

Third Rail

The Award-Winning Political-Arts Magazine of the College of Staten Island / CUNY | 2005 : Issue 1



**Free CSI
Tuition?**



Third Rail is pleased to announce that we have been honored by two prestigious organizations. Firstly, *Third Rail* has been named one of the ten best collegiate publications by *The Nation*, America's premiere progressive news magazine. Secondly, *Third Rail* has been awarded the Campus Alternative Journalism Award for Best Reporting by the *Independent Press Association*. For more details logon to www.ThirdRailMag.com

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STILL CLINTON'S SHOW?
BY WILLIAM GREIDER

Third Rail

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CSI & CUNY NEWS



City Councilman Charles Barron

Free CSI & CUNY Tuition?

A free CUNY? Sheer lunacy? Perhaps not, says City Councilman Charles Barron. Amid the strenuous objections of students, last June, the City University of New York Board of Trustees voted to raise tuition for the first time since 1995. "If free tuition makes fiscal sense, what is standing in the way?" he asks before providing his own answer, "Institutional racism!"

Councilman Barron is using his position as Education Committee Chair to announce two public hearings: the first, on Sept. 24, will cover the effects of the new tuition hike; the second, on Oct. 27, will consider the reinstatement of a free CUNY. CUNY was a free educational institution for 129 years, from its founding in 1847 to 1976 when it succumbed to political pressure. Open admissions were instituted at CUNY in 1969 in response to a student demonstration against an alleged racist admissions policy.

In 1975, President Ford threatened to withhold federal funding to New York City unless free tuition and open admissions were eliminated from CUNY, complaining that one of the largest universities in the world was offering free tuition to "any high-school graduate, rich or poor, who wants to attend."

But open admissions lasted until the Board of Trustees voted in 1998 to eliminate remedial instruction from the senior colleges and sharply curtailed it in the community colleges. That decision was greeted by a chorus of protesters, 24 of whom were arrested, after public hearings at CUNY's administrative headquarters had drawn outraged faculty, students and alumni to speak out. Two of the most prominent were Arthur Miller and Wendy Wasserstein, who said they would not have been able to graduate from CUNY without remedial instruction.

Most CUNY trustees were and are intimately involved with such right-wing think-tanks as the Empire Foundation, the Scaife Family Funds, the Olin Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. As pointed out by H. Bruce Franklin, professor of English at Rutgers University, CUNY served for over a century as "a boulevard for success" until left-wing activists, the Black Power movement and multi-cultural ideals invigorated the campuses and infuriated the power structure. In March 1998, an Empire Foundation report was

released that demanded a return to a CUNY-wide curriculum focused on Western Civilization and the elimination of such "fluff courses" as Sociology of Women, African Literature and the Third World in the Modern Era.

Tom Carroll, an officer of Change-New York (part of the Empire Foundation) explained, "Loony professors shouldn't be able to force grievance courses like those based on racism and feminism on students."

In March of 2003, New York Gov. George Pataki appointed Benno Schmidt as Chair of the CUNY Board of Trustees. Schmidt has spent the last 10 years as CEO of Edison Schools, a corporation devoted to the privatization of the public school system.

The greatest obstacle to college entrance and graduation for immigrant, Hispanic, and African-American students are two CUNY-wide English tests, graded for structural correctness only, thus eliminating the need to acquire skills of intellectual inquiry. Councilman Barron points out that linguists know there is no "bad language," only different ones. He attributes failure of many African-American students to pass standardized English tests to disrespect for their mode of speech. A teacher should not "correct" an African-American construction, but advise the student to translate it into standard English. "No one advocates teaching Ebonics, but those who teach black students should be taught the history of black language and culture."

Unfortunately, little has changed since Vice President Spiro Agnew complained three decades ago about too many black college students, and President Richard Nixon's educational adviser, Roger Freeman, warned about "producing an educated proletariat." Today, President Bush opposes permitting college work to fulfill welfare requirements because it would cost "a bunch more money and some people could spend their entire five years on welfare going to college."

by Pandi Hopkins

Burnt Rubber

by Marc Batko

*Instead of radical conversion,
sharing work and assets,
rewarding poets and writers,
not only speculators and con artists,
Burnt rubber became a language,
a leverage and a lifestyle,
a false hope
and a false security
conferred by a false consciousness
in a culture of conformity
and mutual congratulation
where vision and utopia were lost.
Language and community
are in permanent crisis
amid repressing and fading out
everything unpleasant.*

*Was speed glorified by the media
so present, past and future dissolve
as means are confused with ends
and the part mistaken for the whole?
A world of interdependence
can be envisioned
where stories of liberation
eclipse the stories of office buildings,
where the market isn't the omnipotent ruler
reducing life to a shopping mall
but a means
fostering human development.
Change of consciousness
from auto-dependence in the car-tastrophe
is still
in its infancy.*

*Intoxicated with itself,
the triumphalist culture is threatened with solipsism
as vanity and narcissism
threatened Narcissus gazing at the mirror.
There is power in our question,
our proclamation and our vision!
Are human rights the same as market rights?
Do we ever learn from other cultures?
Do we obliterate the memory of other people?
Is growth endless and undifferentiated?
Can market progress threaten human progress?
Can Wall Street overshadow Main Street?
The rich one can lose all things without sorrow.
Buddhist enlightenment like Jesus' parables can change reality.
True wealth is receiving and sharing
reconfiguring the plutonium economy of nonstop consumerism
where future generations refuse the celebration of burnt rubber.*

Earth Warrior

Brown veins don't bleed as hard, able to
withstand tears, starvation and mudslides.
Keeping it all in, always bearing fruit
that is nourishing. Roots ingrained into
Earth, not even wind can knock it down.
Brown veins. Brown uterus.
Holding life together with strong, but weak limbs.
I am earth. My thighs rubbed together
And created you.
Don't think you can screw with me!!!
Polluting my breathing space.
Trees don't grow in Brooklyn,
not in this infected air space.
Bend down and call me mother.
For ruining this body my ancestors has took
generations to create.



by Leslie Ann Murray

Leslie Ann Murray has published a poetry chapbook,
Queen Without A Name.
For more info about her book, contact her at thandlestories@aol.com



THIRTY FIFTH
OPEN
ADMISSIONS
ANNIVERSARY

Open Admissions In CUNY:

A Major Victory of the Opressed

When the history of civil rights struggles is summarized on corporate television, there will inevitably be footage of sit-ins at Greensboro lunch counters and of MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech. If the viewer is very lucky, there might be scenes of Malcolm X or the Black Panther Party. But one of the most important battles of the freedom movements of the Black and Puerto Rican communities that you will never hear about in such places is the CUNY open admissions strike.

Before 1970, CUNY was a sea of whiteness in a city that was fast becoming majority people of color. It was a scene straight out of South African Apartheid. City College was known as "the white Rhodesia of Harlem." This despite CUNY's stated mission from the very beginning of providing higher education to the poor and disenfranchised of the city. In practice, this mission was limited to educating mainly poor and disenfranchised white men. It's no wonder then that the closed doors of CUNY became a major target of the burgeoning mass movements of the city.

On April 22, 1969, the Black and Puerto Rican students of City College, with support from the progressive section of the white students, chained shut the doors of South Campus, renamed the school the University of Harlem, and declared a strike.

Over the course of more than two weeks, the

campus witnessed the campus turned into a police state by the administration, a divided faculty, and furious organizing on the part of the students. The turning point was a pitched battle between about 30 Black students and a mob of a couple hundred white racists opposed to the strike. The strikers routed the white mob. Subsequently, divisions in the opposition began to sharpen, and some of them came out in support of the strike. Eventually the administration caved in and acceded to the five demands of the strikers.

Why was the Open Admissions Strike so important?

OPEN ADMISSIONS FORCED CUNY to turn itself into an institution that gave more degrees to students of color than any other higher education institution in the country. In fact, CUNY grants more such degrees than the next two institutions after it, SUNY and the whole Cal State system, combined. The direct benefit to the Black, Latino and Asian populations of all the hundreds of thousands of people coming out of CUNY with a higher education they might not otherwise have is immeasurable.

OPEN ADMISSIONS WAS A VICTORY FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION STRUGGLES of Blacks and Puerto Ricans.

by the Freedom Road Socialist Organization
www.freedomroad.org

But as is often the case, this victory on the part of the part of some of society's most downtrodden was one that served everybody in the end. That's a lesson the white supremacist ruling class wants us to forget.

OPEN ADMISSIONS SET A STANDARD OF OPEN ACCESS that created momentum for schools across the country to follow. The shock waves the victory sent out were felt both as pressure on other administrations and as inspiration to thousands of students of color everywhere fighting to open up their own institutions.

OPEN ADMISSIONS CHALLENGED THE REIGNING CAPITALIST VIEW that education is about providing the student customer with a diploma that has the highest possible exchange value so the graduate can turn himself into an elite corporate commodity. In its place it put forward the radical notion that education is about self-improvement on the individual level, about all of us becoming the best, most developed individuals we can become. More than that, education is about the uplift of the downtrodden communities, about the advancement of oppressed peoples in our society.

OPEN ADMISSIONS TAUGHT A LESSON that relatively small numbers of people at the core of a much broader struggle, with the right strategy and under appropriate conditions, can shake the foundations of heaven. It gives us an inspiring lesson against demoralization, that fundamental change in institutions is possible and that it always starts with a relative handful of committed people.

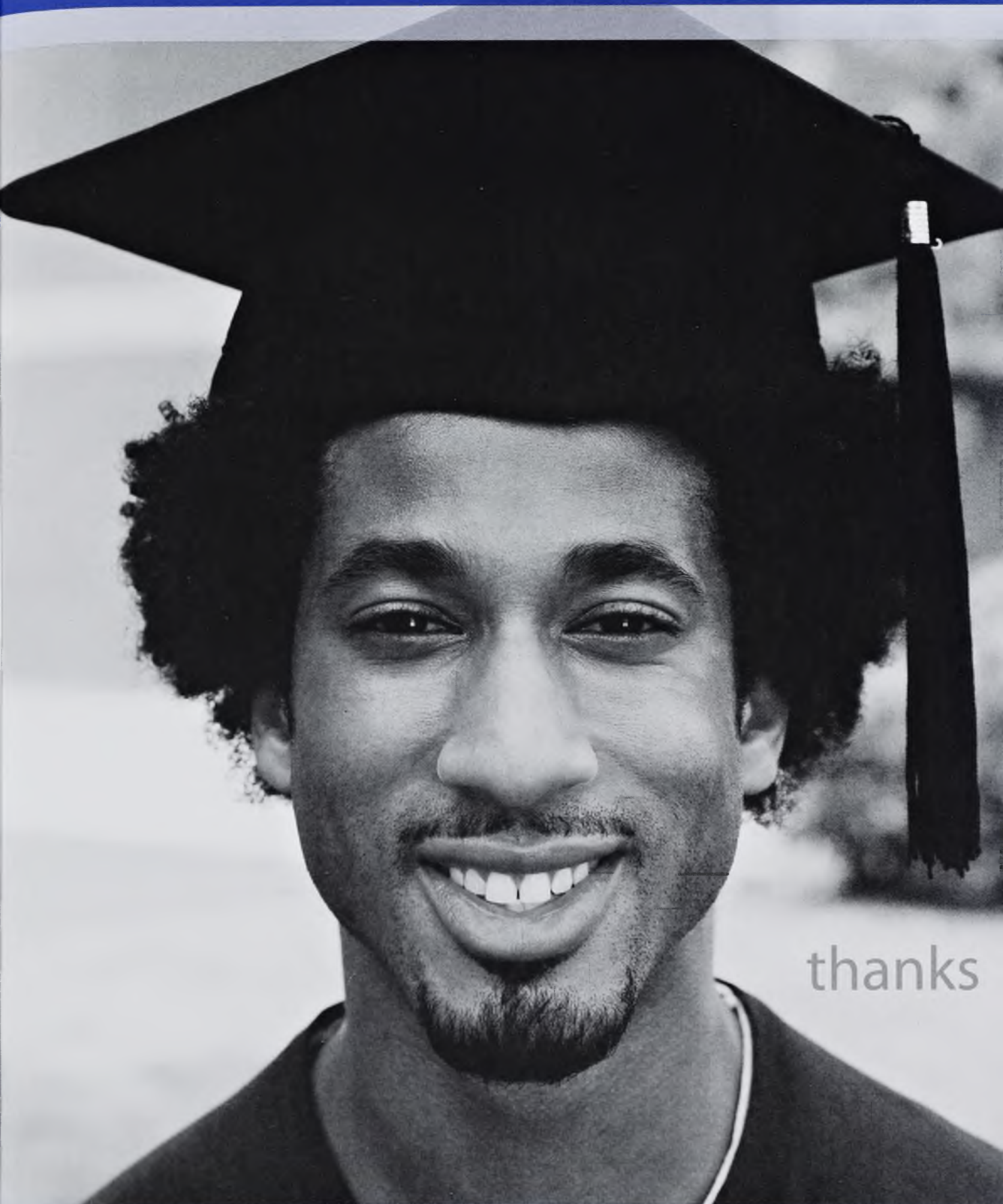
On the other hand, it reminds us that if that handful is to succeed, it must not stay isolated. In the end, victory can only be achieved through the involvement and support of the broad masses of people whose interests are at stake. The open admissions victory was won in the context of an entire society in motion. Without that context, the support from the community, which was absolutely essential to the victory, wouldn't have been nearly as broad nor as active as it was.

Since the 1969 victory, the enemy has been try-

ing to beat us back, in one attack after another. We must fight them every step of the way. Even battles we fight and lose are important because they slow and limit the advances of the ruling class against our interests, and preserve as much of our gains won earlier as possible. Even today, after years of retreat and an outright frontal assault on open admissions by former Mayor Giuliani, we still have many aspects of the policy preserved, even as others have been damaged or eliminated entirely. This way, when the next big upsurge throughout society comes around (and it's likely to be sooner rather than later), we will have a higher starting point from which to push things forward.

These days, the vision of higher education as liberation, which motivated the heroes of 1969, has been largely crushed. The white supremacist ruling class has done everything it can to bury that vision under mountains of talk about "diversity" and "affirmative action." In their view, higher education is about reproducing the layers of elites – the ruling class itself and the various managerial layers below them – needed to perpetuate the rule of their class. Within this vision, giving an elite education to a fraction of the oppressed nationality populations in this country is crucial to them for a number of reasons. First, giving the elites exposure to a "diversity" of populations and cultures gives them experiences and knowledge that will help them more effectively rule over and manage those populations. Second, granting privileges to a small proportion of oppressed nationality people helps to buy off some of the leaders of those populations and thus to create a class of vendidos that can be led to act against the interests of the communities they come from. Finally, a measure of "diversity" is useful to provide a façade to the existing white supremacist system, to make it appear to be fair to anyone who doesn't take the time to look beneath the surface.

The main mechanism in higher education the ruling class uses to achieve this "diversity" is affirmative action. It is interesting to see corporate elites defending affirmative action programs in higher



thanks

CSI & CUNY NEWS

education and in corporate hiring policies as being in their interests, against the more clueless white supremacists on the ideological right who attack these programs. We should keep in mind when we defend affirmative action programs in other places [as defend them we must] that they are but a pale shadow of the open admissions policy that was won at CUNY.

There is a final lesson that has been taught to us not so much by the 1969 strike but by all of the years of retrenchment since then. Mass student organizations come and go. Leaders graduate and move on. Relationships and alliances with other mass-based groups on other campuses and in the communities dissipate. The 1969 struggle and all the subsequent struggles in CUNY have turned out

thousands of revolutionaries who understand the real nature of white-supremacist bourgeois rule and who have a vision for a fundamentally different society. Some of those revolutionary students have remained committed and have fought the good fight in other places, but many have dropped out of the struggle, with nothing left but memories of fire.

The only certain way to build a movement that can be sustained over the years, and one that

can connect the struggles throughout all sectors of society is through revolutionary organization. It provides the training, the information flow across the generations, the links between sectors that otherwise aren't made. If you're an activist and you consider yourself a revolutionary, you should be in a revolutionary organization, looking for one, or trying to build one, along with maintaining your work in a mass-based group. That's how we will create two, three, many CUNYs.



me too

thanks

thankyou



turn me



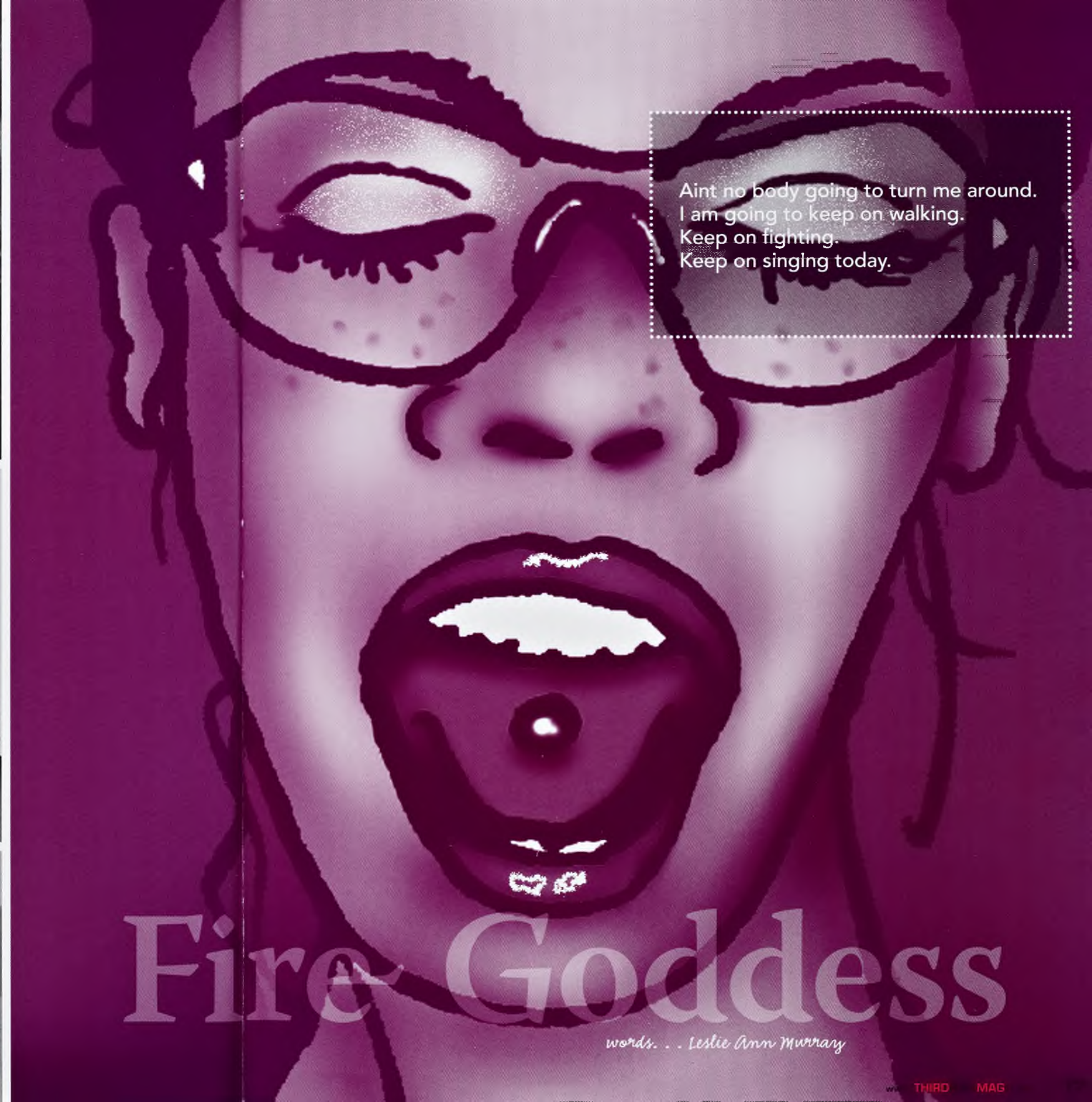
walking



keep on



fighting



Aint no body going to turn me around.
I am going to keep on walking.
Keep on fighting.
Keep on singing today.

Fire Goddess

words. . . Leslie Ann Murray

POETIC JUSTICE AT THE MUDDY CUP

By Shawn Fisher

Amidst an island of bubblegum pop symmetry lies a little hovel, an obscurity of culture in its pure and raw form, as top-forty muzac calls the attention of Kmart shoppers to herd over to the latest blue light name brand want. All the while as the masses whiz by in their Volvos and Hummers blaring WuTang and Christina (Staten's so-called contribution to society), they pay no attention to the small little rabbit hole known as the Muddy Cup. On Tuesday nights a peek through the looking glass reveals an interwoven group of artists, poets, sirens and writers. Gathered together in the backroom like some World War II French resistance fighters reciting their sonnets, sestinas and hai-ku's with such zeal as if their poems were weapons being used in a plot to rise up, overthrow corporate tyranny and restore to the world, the liberty of cultural diversity.

Or could these comrades in intellectual arms simply be seeking a safe haven to enjoy the arts without criticism or com-

mercialism, a sanctuary like the one Quasimodo lost or that Logan 5 never found during his run? The Muddy Cup offers just this, a safe out-of-the way place for an individual to go and just enjoy or even express, a little counter culture, as Alice Austin and Audre Lorde contributed along these same streets. "Staten Island is such an intellectual wasteland; I mean literally our geographical and social center is the Staten Island mall...The Muddy Cup tries to be a place where anybody can come," says Jeremy Condit, the host of poetry night.

The Muddy Cup is clearly an effort to restore Staten Island's cultural health. Just to walk past the bathtub of books, the internet stations, the bubbling sound of hot java, and the smell of scrumptious desserts and into the back-room of the Muddy Cup, on poetry night (officially called Open Mic. Poetry Night) if not any other is to walk through time to the early eighties where its second-hand brick façade and curb-side couches harkens back to the backdrops of the as yet sold-out MTV vjs and the virgining medium of music videos (yes Virginia, MTV really did play music videos). One half expects Martha Quinn to show up and introduce a then refreshingly original, New-Wave video from some English import, or something from that then obscure underground movement called rap.

Although this is not the case, we are instead treated to something even more special, Jeremy the host, who looks like he may have just stepped out of a Smith's video. With witty cantor and a respect for the art of poetry, this full-time EMT and part time bard orchestrates a cavalcade of loriets whose only desire is to enjoy and be enjoyed by anyone who wanders in and pulls up a chair. Long has the art of word weaving been the passion of this Staten Island native who is a former student of the College Of Staten Island and collector of typewriters. He treats each person with the nerve enough to stand before the mike and expose their inner thoughts before a room of known and unknown peers like a virgin, learning for the first time what it is to express the passion of one's soul. "The fact is I don't think Staten Island has many opportunities like this, there just aren't a lot of forums where people can come out

of the intellectual cold," says Jeremy.

With no preconceived notions and no critical disdain Jeremy always offers words of encouragement, advice if so desired along with a hearty welcome to return to the podium at any time the poets' hearts desire. It is safe to say that by day this post apocalyptic Shakespearean MC helps to mend the bodies of those in need and that by night he helps to mend the cultural body of Staten Island which has been beaten and left by the side of the road to rot. "It's half church and half circus, when somebody is up here on the stage they can speak their mind. And there isn't one person on the floor that has a damn right to say anything about it. When they're off it's an open forum, it's an open discussion. We throw a lot of ideas around between poetry, it's generally a good time," say Jeremy. Who also seeks solace in this moonlit job and adds. "This is definitely a release. During my day job I don't feel so much like me as just a vessel doing my job. This is where anyone can be themselves no shame or fear."

Some of the Cup's visitors are just strangers passing in the night, visitors from out of town, professionals trying out new material, even the occasional college field trip. Those who choose to stay a while are welcomed to pull up a seat and join in with the going on of a new extended family that lacks the judgmental glare of one's in-laws. "We have some people who live soap operas and you can tell just from the moment they get on stage, you can tell from the posture much less the words," says Jeremy. But be forewarned that the diversity of poets bring with them a diversity of emotions. Rage, love and sorrow are just as taste of the feelings you will sample at this feast of bards. There are poets that will give Viagra a run for its money. And others who would make Lorena Bobbitt look like a girl scout. Some will spark a furor inside your soul that you never knew you had and still more who will have you weeping more than a Benji movie could. He goes on to add, "There are some people who I never see, never talk to at any other opportunity. People who get up and get the thirty second glimpse into a world we probably need to know more about." And it is these souls that Jeremy tries to cultivate. "I think creating a positive environment like this where they can actually feel safe to be smart. Well that's something I never had growing up," say Jeremy.

Jeremy is not alone, however, in his endeavors at the Cup. As the ancient celluloid sage Yoda once said, "there is another" and that other would be Jack. "Jack is our resident brain. The man is the patron saint of Tuesday night," said Jeremy. And such is Jack's trust and the comfort surrounding poetry night that he displayed a most intimate side to himself when he took the stage this past summer to propose to his long time muse, Chantell. She most happily accepted the offer.

Such is the nature of the Muddy Cup and Poetry Night as it slips under the pop-culture radar, allowing those who would wear their hearts on their sleeve, not to have them unwantingly hemmed up. "The other boroughs don't know we exist they



Jack proposes to Chantell

call us diet-Brooklyn, they call us that other part of New Jersey," says Jeremy. Referring to the forgotten borough mentality Staten Island has been burdened with throughout its history. Yet like the Shaw family of the nineteenth century whose championing of abolition led to the diversity of the U.S. military, Jeremy Condit and the Muddy Cup have emerged from the commonality of Staten Island to offer the people something unheard of on twenty-first century Staten Island; cultural diversity.

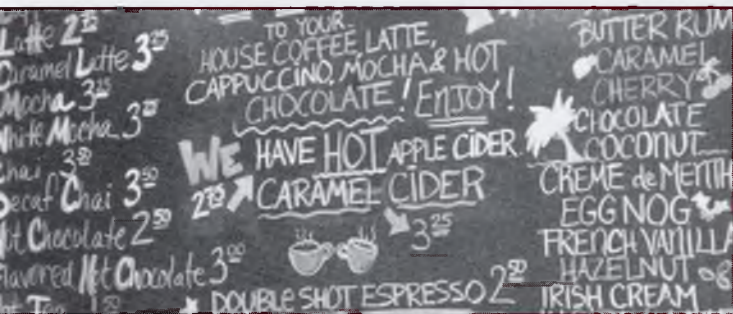
Of course, as for this gathering's location, like the 900 pound elephant sitting in your living room sipping Jolt Cola and watching The Jerry Springer Show, the obvious question must be brought to bear? Yes, The Muddy Cup is by definition a coffee bar, but by no means is this Jennifer Aniston's coffee bar. You will find friends here, but not of the plastic, kiss kiss type spotted in exhausted TGIF sitcoms or for that matter at any suburban diner. No, save that for any of the infinite number of Starbucks that strewn the land like lepers during the Dark-Age.

"I think the problem with any other part of New York [City]; the biggest problem is the gentrification. Once you have anything good, in comes an element of people with the money who simply want to possess a part of it. And Staten Island actually has a unique advantage in the fact that we've been segregated and separated for so long that in a sense cultivating something this honestly genuinely cool to anybody it's almost like there's nobody out here to destroy it," says Jeremy about the Starbucks mentality. And Jeremy is correct there is something to be said about a 'mom and pop' business, a certain warm atmosphere that just can not be replicated by the corporate machine. The Muddy Cup is not just another paper-cut taken from a ream of badly photocopied corporate outlets. It is distinctly a creation of its customers and not a creation for a customer's money.

The Muddy Cup offers something different this sanctuary offers the relaxing comfort of your mom's basement where you and your closest friends can just hang without all the trappings that society requires us to wear. "It's strange that we're actually lucky to have our place on Vanduzer Street. Stapleton at least this little part is becoming the hippest part of Staten Island, without the usual pretensions that follow hip," says Jeremy So take off, all that gaudy makeup, throw on some jogging pants, grab a cup of Joe and head on down to the basement, I think Martha Quinn is coming on and she has something refreshing for us.

The Muddy Cup is located at 388 Van Duzer Street, S.I., New York. For more information, log on to www.MuddyCup.com.

photos by P. Melissa Fisher



Shawn Fisher (l) interviews Jeremy Condit



The Mad Hatter was the first to break the silence -
"We must defy the U.N., to show the world
that the U.N. must not be defied".

I'm so **bored** of everybody **babbling** about the war. **Damn right**, and I've got every right to be! **It's everywhere**: on the telly, in the papers, on the net... it's just **sooo** annoying! **Why don't people just get over it** and go on with their lives? **Couldn't they just forget the whole thing?** The whole **peace movement is so passé**, why won't they see it themselves? **And they're hurting my feelings, too, everybody is trying to give me that shit about us being the bad guys this time.** Ha ha, can you imagine it, **Americans being the bad guys?** **What on earth are these people on? With what right** do these fucking hippies go on disturbing me? **Huh? What would they say if I went to their homes to tell them what to do?! What? What did I say? Hey! You are one of them, aren't you? You are! Fuck it, it's no use talking to you, you just won't get it, you traitor!**

This is not a movie; there are no good guys or bad guys.
And Iraqi civilians can't just turn off the TV, when
the entertainment value is gone. Will you?



The two shared a common womb
Not first-born but yet beacons of light;
For those with sight
Those twins stood proof of her majesty;
The Great Mother of many Nations
But out of darkness-
Those beacons of light,
Like eyes to the world,

Like Solomon's eyes-
Erased into pools of emptiness
(But out of darkness)
And in anguish released those enfolded
Faithful Souls...
They trusted the visions seen -
And did not question
(But out of darkness)

Labor long and hard...
But out of darkness has come a Great Light
The refiner's fire initiates rebirth...
Mother,
What have you learned from the loss
of your twins?
What will your offspring look like?

Diane Isaac 2000!

Colin Powell Return to CUNY



photos by Diane Greene Ient

CUNY Alumnus Receives Warm Welcome From Students

CUNY Students Give Powell A Bronx Cheer



When Secretary of State Colin Powell graduated from the City College of New York [CCNY] in 1953 tuition was free.

When he returned to his alma mater on Nov. 10 to speak at the Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies about democracy in the Middle East, he was greeted by a couple hundred protesters, many of them students still reeling from budget cutbacks and a 40 per cent tuition increase during a time of record military budgets.

"It's great he got a free education when he came here," said CCNY junior Rodolfo Leyton. "But now he's

giving all the money to help finance war and destruction and killing." Leyton's financial aid was reduced this year. He currently works two jobs and goes to school full-time.

Tanya Thurman, a CCNY junior from Staten Island spoke of her older brother who joined the Marines four years ago and has fought in Afghanistan and Iraq and may soon be returned to Iraq for a second tour of duty.

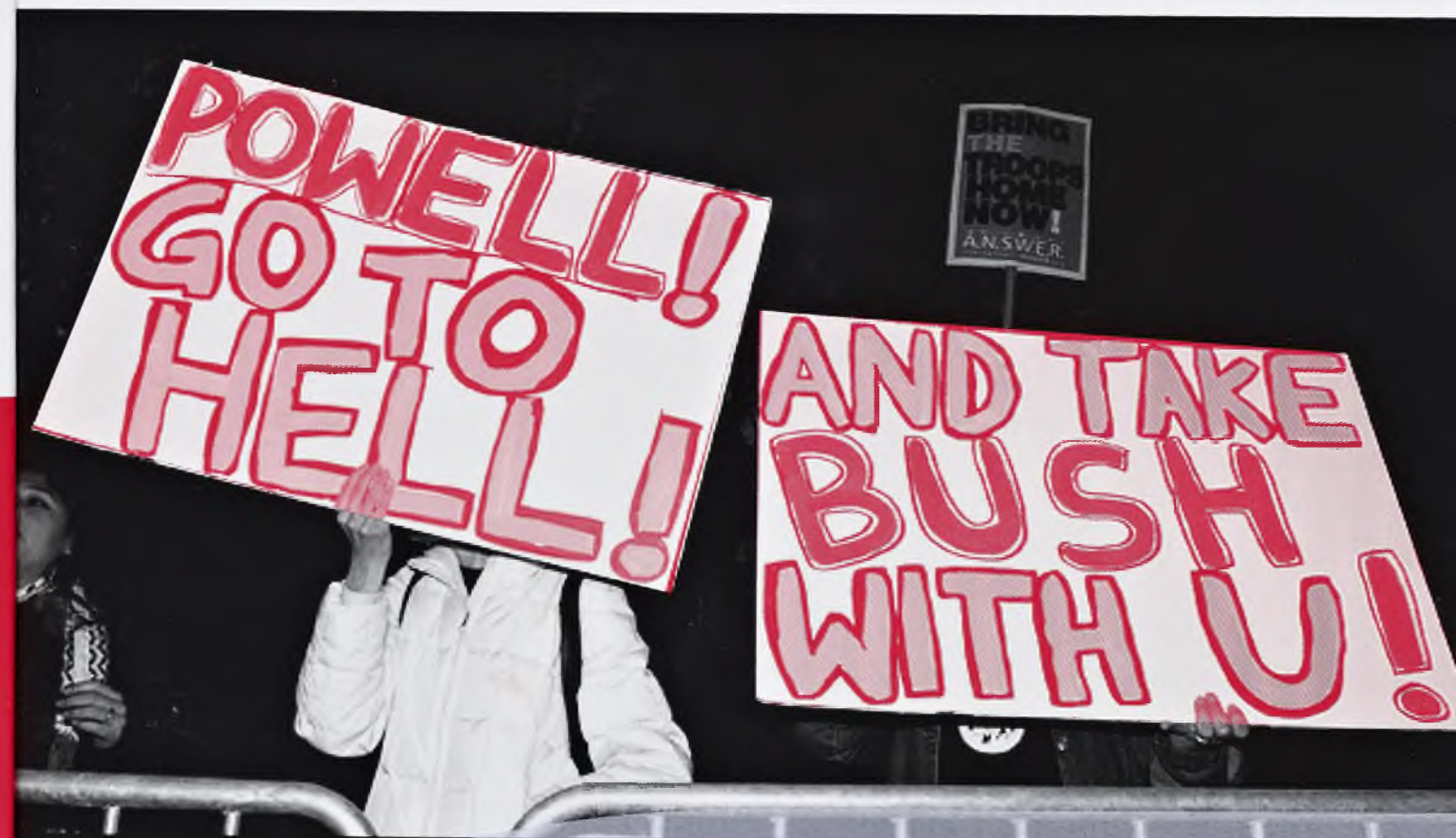
"He's been broken by his experience," she said. "He's

a different person. He was a sweet, sensitive, funny guy. Now, he's a tall, brawny machine."

Nick Power, a CCNY Professor of African-American Literature and World Humanities,

saw Powell at a reception before he gave his speech. He said Powell was still a role model for some young African-Americans but "a warning of what not to be" too many others.

"Just as one human being noticing another, he's tired," Power said. "He'd be better off if he took off the mask. I knew the Left was right when I saw Colin Powell doesn't sleep at night."



Secretary of State Colin Powell, a graduate of City College, chose CCNY/CUNY as the location for a major foreign policy address last semester. This was a disgusting and cynical maneuver. Powell appeared at a working class and largely Black and Latino school at a moment when anger about the war and occupation in Iraq were growing. CUNY schools have faced massive budget cuts and students have been forced to absorb huge tuition hikes. Meanwhile, the Bush administration has won approval for \$87 billion for the brutal occupation-- and corporate looting-- of Iraq.

The message of the protest against Powell's speech was Money for Schools not for War and Occupation! Powell

is arguably a war criminal, and is part and parcel of an administration that is attacking women's right to choose, immigrants rights, and basic civil liberties.

Social justice and antiwar groups from across the city are participated in the protest. They brought signs, pictures, and banners that exposed the human cost of the occupation of Iraq, and of the similarly brutal war at home on our schools, jobs, and services.

CUNY sponsors included : International Socialist Organization-CCNY/Hunter & the Student Liberation Action Movement-CCNY/Hunter. Endorsed by the CSI College Voice & Third Rail magazine.

*The great myth
that individual selfishness
becomes public good
reflects
the displacement of public ethics
by personal morality.*

*The myths of the self-healing market,
the ever-larger cake
and lifting oneself by one's bootstraps
are economic and psychological
like the myths of corporate
beneficence,
trickle down prosperity and
nature as an external.*

*Who would have
thought
that Reagonomics would
be
such an insurmountable
virus?
A lie can travel half way
around the world
before truth gets her boots on!
(Mark Twain)
Myths and prejudices
block the way to
understanding.*

*Economism sets profit and
property above human life,
degrades labor into a cost
factor,
and commodifies all life.
The anthropology of self-
interest
has its counterpart
in the anthropology of
receptivity.*

*We are social beings bound to
one another
like the waves of the sea.
We are dependent and changed
by our context and
environment,
not atomized nomads
without connection,
history, passion
and hope.*

*The truth will set us free
but the truth is a process
where life is an unfolding
fragment
relational and conditional
calling us to engagement
not self-righteousness or solipsism.*

*As the end is present in the beginning,
the tree in the seed,
our fragmentary lives
ought to be
dialogical and international
where we are questions and answers
to one another exploding the myths.*

THE SOME MYTHS

MARC
BATKO

DDMM

@Bells@

BY P. MELISSAERI FISHER

*Pavlov's dogs knew
That a ringing hell sent
A message to the brain
They thought—
Food is coming*

*To me the ring
Is every bit as meaningful—
Trouble's coming
The unknown,
Always the greater fear*

*Is on the line and looking
For me, if I'm lucky
Sales call or wrong number
I'm not often lucky*

*But can I shoot this messenger
Whose ringing runs the marathon
On my nerves?*

*"Hello?"
"Your mother's mammogram's
abnormal"*

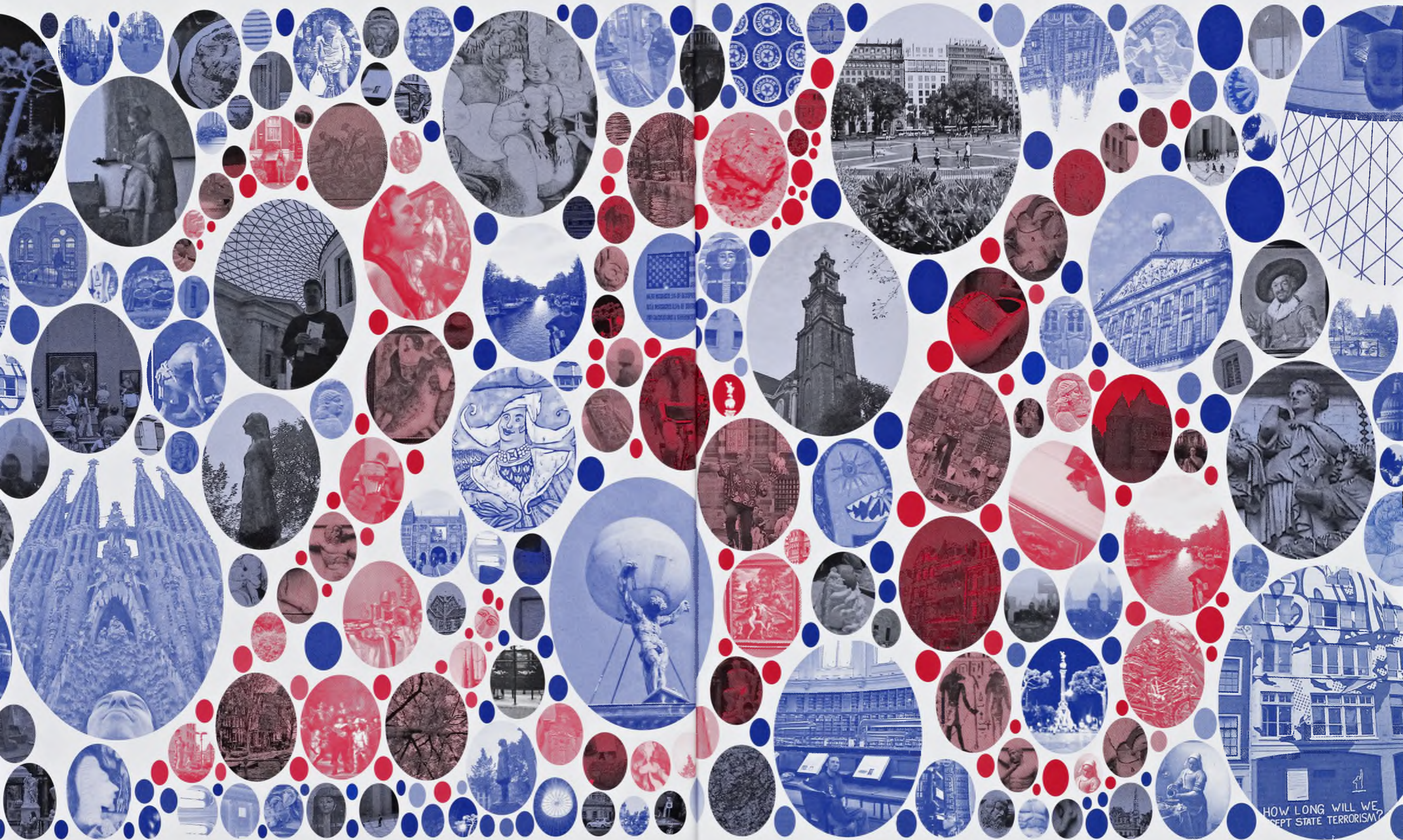
*"Hello?"
"Are you aware that your son
Has missed 30 days of school?"*

*"Hello?"
"You owe us money"*

*"Hello?"
"Yes, we've determined
It's cancer"*

*Where some may salivate
Me? I cringe
At each bell
Whose morsels are acidic
Tidbits to break me down*





Barcelona, Spain :: Amsterdam, The Netherlands :: London, United Kingdom

VIDEO SUGGESTION

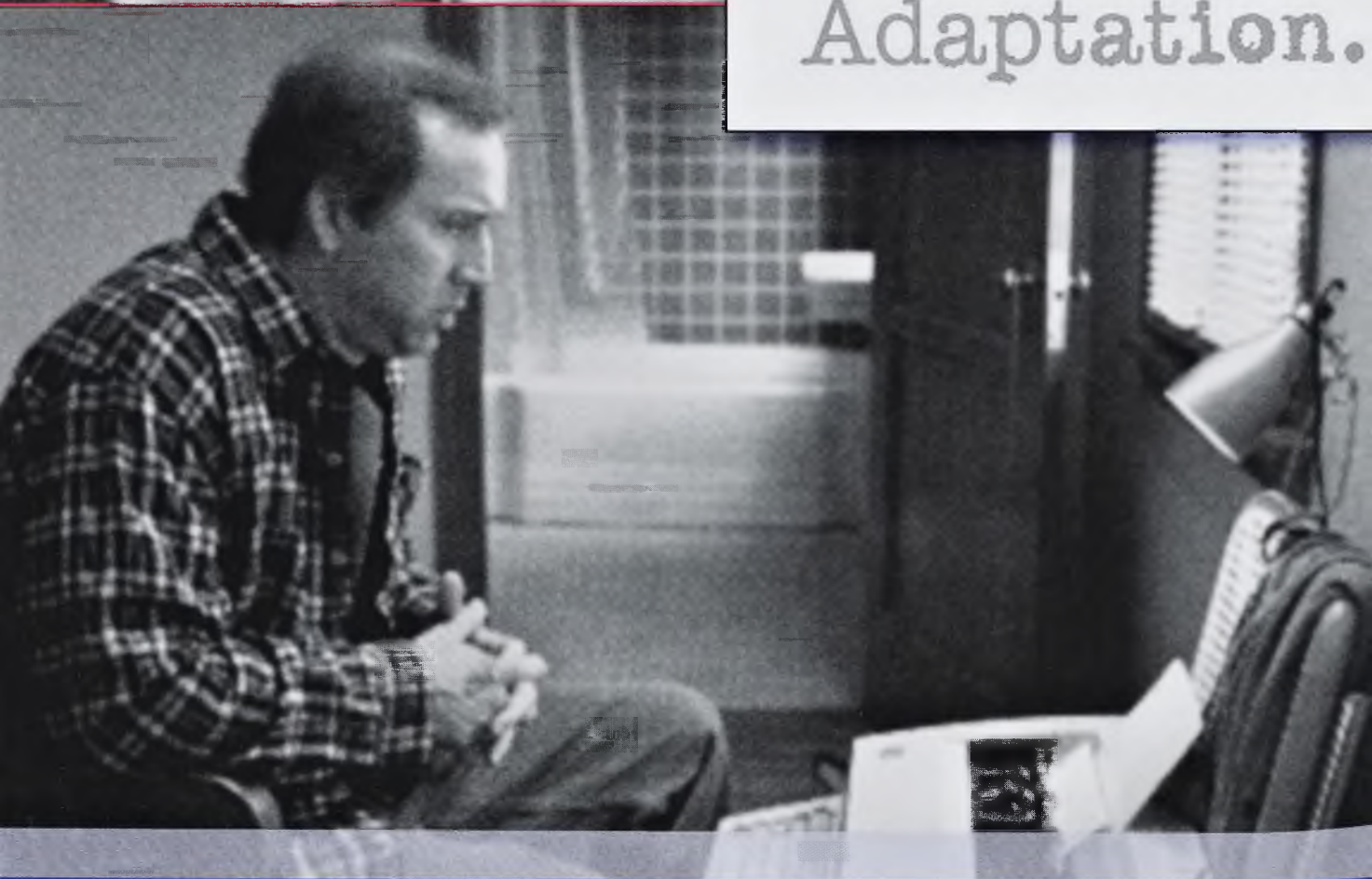


Nicolas Cage
Meryl Streep
Chris Cooper



Directed by Spike Jonze
Screenplay by Charlie Kaufman and Donald Kaufman

Adaptation.



Adaption

REVIEWERS RATING

(OUT OF FOUR STARS)



"You are what you love, not what loves you" - Donald Kaufman [Nicolas Cage] from *Adaptation*.

Charlie Kaufman [Nicolas Cage] is stressed. He hates himself. He's lost all confidence in his writing abilities. And on top of that he's "fat, bald and repulsive" (in his words). What has spurred this sudden nadir? Kaufman has been hired to adapt a screenplay for Susan Orlean's "The Orchid Thief;" a book that details centuries of Orchid swipers and the trials of John Laroche, a grimy, toothless Florida hillbilly who has been recently arrested for stealing the rare ghost orchid from a nature preserve. He seems optimistic at first and proclaims to the film executive Valerie [Tilda Swinton] that he completely wants to exclude the Hollywood staples of "sex. Guns. Car chases." "No one's ever done a movie about flowers before," boasts Charlie. But after several weeks of unproductivity, his confidence implodes.

He can't imagine writing a screenplay about Orchid history. And while John Laroche's character is fascinating, there's hardly enough written about him in the book to transfer to the screen. And to top it off the book is plot-less and has no character arc or motivation. Several more weeks pass. Now Charlie is really frazzled. Fresh off of the success with his penning of

film
reviewer
director
screenplay

starring

ADAPTION
BORIS KOYFMAN
SPIKE JONZE
CHARLIE KAUFMAN,
DONALD KAUFMAN,
SUSAN ORLEAN
NICOLAS CAGE,
MERYL STREEP,
CHRIS COOPER,
TILDA SWINTON

Being John Malkovich, he's stuck between a rock and a hard place. Meanwhile his twin brother Donald (also played by Cage) has just sold his

cliché-ridden serial killer script for a million bucks. Charlie's hopelessness has seeped into every facet of his life. He can't muster the confidence to kiss the prettgy Amelia [Cara Seymour], although she's given him many opportunities. He's deathly afraid to meet Susan Orlean and in the process begins to stalk her. Donald, meanwhile, has an affair with sexy make-up artist Cathrine Maggie}

Gyllenhaal] and starts hanging out with stars like Catherine Keener. He's on top of t! he world. Why? Donald is just as fat as Charlie. Just as bald too. But he has stellar self-confidence. That's why he gets the girl and Charlie is left to play with himself.

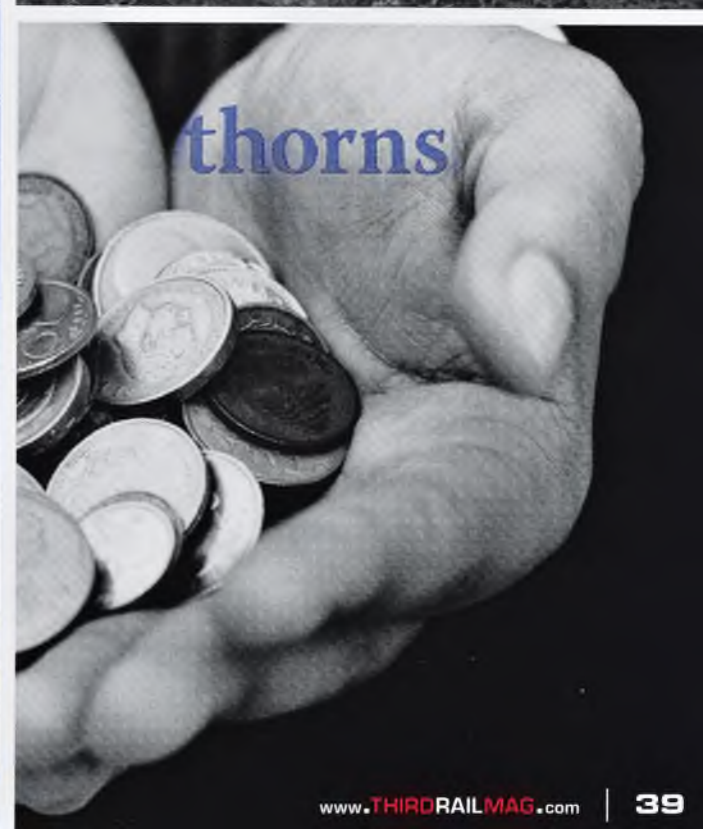
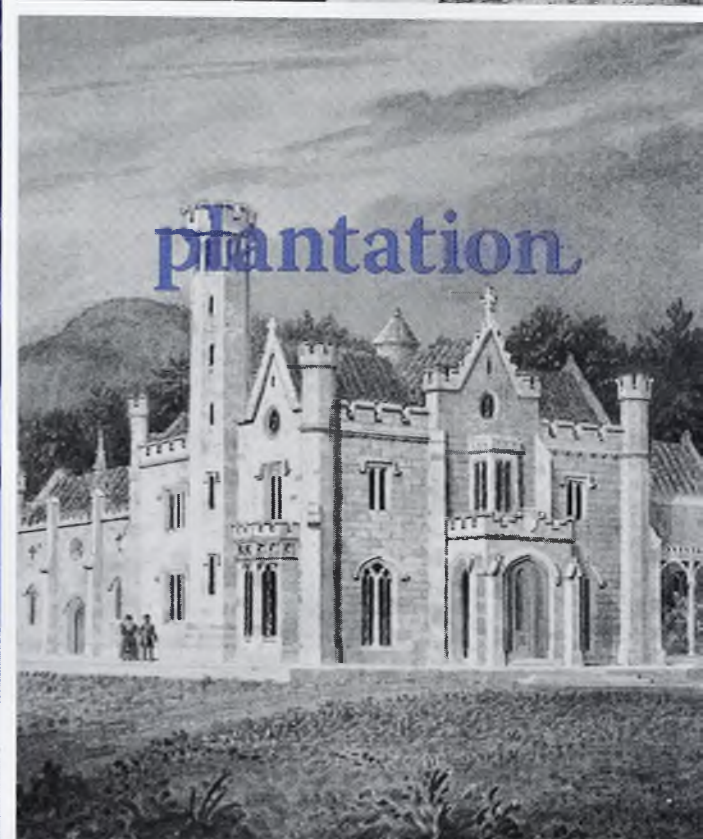
Before penning her book, Susan frequently visits Laroche and begins to appreciate his brash, but genius personality. He seems passionate, all too passionate about orchids. Susan envies this. She sees herself lacking fire. Susan dearly wants to care about someone or something. John not only shows her the beloved ghost orchid but also shares the tragic story of how he lost his front teeth.

by Boris Koyfman



Molested Day Women

My plantation wombs via colonization-reopened.
Too young to feel the pains and hear
the cries of abused victims.
My body unconsciously rejects the stares of white men.
Still feeling the bruise of auction block blues.
The molestation of French colonization,
and the health deficiencies in our black communities.
My plantation wombs via colonization-reopened.
Broken family tree. Forced patriarchy.
No more communal living.
Wounded by sexual exploitation.
She sleeps with her TV on, hoping
the sounds and light will drown out her fear.
At nighttime she wakes up with horrid
dreams plagued by her ancestor's tragedy.
Her mind not always rested un-waiting
the touch of her father. Fucked up circadian
rhythm body out to wack. Mummified in the sheets,
hoping he don't find the garden of Eden.
She holds her crotch like a chastity belt,
plucking out the thorns placed by her father.
Bodies desperately trying to be free
from the hammer and hoe complexities
of misplaced matriarchy and a screwed up vision of
patriarchy.
No stop it!!! Stop Daddy!!!



snaily maily wail • wait for
the **kingdom** to fail • **horse**
radish ding-dong • monster wonser

dead racoon • perishable peters &

sustained sallys • **wrapped** up like

super glue in **mother's breast** • positive

pew, **rembrandt** blue, over & over • the

palaces of gnoo • were **written** the

words: • "scuttle a ruttle a mommuttle

• a **thrice** maskarace, a lace boomy

bass • wrapoid slickoid

trapoid • **penny**

penny factoid •

come **together** like

christmas come" •

butternuts & **butter**

beans • **show us** anal oral

rectal **spleens** • show us to **improve** our

human race • without **this all**, so shall **melt**

our face • hither to & **heather** toe, **round**

round the **mistletoe** • split like **no no's** split like

chains • **in and out** of our love sick **mainframes**

• pasta cunt & **leather** cock • schlock **system**

horror & system **horror** shock • **been**

down the ruddy ruddy road of

rundown rundowns • and

all I **heard** • spoken in

three **distinct** voices •

of **mellow pits** & perfect

pronunciations was: •

• "wanda wanda wooly

• **splenda** spendoo

mollie chooolie **chew!**

• scambast blamast

micromedia muzzles

• pourdown the saddy

raddy **toothpick** tits

• of bloozy, fuh foozy,

pierced pussy puzzles!"

show
us to
improve
our
human race

News





*I'm running away from yesterday...
A fountain waits for me.*



*Sunshine whispers
wondrous words
and new days have begun*



*Apple orchards are just a dream
that colors our reality*

My Orchards

By Tiffany T. O'Neil



*So Solid structures ground my wish
And nature's essence has found.....*



*But a river runs throughout my soul
That ever lasts its mark.*



*A way to make me walk away
And never turn around.*

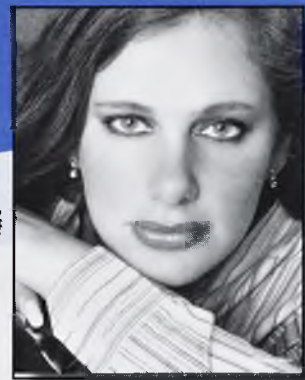


IMAGES...
Nicolas Capofari



THIRD RAIL EDITORIAL

by P. Melissa Fisher,
Editor-in-Chief



Writing for any publication is not a responsibility to be taken lightly, but it is even more important when dealing with the news—especially when the readers have no other means to get the information which the newspaper is supposed to provide. For a student publication, this would include the goings—on of Student Government (SG)—good and bad. However, it should not lose sight of keeping the student body apprised of issues that inform them of a potential threat to their college education in a petty attempt to seek revenge on SG in general and its president in particular. The student body needs to know what is happening on their campus as well as CUNY wide. Many of them don't know that such bodies as the College Council or the CSI Association exist, yet they make decisions that have a direct affect on the students' lives every time they meet. For instance, SG can vote in any expenditures it likes, but if the Association does not approve them, they do not go through. Why then, are these bodies seldom even mentioned in the college's official student newspaper?

It is not only the right of the student press to question and report on its student elected government—it is its obligation. As a senator, I have to prepare myself for this coverage, be it complimentary or not. As a member of the student press, as well, I understand this better than most. Furthermore, I will admit up front, that Dwight Dunkley, President of the CSI Student Government is also on staff at *The Third Rail*. The student press is well within its boundaries when it lampoons said Student Government, and we have to accept that. However, to wage a petty war over a few dollars' stipend is be-

yond irresponsible; it is doing a great disservice to the students who really need to know what is happening in their academic world. Yet, *The Banner* has decided to run questionable op-eds written by former senators who were removed from Student Government that include some out-and-out lies without noting that the writer had been stripped of a position on SG because they could not be bothered to attend meetings; skewed articles that focus on complaining about the one-time expenditure of keeping the student leaders' room in good repair and barely mention the fact that SG has created ongoing scholarships to remember lost members of the CSI family, and completely insulting cartoons simply because SG gets small stipends—which it deserves—and student journalists don't—regardless of the fact that they deserve stipends every bit as much as SG senators. Again, since I have done both (including a year as editor-in-chief of *The Banner*, for which I received no stipend), I am aware of just how much time, money and effort each job requires.

What space this publication does not devote to bashing the efforts of SG, it gives to fluff. It is very interesting that a student managed to get into a porn convention (I would love to know who funded the trip) but I just don't think that it's **front page news** when our students are facing **another tuition hike and cuts to financial aid and opportunity programs that make college possible for our neediest students**. This particular topic was mentioned in an article that at most was 500 words long and buried on about page three or four. The planned Lobby Day against such cuts and tuition hike

(to take place on March 7) was noted briefly in the article on the Governor's budget, but the hard work and financial backing SG gave the effort was not mentioned at all. In addition, *The Banner* also failed to mention the fare increase that the MTA just put in place and the toll increases proposed for the bridges, in spite of the fact that these facts might prove to compound the financial burden of the CSI community. Yet, *The Banner* had plenty of room to report on the minor issue of a vote on how the new logo—meant to increase visibility and let the students know what SG does for them—was to be placed and the money spent on the room that SG senators spend so much time working in.

Articles on sex, drugs and rock-n-roll are nice, and should be a part of any student newspaper. But when there is more hard news in a magazine that is primarily intended to deal with arts, from an admittedly explicit political point of view, there is a problem. *The Banner* has made great strides in becoming a truly great college newspaper, and I don't wish to take that away from them. As a former editor-in-chief of that very publication, I can appreciate exactly how much work goes into putting out such a quality product. However, I also realize that sometimes, finding news that is actually relevant to the CSI community can be difficult. Right now, that is not a problem. So I say to the staff of *The Banner*: keep up the reporting on SG. As a senator, I welcome it. Just don't keep your sights so fixed on SG that you can't see anything else.



CSI Student Government hard at work.

P. MELISSA FISHER is an award-winning journalist; she was honored by the *New York Association of Black Journalists* in recognition of her work with *The Black Reign*. She holds an AA in Liberal Arts and a BA in English with a concentration in writing and a minor in journalism, both from the College of Staten Island where she is currently pursuing an MA in English rhetoric. As an active student, she has contributed to *Always a Woman*, a campus feminist arts magazine and been editor-in-chief of *The Banner*, CSI's official student newspaper. Currently, in addition to being editor-in-chief of *Third Rail*, she is the graduate representative to CSI Student Government and sits on several committees and commissions at CSI.



DWIGHT DUNKLEY is currently pursuing a degree in Marketing at the College of Staten Island. As the current CSI Student Government president, Dwight is a member of the CSI Association, Auxiliary Services, College Council and is president of the CSI Marketing Club. A self-professed libertarian, Dwight recently traveled to Havana, Cuba on assignment for *Third Rail* to investigate the island-nation's unique form of socialism (*article forthcoming*).

SHAWN FISHER is a decorated veteran of the *United States Naval Reserve* who majors in Communications at the College of Staten Island, with a specialization in Journalism. He holds an Associates of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences and has received two *Presidential Commendations* from the University for his activities on Campus. He has also worked professionally for *The Black Reign*, a newspaper dedicated to providing important content to Black New Yorkers. Credits extend to *Photics*, an online and print magazine founded by a CSI Alumnus and *The Sci-Fi Guys*, a webzine covering the world of science-fiction and fantasy.



JEFF MCGRAHAM is currently on a quest to find Nirvana. Consequently, he is attempting to suppress his id, ego and superego and so refuses to participate in self promotion.



BULLPEN



I WANT TO SUCK YOUR BIG, HAIRY

FICTION,
POETRY,
PHOTOGRAPHY,
& POLITICAL
ESSAYS

Third Rail: The Political Arts Magazine of the College of Staten Island
is seeking your Submissions & Correspondence!


Send us your poetry, letters, fiction, comments, photography,
criticisms, complaints, complements, and lewd pictures to:

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Third Rail Magazine
c/o College of Staten Island
2800 Victory Blvd, 1C-207
Staten Island, NY 10314

E-mail:
editors@ThirdRailMag.com

On The Web:
www.ThirdRailMag.com

Drop Off In Person:
Room 231 in the Campus Center
or in our mailbox located in Room
1C-207 (Student Government
Office)



Twenty years from now you will be dissapointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

-Mark Twain

Cinque Terre

AS TIME GOES BY

P. MELISSA FISHER

Once, soft and new, he craved my touch,

A mother's hand to stroke his cheek

And dry his tears.

When did his scraped knees become immune

To the kisses that had always

Healed his wounds before?

No longer one for showy displays

Of affection,

Today the closest he allows me

Is buying the Stridex pads

That now stroke the cheek that I caressed.

His love takes the form

Of wrestling holds;

A hug of sorts—I guess.

