said: I think there's a stronger awareness of how knowledge is formed, and not given, I think there's a new questioning of authority, of authoritative and sometimes tyrannical kinds of knowledge, and I think I've contributed to that sense, that you really have to ask questions - not just in *Orientalism*, but in my book on the intellectuals and cultural imperialism and my recent stuff - the idea is that anybody can do it, basically, what it requires is commitment and dedication. To me, to read a novel is to read a form of historical experience that's connected to the experience of a community, or of a generation, you understand what I'm trying to say?

