

# The Watch

Spring 2003 / Volume XXIV

A photograph of a man with a beard and a red-lined jacket speaking into a microphone to a crowd of people. The man is standing in front of a building with the words "BRANDEIS GRADUATE" visible on the wall. The crowd is seen from behind, looking towards the speaker.

## Mouthing Off at Brandeis

**Inside: The Importance of  
Hate Speech on Campus  
How to Protest Intelligently  
Sex, Guitars, and Sloppy Heuristics**

# the watch

## EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

benjamin woodring '06  
jonathan cetel '06

## LAYOUT AND DESIGN EDITOR

martin kaminski '06

## COPY EDITORS

hannah agran '04  
kathryn harris '06

## ART EDITOR

dave friedman '03

## BUSINESS EDITORS

natasha ushromirsky '04  
irene fishman '05

## DISTRIBUTION EDITORS

krystal klein '03  
ryoko ono '04

## CONTRIBUTORS

marshall botvinnik  
whitney cohen '03  
kevin grinberg '04  
eric horowitz '06  
mitali kamdar '03  
devon atria '06  
yishan lam '06  
dave libber '06  
sam petsonk '06  
josh russell '06

Back Cover by Yishan Lam

## *The Watch*

Spring 2003, Volume XXIV

Copyright © 2003  
by THE WATCH MAGAZINE.  
All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States

THE WATCH MAGAZINE is a chartered student organization of the Brandeis Student Union Senate and a member of the Brandeis Media Coalition.

Opinions expressed in any given article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of other Watch staff members.

Submissions should be sent via electronic mail to [thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com](mailto:thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com)

# Letter From The Editors

The Watch's spring issue has finally arrived. Snow no longer blankets the earth and the numbing New England wind is long forgotten. The transition to the new season reveals the unsurprising truth that the role weather plays in the emotional well being of the student body cannot be underestimated. The campus is more alive, the students are more enthused, and the overall feeling of the university is a little more positive. One should not conclude, however, that New England winters suppress student activity. The frigid weather never succeeds in freezing the opinions of the student body. Throughout the harsh winter, Brandeis students continued to engage in dialogue about the war with Iraq, voice their opinions on administrative policies, and maintain their usual multi-tasking, activity-ridden spirit.

This issue's cover reflects the Watch's zealous support of personal expression. The ability to debate and articulate intelligent opinions is the foundation of participatory Democracy. Since the dawn of written language, the written word has served as the most widespread and influential medium of expression.

Unfortunately, the printed word's hegemony is being challenged by certain cultural and technological developments. Magazines and newspapers are losing cultural stature as circulation and subscriptions continue to decline. Broadcast journalism and interactive websites have increased in popularity because the image speaks more directly to American citizens than the word.

Another worrisome development is the erosion of the sanctity of English grammar. The culture of "IMing" has made casual English accepted as normative behavior. When conversing through a computer, it becomes efficient to use incomplete sentences, to forget punctuation completely, and to spell words phonetically. This trend has even entered the political spectrum, albeit in a milder manner. Politicians avoid using highfalutin words in an effort to speak "directly to the people."

Just as the student body survived this harsh winter, the printed word can survive these challenges. In some areas, written publications are thriving. Zines, for example, remain the medium of choice for independent thinkers. Containing articles, artwork, poetry and prose, these cost-efficient publications are heavily circulated throughout various subcultures. Students are reading magazines and it seems likely that students will continue to read magazines. And so, in the spirit of this powerful medium, we, the editors-in-chief, present this season's issue of The Watch. We hope it inspires you to mouth off.

Editors-in-Chief,



- 4** **Non-Complimentary Free Cigarettes**  
Musings upon misplaced cigarette boxes  
WHITNEY COHEN
- 8** **An Overanalysis of the Facts Concerning Relationships**  
Constructing a solid relationship aside from the evasive concepts of love and beauty / MITALI KAMDAR with DAVID GOLDSTEIN
- 10** **If Bicycle Wheels are Turning, It Must Be Revolution**  
A perspective on how bicycle riding challenges the status quo  
JOSH RUSSELL
- 11** **A Condensed Philosophy of Radical Statements**  
How to avoid sending mixed messages when protesting an issue / BENJAMIN WOODRING
- 12** **"Nearly everything delights me!" Hidden Beauty in the Photographs of Diane Arbus**  
Spring 2003 Watch Essay Winner  
TAHLIA ORBACH-SMITH
- 18** **Snood, the Best Game Ever**  
The game of Snood, its creation, and everything in between  
DAVID LIBBER
- 20** **Dear Mr. President...**  
The author entreats the President to embrace, rather than merely tolerate other religions, in public discourse  
KEVIN GRINBERG
- 21** **Time Out!**  
Ten things to do after graduation if you're not going to grad school next year and you aren't ready to start "the rest of your life" / KRYSTAL KLEIN
- 24** **A Profile of Triskelion and Its Unclear Future**  
An overview of the group, with comments from General Coordinator Aaron Schwid concerning vital organization problems / IRENE FISHMAN
- 25** **Why Brandeis Needs Native American Studies**  
A call for the University to increase its scope / JON CETEL
- 26** **You'll Hear**  
Evaluating the ups and downs of having stars like Lebron James skip college for the NBA / ADAM MARKS
- 27** **Artist's Choice**

# The Watch

Spring 2003  
Issue XXIV

---



## Intolerance of Intolerance is Still Intolerance

Why a college campus is the best place for allowing and critiquing hate speech / KATHRYN HARRIS

---



## Transfer In/Transfer Out

Comparing the experiences of two transfer students, one coming to, and one leaving Brandeis  
MARSHALL BOTVINICK  
and YISHAN LAM

---



## Sex, Guitars, and Sloppy Heuristics

Exploring the psychosexual implications of the guitar and the player's vulnerability to self-aggrandizement / SAM PETSONK

# Intolerance of Intolerance... Is Still Intolerance

KATHRYN HARRIS

In “Fighting Words,” Lawrence R. Marcus writes: “Deeply ingrained in higher education is the principle of academic freedom...The academy should be...a place where learning is fostered and knowledge revered, but where ignorant, unpleasant, objectionable, offensive points of view might be exposed...or rejected in debate for what they are, but never suppressed.” Since prohibiting the public expression of hate speech is harmful to an educational environment because it decreases the flow of ideas, I firmly believe that such speech should not be stifled.

Because students expect to be educated when they choose to attend a school, the school is obligated to rectify anything that might hinder that environment. While most people think college campuses should ban the public expression of hate speech for this very reason, the opposite is true—it is the prohibition of hate speech that is truly detrimental to the learning environment of a college or university.

Prohibiting hate speech harms the learning environment for every student. The purpose of a college or university is to teach students by challenging their ideas and beliefs, without picking and choosing between them. Mark Goodman notes that “universities [are] accepting the misguided notion that viewpoint suppression is an appropriate means of [fighting racism].” To obtain a more advanced education, it is imperative that students examine the merit of ideas on their own. Therefore, a college campus is the most appropriate setting for hate speech. Moreover, the line between political and hate speech is too fuzzy to regulate. In certain situations, statements are too ambiguous to label as one specific type of speech. Claiming that affirmative action is bad because it lets too many blacks in, for example, may be classified as either hate or political speech. Benno Schmidt elaborates:

“The...problem is the...greater number of speakers who will steer clear of possible punishment by steering clear of controversial or unpopular views. The chilling effects...are likely to be....damaging to freedom of expression.” Thus, when schools use hate speech codes, students express less potentially controversial speech. This harms the educational environment for the whole student body.

Further, prohibiting hate speech harms the learning environment of hate speech victims in two ways. First, hate speech codes imply that targeted students are incapable of defending themselves. As Dinesh D’Souza states in *Illiberal Education*, “The [University of] Michigan administration continues to coddle and pamper minority students [with hate speech codes], and is then surprised when they respond with hostility rather than gratitude...Undergraduates ...do not like to be handled with the delicacy reserved for children.” This treatment only reinforces stereotypes, making the victims feel the school does not respect them. Targets then cannot choose how to respond; this perpetuates the very stereotypes codes are designed to

stop. Second, prohibiting hate speech shifts the focus from combating hatred to promoting free speech, making “First Amendment martyrs of fraternity boors.” According to Charles Lawrence, “The debate...is being recast as a debate about free speech.” Being depicted as First Amendment crusaders lends hate speakers sympathy and support they otherwise would not have. Minorities now have to fight a Constitutional battle, not a racial one. Minority students then find it difficult to learn, as it is harder for them to eliminate stereotypes.

Though it may seem counter-intuitive, college students do not learn best when sheltered from the language and ideas of hatred. Rather, the only way to ensure an education environment filled with free discourse is to allow the presence of such speech. To do otherwise is to overprotect both minority students and the entire student body alike, failing to prepare them for the real world.

*Kathryn Harris '06 is copy editor of The Watch.*

## The Watch Congratulates the Newly Elected Members of the Student Union Executive Board

But the election process was also marred by a series of technical difficulties and legal battles.

During the first 18 minutes of Round I of the A-Board elections, the computer system failed to record the votes. Although the elections commission was aware of this at the time, they decided to allow Round II to take place. It was not until Round II ended that the commission decided that entire election had to be redone, starting with Round I. The student body, therefore, voted for A-Board members on four different occasions. Fortunately, the second time around, the election ran smoothly.

The election commission disqualified Silverman (the founder of Boogle.agblog.com) from the Union Secretary race because he campaigned on his website. The commission argued that this advertisement was unfair. Candidates were only allowed to campaign on sites that all students have access to. Silverman appealed to the Union Judiciary Board on the grounds that he is no longer affiliated with boogle; it is currently owned by Computer Operators Group (COG). BTV64, Concord Bridge, and The Justice filed an amicus brief on behalf of Silverman. He won the appeal and, ultimately, the election.

Ben Brandzel appealed to Union Judiciary Board to nullify the results of the elections because students studying abroad were not able to vote. Josh Brandfon beat Josh Sugarman by only one vote. The votes of students studying abroad, therefore, could have seriously altered the outcome the election.

## NON-COMPLIMENTARY

## FREE CIGARETTES

WHITNEY COHEN

When I got out of the Waltham Victory supermarket this afternoon, merrily pushing my cart of fruit, vegetables, and grains back to my car, I arrived to find six empty cigarette packs on my windshield. For a moment I just stared at them, baffled, before glancing briefly at the car next to mine to see whether it had suffered a similar fate. Nothing. A few cars down someone had a neon pink flyer waving in the breeze in the same location, but no cigarette packs.

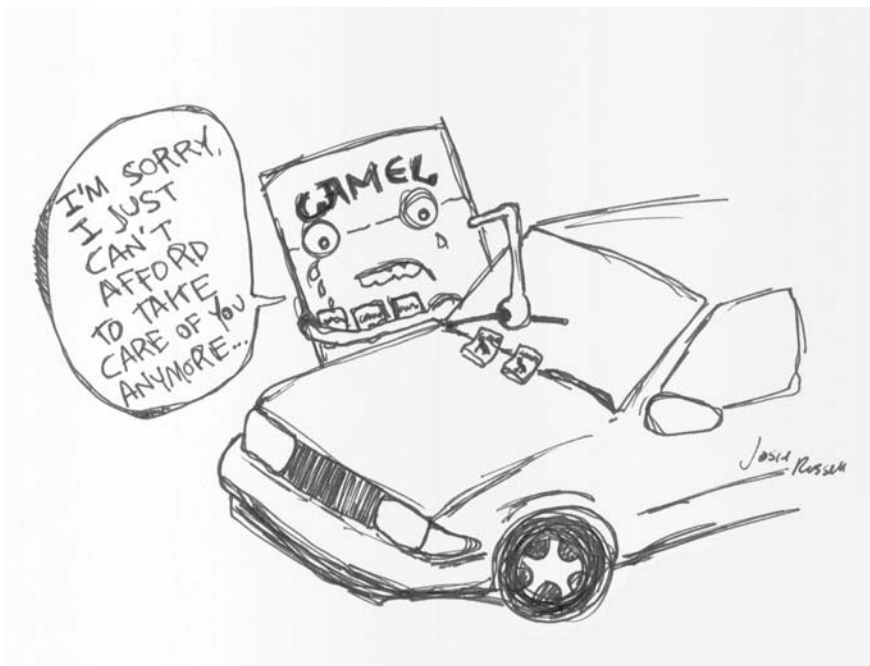
I had the feeling that there was a hidden camera somewhere. At the very least, someone was watching me, surely. I acted as completely nonchalant as I could manage, picking up the wiper with one hand and collecting the packs in the other. I couldn't fit all six in one hand, so I ended up juggling them hurriedly into the crook of my arm, grabbing the last one, hopping into my car, and locking the door.

I refused to look around.

On the drive home, I kept looking down at the pile of packs on the seat beside me to convince myself that it had indeed occurred. Five Camels and a Parliament Lights. I got home, sniffed one and found the scent horrific, read the warnings on the side—"contains carbon monoxide," "causes birth defects," whatever—and the beautiful descriptions of the wonderful Turkish flavor to be found inside, surrounded by lovely tropical beach scenes and golden waves. I did the only thing I could think to do with them: crush them in one hand, brushing the flecks of whatever onto the floor of my car, and throwing the packs into the dumpster. The end.

But then I got to thinking—under what circumstances could this have happened? I

couldn't think of a single one. I mean, someone had in his possession six empty cigarette packs. Someone came up to a stranger's car, not knowing when that stranger would return. Someone carefully lifted up the wiper and placed the six packs underneath one by



one. Someone walked away. What planets needed to align for that to actually make sense?

Granted, it could have been my car. I drive a rusty brown 1987 Pontiac with a sparkly pink Mardi Gras mark hanging from the mirror and a back covered in bumper stickers like "You can't have me," "Harm none do what ye will," "Naughty and Nice," "I'm so tired of stupid people," and "This car stops for 'Weird Al' Yankovic concerts." Maybe someone walked by and, um, got angry that he couldn't have me.

Then again, perhaps this mystery person actually saw me leaving my car and going into the store and decided to take this particular course of action based on my appearance. I was wearing black heeled combat boots, a black and white mini-dress with black and white biker shorts underneath, thick black

eyeliner with lines off the sides for that Egyptian look, and fading purple and red lipstick. Was it the eyeliner maybe? No one put cigarette packs on my windshield when I wore a black top hat and a pleather choker to the supermarket. Nor when I shopped in a spandex blue T-shirt that says "Rebel" in silver sparkles, exercise pants, and high pony-tails on either side of my twenty-one-year-old head.

Oh, and there was a shiny white bustier sitting on top of the pile of stuff on my backseat, too.

I still can't understand what any of this might have to do with cigarettes, though. They don't seem to express anger—I mean, my windows weren't smashed in or my pos-

sessions stolen. And if someone was feeling too lazy to throw his six packs of cigarettes he'd just smoked away, you'd think he would have tossed them on the sidewalk or in one of the carts stored just nearby, not placed them carefully under a wiper blade.

The only thing I can think is that someone I know recognized my car, remembered I'm allergic to smoke, and thought it would be hilarious to cover the glass in cigarette packs and run a safe distance to watch in secret. It is a recognizable car, that's for sure. But I don't think I know anyone who

smokes that much, or even nearly that much. One of the packs said "complimentary" on the side. Who do I know who gets free cigarettes? Who would do such a thing? Why am I still uneasy? Any hints? Anyone? Anyone?

*Later, much later...*

Oh my goddess. I think I've figured it out. I have a bumper sticker that's a bright two-color no smoking sign. Because I'm allergic to smoke, as I told you already. Someone feels strongly enough about smoking to put six cigarette packs under my windshield wiper because I have a no smoking sign on the back of my car?

I'm sorry, but I'm a bit confused.

*Whitney Cohen '03 is a vegan and a red-head. She was born neither and recommends visiting [brandeis.edu/~wsc](http://brandeis.edu/~wsc). She is a contributing writer to *The Watch*.*

# Transferring



## Something Rotten In The State of Brandeis

MARSHALL BOTVINICK

“That ain’t right,” replied one of my friends after I had finished recounting for him how four hundred students, one eighth of the Brandeis student body, had fallen victim to food poisoning, but as my friend was responding to yet another of my anecdotes, it occurred to me that he only knew half of the story.

**H**e had no clue that four hundred people running to the bathroom at four in the morning to have explosive diarrhea eight or even nine times is actually a microcosm of the entire “Brandeis Experience”. In fact, it might have even been one of my happier moments this past semester. Perhaps, that is because I managed to avoid the contaminated chicken. Of course, my innocent nostrils were ambushed in the morning when I went to brush my teeth by the smell of rectal explosions.

Now, what would prompt me to compare my three months at Brandeis with salmonella? The uninformed might assume that I was looking for a campus that was more aesthetically pleasing, and by aesthetically unappealing, I’m not referring to that ugly, aqua building in the middle of the campus; I’m referring to the student body which was voted the ugliest in the country. Others might assume that I didn’t enjoy the company of the fourth most depressed student body in the country; however, both of these assumptions are incorrect. I actually feel and have always felt quite at home amongst the homely and miserable.

My problems with Brandeis extend much farther than giant noses and long faces. In addition to not providing its students with a rigorous and challenging environment in the classroom, Brandeis also does not offer a

variety of experiences outside of the classroom. It comes much closer, in my opinion, to Jewish Camp than it does to college. The weekly school sponsored dances were something that I had hoped to leave behind when I graduated middle school, and having an R.A. who was so zealous in his enforcement of hall rules did little to give me a feeling of independence and adulthood. In fact, the only major difference that I noticed between Brandeis and Jewish Camp is that Jewish camps usually don’t have political protests every weekend.

However, I don’t want to leave my readers with the impression that there is nothing redeeming about Brandeis. The administration at Brandeis does an excellent job of providing its students, many of whom have the munchies, with free, non-contaminated food at late night hours.

*Note: This article is in no way meant to offend those who are content with their experiences at Brandeis. Rather, it is meant to make you completely miserable and unhappy, although according to Princeton Review you already are. That way, I will feel as if I am justified in having such a negative view of the school.*

*Marshall Botvinick left Brandeis in the winter of 2002.*

Matt Sussman ‘06 enrolled as a Brandeis transfer student this winter



Photo by DEVON ATRIA

**Hate Us?  
Love Us?  
We want to  
hear it.**

**Send your letters to the editor to  
thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com  
the good, the bad, and the ugly**



# The Journey... to Brandeis

Y I S H A N L A M

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*.

I am seven months into the journey. Seven weeks to pass until I finally revisit the origin - the point where this odyssey was launched - my island-home, Singapore. I count the days - seven, every week.

Twelve days into the war. Twelve years since the last. My minute hand waves past each of the twelve points on the watch face, nervously, ceaselessly awaiting the coming full circle of the crisis.

It seems we are all waiting - all riding the caravan of history, voyaging out to explore and yet, also longing to "arrive where we started". As for me, my eyes look homeward. I anticipate bringing back the spoils of my great adventure which began in August 2002. And as for this country - the desire for the return to pre-2003 Pax Americana is written on the collective face.

We all trust in the completion of the cycle. We trust that Time brings about restoration every twenty-fourth hour, giving us back the

morning when we have kept the night's vigil with patient stoicism. But things *change*. The 'place where we started' is lost, forever. Singapore in June 2003 will not be the same as the frozen picture I have kept in my head. Over there, fear of the deadly SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) illness that has traveled across East Asia induces at home a national gasp. A giant bug has landed on the windshield. My baby cousins, infants the last I saw them, will have grown. Things will be different. Things change for America, too. The geopolitical structure of the world will be altered, and American hegemony will take on different tones hereafter.

Just as things have and will change, so have I. Transplanting myself from the National University of Singapore to Brandeis, I have moved from equatorial warmth to winter chill, from a heterogenous Asian populace to being a minority. I have become

more resilient and resourceful. In an international setting I have learned to look beyond the color of a person's skin, the labels on their clothes, to divine the depth and beauty of their personality and cultures. Being here not only helps me think critically about the world's only remaining superpower (one not afraid to flex its muscles); it has also been a circuitous way of looking back at my own culture, countenancing both beauty and beast in both parts of the world. I have been blessed with new ways of seeing, through the invisible beneficiaries whose wallets have contributed to the Brandeis grant that allowed me transfer, and through the work of the countless people in my city-state which created the circumstances for my being here. Life is such a crucible of invisible factors.

I wonder how it will be when I touch down at the airport in June. Will the SARS outbreak be over? And then, when I return to Brandeis in the fall, will this war be laid to rest? Questions and uncertainties. Of this I am certain: that whatever spins the world off its axis, whatever shakes its very foundations, it is all part of a beautiful journey. There is a God who governs time from first to last, and who gave me a special position on the observing deck as I travel from East to West and back again. I suspect that I will never feel that I have "arrived", and the moment I think I have is the end of exploration and discovery.

*Yishan Lam '05 transferred to Brandeis in fall of 2002.*

## The Watch Academic Essay Competition

Submit you 500 to 2000 word paper on any academic topic to [thewatchmagazine@brandeis.edu](mailto:thewatchmagazine@brandeis.edu)  
The winner's complete essay will be published, securing the path to fame, fortune, and all that jazz.

# AN OVERANALYSIS of the Facts Concerning Relationships

MITALI KAMDAR  
WITH DAVID GOLDSTEIN

Everything happens for a reason, right? Then what is the reason for death? Not a clue. What about love? Why do people fall in love? What is love anyway? Maybe true love—or a “perfect match”—is when two people come together with the same concept or definition of “love.” People say “opposites attract.” What is that all about? I guess it’s true in the sense that people are attracted to things that they can’t do or have. But that’s purely lustful, sexual attraction. Is that what true love is?

Boys make no sense. Neither do girls, I will admit this. When a girl says, “It’s alright” or “It’s okay,” it never is. There’s not even an “almost never” there; it just never is. Part of the problem is that girls like me analyze situations and people way too much. But that cannot be helped. I don’t plan to be a stupid girl who just lives life having sex with every sexy guy who comes her way or kissing guys because they are cute. I also don’t plan to be a girl who takes things lightly. Don’t get me wrong, I know when it is time for fun and games. Cuteness and sexiness in a man is a bonus.

---

## Boys make no sense. Neither do girls.

---

Men are quite intriguing specimens. Girls complain that men don’t respond or are rude or apathetic. Well, at least I do. But I think I’ve got this one figured out. They don’t mean to seem anything. They just kind of go with the flow. That’s apathy in a way... but not really. Guys don’t mull things over. They don’t fret or worry about what to wear. They don’t worry about looking good for some girl they like in class. They don’t bang into desks and trip over nonexistent bumps when the girl they like is around. The only thing I’ve seen a guy worry about is if he smells good and if his hair looks good. But it’s better for girls to believe a guy is an uncaring jerk, rather than realize he isn’t bothered by

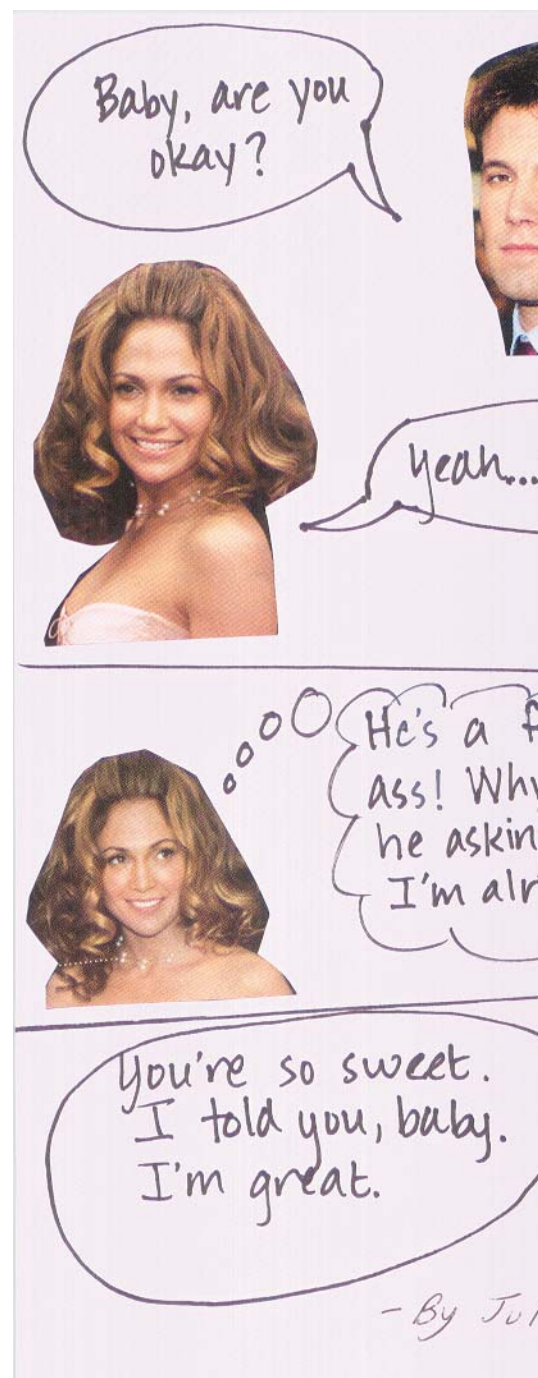
anything and doesn’t even think about you. It’s better to have a guy not like you than to just not exist for him. Being hated is better than not existing as it at least means people are jealous or insecure because you’re better than them in some way. Not existing, on the other hand, means you’re average.

The girls of today will tell you men are not to be trusted. This is a lie. No one today can be trusted, especially people who are in love. Your best female friend will screw you over and forget to call you if she’s in love with a guy. Relationships are the worst. This is where people screw each other over the most. Honesty will definitely screw you over in a relationship. If you’re with someone and you tell them EVERYTHING and they tell you nothing interesting ever happens to them, they’re lying to you.

I see all these romantic movies that have all these different theories about why men and women are the way they are, but all the theories make sense while conflicting with each other. Yet in the end everyone in the movies ends up happy anyway. In the real world, unlike movies, terrible things happen to people, and in the end there’s nothing but hurt and hatred. I think verisimilitude on screen died a long time ago. The point of this random observation is that I, too, have conflicting notions about relationships. So I guess I’m taking a little break to add a disclaimer for those who have had or will have conversations with me about why the penis makes men do stupid things and why girls having no appendage is an excuse for doing stupid things. I never know which conflicting belief of mine will pop out when I’m babbling and desperately begging you not to whip out such harsh words as “fraud” and “hypocrite” and “stupid, confused girl.”

Staying up all night gives me hope. I don’t know why. It gives me hope for love... and that’s sad. Because I don’t really think love exists. I mean, yes it does exist, but not in the form we, as human beings, expect it. I’m not some bitter, cynical, depressed bitch who has given up hope in anything and everything that is good on this earth. Sometimes I am, but most of the time, I think there are certain ideas

that we as human beings have that cannot exist. Love can and does exist between two people but not always as people think it should. There’s a constant push and pull in all relationships. Relationships can be designated as good if the pull is a certain level



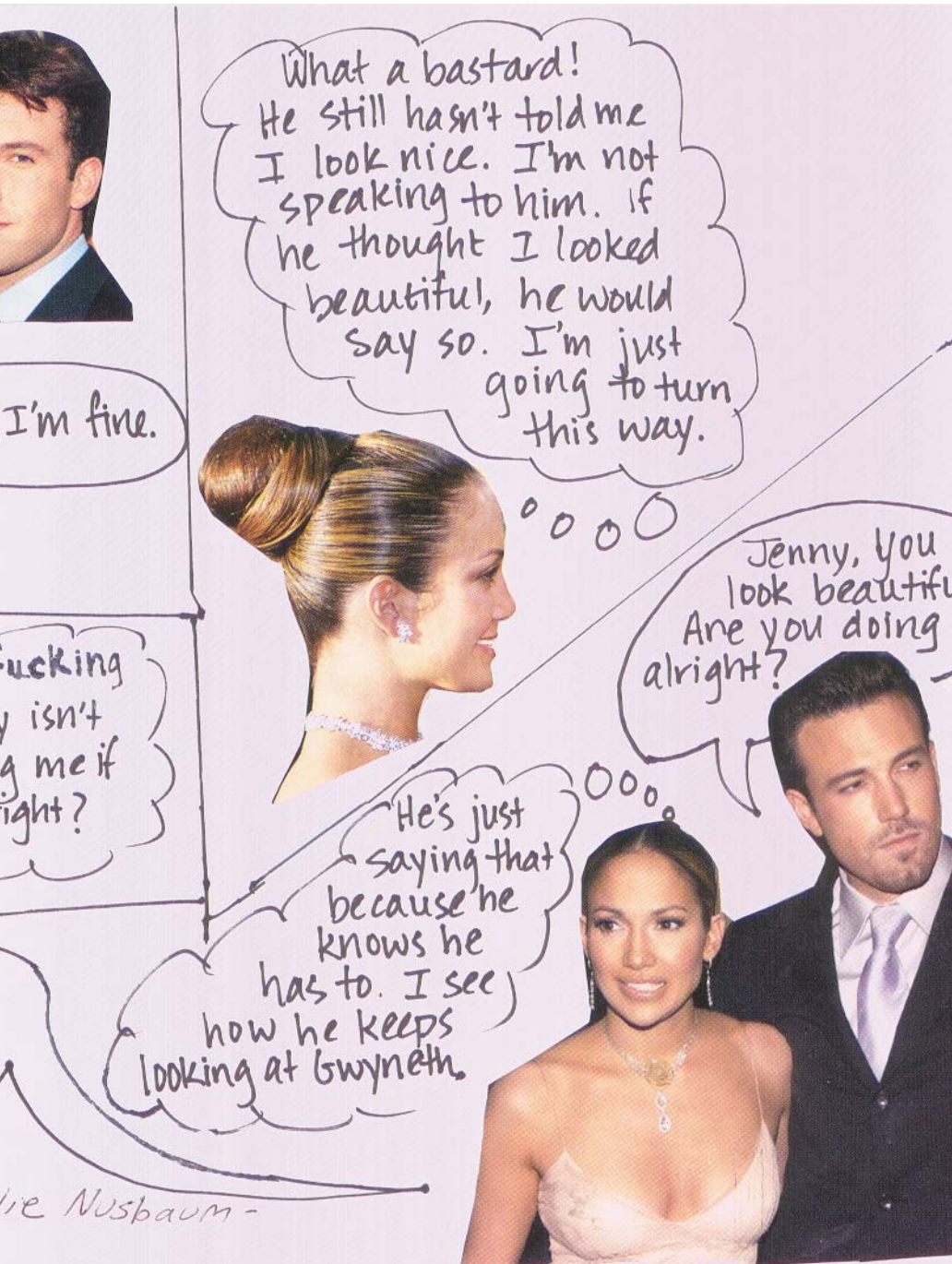
above the push. This sounds like settling, and, yes, it is, but that is exactly what keeps a relationship going. To prove I this theory I offer an example from my Indian background—arranged marriages. In such marriages, neither person feels a need for that certain someone or even a special someone. They are willing to work things out and compromise with each other, so their relationship can happily last. I'm not advocating arranged marriages but merely using them as an example. And I'm not stupid enough to think that they all "happily" last either, but surprisingly, most do last.

There's no real science to good relationships. Men and women are not out to get each

other, at least not the sane ones. Girls should take a hint from the opposite sex and relax instead of overanalyzing and developing neurotic tendencies. Any relationship will be great if both people are willing to work together and avoid arguments about where to eat or who gets the better side of the bed or whose habits are more annoying. The key is to have fun and not let the push overcome the pull.

Oh, and a lot of mind-blowing sex also helps.

*Mitali Kandar '03 is a contributing writer to The Watch.*



Like to Write? Prove it.  
TheWatchMagazine@yahoo.com

# If Bicycle Wheels Are Turning, It Must Be Revolution

JOSH RUSSELL

“I feel numb in a car, inert as I sit in my window seat. Air-conditioning and reflected sunlight while your breakfast digests uneasily.” —Drinking Sweat In The Ash Age

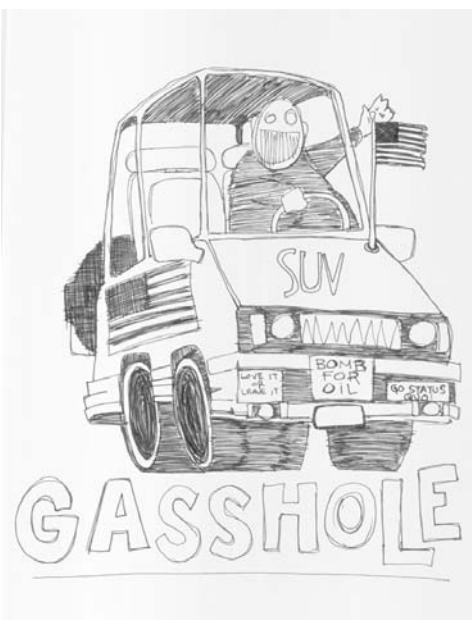
So there are these large pieces of metal hurtling around at high speeds in residential areas. They are such a menace to life and limb that every journey made by any other means is chiefly spent dodging these monstrous objects. They are the single biggest cause of atmospheric pollution and global warming. They are the largest market of the war-mongering oil industry. Their existence murders tens of thousands of people every year. These “cars” are so central to the organization of this society, especially the organization of work, that an illusion has to be maintained that nobody sees anything wrong with the ever-increasing number of cars. But is there? Have you ever really thought about how often you drive a car in unnecessary situations? Have you thought about the ramifications of these actions, both upon yourself and the world around you?

Hi, my name is Josh. I ride bikes, and I would like to tell you why. For all intents and purposes, we live in the city. There really isn't any reason any of us need cars to get 90% of the places we are going, we can take the bike accessible bus or the bike accessible commuter rail into Boston and go go!

“Those who wish to control their own lives and move beyond existence as mere clients and consumers - those people ride a bike.” —Wolfgang Sach

A lot of the external ramifications of driving a car are pretty obvious—we are killing each other at staggering rates, paving the entire world, making the air unbreathable, and stuffing landfills full of these behemoths. Think of all the wars engendered around the world to fuel these things and then George Bush is giving tax breaks to people who buy SUVs. Wow. So basically these machines are destroying the world around us and nobody thinks twice about it but you don't need me to tell you about that. You are all intelligent,

and I am sure that once you exit your cultural lenses, you can think of many other ways driving cars affects the world around us. But what about the personal consequences? Car culture socializes us into passivity. It reflects many negative aspects of larger society in a lot of ways. It's a continuation of the American ideal of “convenience at all costs.”



We isolate ourselves within these boxes of metal and glass, cut off from the rest of the world around us. Instead of interacting with our environment, we force our way over it, crushing everything in our wake. We learn to treat other drivers not as humans, but as other cars—objects in our way with which we must battle for lane space. It's all quite adversarial. The only real human interaction a driver may experience is the occasional horn blast, or the obscene gesture out the window of an angry motorist.

No, I am not calling for the destruction of all cars. Believe it or not, there are situations where driving a car might be necessary. Part of the purpose of this article is to explain that these instances however, probably

aren't nearly as frequent as you may think. Why not bike instead? Lots of people ride bicycles instead of driving for social, political, environmental, and personal reasons. Bikes are actually a pretty profound form of resistance to our culture of consumption. They are self-sustaining; propelled easily by your body and heart. Biking activates you, brings you back into the mindset of *doing*, instead of *having things done to you*. Like sex, bike riding is both fun and exercise *at the same time!* You become engaged with your environment, and begin to appreciate your surroundings in ways you may have never thought about. You interact with people *so* much more. Who knows, you may meet some new friends, or develop a friendlier outlook towards people in general. Even police departments have bike initiatives, since cops on bikes can foster a real relationship with the communities in which they work (despite the fact that police are usually hostile to bike related activism, and bikers' rights in general) While bike riding in cities can be hectic, in some ways it is a praxis, a catharsis, and consciousness all in one. Biking outside of a dense city atmosphere (say, around Waltham or Walden Pond) tends to create a mindset conducive to creativity and intellectual thought. Most of my most prized artistic impulses occur when I'm riding.

“I thought of that while riding my bike” —Albert Einstein

Bike riding is empowering, and challenges a lot of the established norms we take for granted. So take to the streets! There are a lot of fascinating political movements situated around bikes, most notably Critical Mass, a phenomenon I would love to detail but haven't the space. Check it out for yourself! [www.bostoncriticalmass.org](http://www.bostoncriticalmass.org) You can also learn lots of interesting things about bike laws from [turl.blogspot.com](http://turl.blogspot.com). So I suppose I am at the part of the essay where I throw out the obligatory cliché slogan: The Revoltuion Will Not Be Motorized! Booyah!

Josh Russell '06 is a contributing writer.

# A Condensed Philosophy of Radical Statements

BENJAMIN WOODRING

When deciding to protest or speak out against an institution, policy, or event, it is important to consider the approach and method. If the devices used to stir a public reaction are similar to those related to the source which sparked the original dissent, little is being truly accomplished. In mainstream media, those who have qualms with the current system are often lumped together as “leftist,” “communist,” “violent,” “trouble-making,” among many other gross generalizations. How unproductive it is then, when protesters commit the same fault by labeling others as “pigs,” “machines,” “suits,” and the like. I have listed a few suggestions in the spirit of promoting more constructive reform movements.

## Is the statement informative?

Is the listener or reader gaining knowledge from the statement or at least being encouraged to question and research? Or is he or she being spoken at, told what to believe, encouraged to repeat lines, chant, follow, perhaps purchase...

Example 1: Repeat after me...George Bush sucks!

Example 2: I too see Saddam as one who has committed injustice toward many humans. Yet, I can't help but notice that the current establishment that is pursuing him has had considerable economic and diplomatic relations with this man in the past, even during the gassing of the Kurds in the late 1980's.

In Example 1, nothing is happening. There is virtually no cognitive activity involved in repeating a statement. Doubtless, there is an emotional quality associated with many people chanting the same words at once, suggesting a form of solidarity, as if this is what the “people” agree on. But remember, a statement such as “We will not step down—America will prevail,” may excite the same sensation of collective assurance in a Congressman, as he joins an entire room in applauding the President. This is not to say that

positive rallies that use memorable lines to prove their point are entirely ineffective or inadvisable—but one should always be aware of what the repeated lines mean. The chanter is essentially being told what to do, and becoming a passive subject rather than an investigative individual.

Example 2 is obviously not as catchy as Example 1. To some it may seem verbose and listeners may lose interest before the statement is finished. While it does not make any definite conclusions, it considers the importance of history, past actions, and recent diplomacy/connections. The second example is more open to debate and investigation—it is not a kneejerk reaction. Grave issues must be approached with a critical eye.

## Do the statements/opinions treat all interested parties as human beings?

President Bush recently grouped Iran, Iraq, and North Korea into the “evil axis.” I later learned that signs were going around at the February 15th New York protest that presented the president, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld as the “real evil axis.” If a protester is taking the same approach as those he or she disagrees with, a problem may very well arise. Describing George Bush or the Republican party as the “enemy” is equally unproductive. For, this is how the administration labeled Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. While both men have committed atrocities, they are still individuals and should be referred to as such. Why not enumerate and discuss the actions of the man instead of applying a simple label used for brevity? The modern American is often portrayed as one who is always on the go, one who has little time, and an ever-shortening attention span. Newscasts revolve around getting information out quickly. But making distinctions just for convenience comprises the gravity of the matter at hand. Thus, it is necessary, in making problems like these known, not to fall into the same trap. One may be tempted to spring for a heavy adjective instead of a statement consisting of proper evidence, but he or she must avoid the reification of terms like “evil.” Do not grow lax, but continue to prove and

defend. People and social situations are both dynamic, and will only sit neatly under categorization for a short time without having to be re-evaluated.

Example 1: The mainstream media is aligned with political interests. All the newscasts present the heavily conservative position as the centrist or normative position and never even present more liberal perspectives. They present everything as black and white.

Example 2: The media which is most popular in the United States is often supported economically by politically interested parties. For example, Station Y is headed by \_\_\_\_\_ who has these connections with Party X. Notably, we see the influence of party X surfacing in the programming, with biased sentiments such as \_\_\_\_\_. This station also has a tendency to oversimplify matters. After Event A, colorful backdrops and catchy slogans were created, like \_\_\_\_\_. In this manner, Station Y attempts to make clear-cut distinctions where a more complex situation exists. With regard to Event A, the distinctions being made seem to allow more voice from Party X than other parties or people.

This should seem rather intuitive. If one is to make a statement, evidence is always important. One must not substitute speculation for analysis. Verify and substantiate every argument where possible. Example 1 is an exaggeration of the situation. Not every facet of mainstream media takes on the attributes predicated in the sentence. Overshooting a point compromises the force of the argument, making listeners doubt the entire premise.

## Do the terms used within a statement (designators) have specific referents?

Here arises a problem not only in radical discourse, but in many flustered speeches. A vague pronoun such as “they” subsumes a mass of people into a flatly stereotypical entity. For example: They take our money, they neglect our needs, and then they ask where our national pride is! The speaker or writer in the above statement is most likely referring to the United States government, but could mean a number of other entities such as large corporations or often the general

misinformed public. Yet, the government is made up of people - maybe a thick, entangled mess of people, but real people nonetheless. Similarly, as big, as spooky, and as faceless as corporations may seem, they are also run by people- maybe controlled significantly by a select few, but still humans just like you and me. Now, it is certainly entertaining to see comics about the robot-like nature of mainstream culture or political cartoons that show the country being run by ugly caricatures who are all similar in appearance. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that no matter how mindless the "herd" might seem, all members do indeed have minds, and these are the very people you want to embrace. Why stand on an elitist platform when it is possible to talk to people, hear their opinions, and discuss solutions to problems. No matter how radical your position or theory may be, it assuredly involves a solution that deals with problems inherent in the government and economic climate. Distancing yourself from mainstream culture based purely on principle will severely damage the effectiveness of the message you are trying to spread. When one refuses to gett into the current political or social turmoil because he or she feels more enlightened, a stubborn ideological trench forms that may prove perilous to cross at a later time.

### Then what is there to say?

Now, when all these methods are analyzed and stripped down, one may wonder, then what options are left? I am not suggesting that one should fear misinterpretation in speaking and writing to the point of silence. There is no unerring standard for setting one's point across in a clear fashion. Yet, it is important to avoid verbal stimulation for its own sake where possible. True constructive thought should not need spectacle, only an efficient vehicle. I am not implying that psychological matters can be or should be divorced from discourse. After all, Frege and Carnap devoted much energy trying to do just that, with little luck. Furthermore, feeling and emotion should remain vital aspects of any endeavor. My wariness only stems from the tendency for some emotions to become mini-dictators themselves, making one susceptible to all flavors of manipulation. Cognizance is essential. Know what and why you are protesting, and be prepared to hear other perspectives.

*Benjamin Woodring '06 is editor-in-chief of The Watch.*

# ESSAY

# WINNER:

# "Near Hidden B

TAHLIA ORBACH-SMITH

Diane Arbus began her career doing fashion photography for a handful of major magazines in the late 1950s and early 60s. Together with her photographer husband Allan Arbus, she built a name for herself in the commercial world. Once she began to break off and work as a freelance photographer, she created a unique niche with a portfolio that focused on unusual and controversial subjects-among them: disfigured children, drag queens, midgets, adults with down syndrome, and giants. Critics bashed her work as being not only aesthetically backward, but also somewhat exploitative of her unfortunate subjects; admirers praised her risk-taking and honest photographs. It is important, as with all artists of any medium, to consider her entire life's work in order to judge Diane Arbus. And when taking into account her work, from the pages of *Vogue* through her portraits of cross-dressers at their vanity tables, there emerges a consistency that illuminates Arbus' keen eye for the idiosyncrasies that make up the human race, and her appreciation for its astounding and diverse kinds of beauty.

There is a particular photograph of Arbus' of a sword swallower (*Albino sword swallower at a carnival*, Md. 1970) that grabs you literally from the inside, as you come across it in a collection of Arbus' photography or in a gallery. The image is of a woman with her arms spread almost Christ-like, she is vulnerable with a blade halfway down her throat, and the second it catches your eye, your hands jump to clutch your neck, feeling the pain vicariously through the photograph you turn away to end the discomfort. And yet once you recover a few seconds later, the photograph is still there for you to gingerly examine, to understand the basic physicality of the sword swallower, to admire her embroidered and sequined costume, to wonder at the lightness of her hair on her white sleeve.

This is the incredible service of Diane Arbus' work: she gives us not only the mere chance to look and react, but also the chance to come back and *understand*. Comments Arbus herself: "For me the subject of the picture is always more important than the picture... It's very subtle and a little embarrassing to me, but I really believe there are things which nobody would see unless I photographed them." According to her photography, we look at the sword swallower the same way we look at midgets and the insane and the aging- that is, with morbid fascination and uneasiness. But by capturing these oddities and displaying them as art, Arbus allows the viewer to look carefully at her photographs and see the subject not as a type of unfortunate, but as an individual with a life and a history and future. She endows the subjects of her photographs with unprecedented dignity and love.

As a photographer and woman, all who closely knew or came into contact with Arbus pointedly remarked on this special dotting quality she possessed. "...Diane plied me with gentle questions and then listened to my answers with such intensity I believed I had never spoken so articulately or been so well understood," remarks biographer Patricia Bosworth, in the preface to her Diane Arbus. She continues, "Later I discovered that Diane consistently had this effect on people. 'When you were talking with her, she made you feel as if you were the most important person in the world,' says her old friend Stewart Stern." This also shines through in much of her work, as Arbus reflected.

*Actually, [the people I photograph] tend to like me. I'm extremely likeable with them. I think I'm kind of two-faced. I'm very ingratiating. It really kind of annoys me... Everything is Oooo. I hear myself saying, 'How terrific,' and there's this woman making a face. I really mean it's terrific. I don't mean*

# ly everything delights me!” eauty in the Photographs of Diane Arbus



Their numbers were picked out of a hat. They were just chosen King and Queen of a Senior Citizens dance in NYC. Yetta Granaf is 72 and Charles Fahrer is 79. They have never met before.  
Diane Arbus, 1970.

Their



Retired man and his wife at home in a nudist camp one morning, NJ  
Diane Arbus, 1963.

*I wish I looked like that. I don't mean I wish my children looked like that. I don't mean in my private life I want to kiss you. But I mean that's amazingly, undeniably something.*

With Arbus' malleable professional personality she was able to infiltrate corners of society previously reserved only for its members. She photographed transvestites, art critics, and bodybuilders alike, bringing to the forefront their images and their stories. By integrating herself into their lives (she even tells of being invited to a male cross-dressing whore's birthday party, in which the only guests were she and the man's pimp), Arbus becomes not only the photographer, but also an integral part of the photograph. She is the only one willing to take the time to document the more unusual lives. She was the only artist searching for new aesthetic pleasures and finding it in people who had long given up on their own beauty and desirability.

Some might argue that this is not true, citing her photographs of nudists and sad-looking elderly couples as being critical of her subjects, and highlighting their pain and patheticness. Indeed, Arbus catches people at moments when other photographers never would choose to: in a scowl, with tears streaming through makeup on their cheeks, their unkempt eyebrows and missing teeth in clear focus. It is unfortunate however that

these slices of life are considered ugliness, as, after all, they are very much real and very much a part of the human experience.

"She was... preoccupied with ambiguity, with contradictions. She was examining rather than interpreting the world." Arbus' obsessive examination and stark presentation of the world leaves her art open to interpretation and to the viewer's personal connection to the image. "A brief look at the work of... Diane Arbus... illustrates how artists take advantage of the conflict between information derived from bodily knowledge and that derived from knowledge from language or other modalities of knowing," points out scholar Ellen Spolsky in her paper on Kinesis and photography. Arbus' choice of subjects for her photographs indicates a certain tenderness or attraction she had to them as an artist. In that sense, it is the viewer who projects onto the image ugliness; it is not implicit in the honesty of her photographs. Arbus felt no obligation to make things seem beautiful, but rather searched for beauty in reality.

Biographer Bosworth recounts an incident in which aging starlet Mae West is outraged at Arbus' "not at all glamorous" photographs of her published in *Show* magazine. This highlights the expectation of the Hollywood elite to be treated with a special flat-tery and only portrayed how they would have

like to have been pictured. Bosworth goes on to point out that Arbus was "genuinely surprised when subjects disliked what she found in them." Arbus could not grasp the specialness of one human being over the other based on their accomplishments. It was therefore in the dark underworld of the deformed and dejected that Arbus found her inspiration. "Freaks was a thing I photographed a lot... There's a quality of legend about freaks. Like a person in a fairy tale who stops you and demands that you answer a riddle. Most people go through life dreading they'll have a traumatic experience. Freaks were born with their trauma. They've already passed their test in life. They're aristocrats." Arbus' childhood was a relatively easy one, as she grew up in a wealthy family without prevalent illness (other than her mother's resurfacing depression), so she was fascinated with those whom, as she said, "were born with their trauma." Arbus' photography reflects her fascination with the plight of the handicapped, and she finds beauty in the play of children with down syndrome, the birthday parties of midgets, a Jewish giant and his parents.

Interestingly, when one looks at Diane Arbus' work as an entirety, it is poignant to note that she photographs her infamous "freaks" with the same intensity and honest quality that she photographed all other individuals. Expounds Bosworth:

*"After a while [Esquire editor Robert] Benton came to see that 'we' (meaning the viewer) looked no different from 'them' (meaning the subjects). 'It was Diane's idiosyncratic style-her deceptively simple, singular approach that leveled all her subjects, regardless of who they were, and made both freak and normal appear in some aspects the same. The term "freak" or "normal" in her context became meaningless. Because Diane had made no distinctions-no concessions, either.'"*

Arbus' extensive portfolio of, and personal experiences with, the handicapped serve as testament to her commitment to recording their lives. Or, as author James Schevill put it, "As we see clearly in her best photographs... Only an unusual compassion can relate ugliness to beauty." Diane Arbus' undoubtedly unusual vision of art and aesthetics does, unfortunately, make her work somewhat difficult and inaccessible to the mass consumer. Some of her photographs, such as *Burlesque comedienne in her dressing room* (Atlantic City, NJ, 1963) and *A young Brooklyn family going for a Sunday outing*

(NYC, 1966) are so painful to view because of their stark depiction of intertwined poverty, excess, and disability, that most would not want to subject themselves to such strong emotions of discomfort and pity. "The attitude Arbus expresses in pictures was known in literature as black comedy," comments author Roger Seaman. Black comedy is another mode of finding humor (that is, beauty) in the tragic (that is, grotesque)-and certainly Arbus did not mean for people to be disgusted by her art, but rather gratified by its realism. "What I'm trying to describe is that it's impossible to get out of your skin and into somebody else's. And that's what all this is a little bit about. That somebody else's tragedy is not the same as your own," wrote Arbus.

Because of Diane Arbus' tumultuous personal life, it is difficult to categorize her photographs as being optimistic or pessimistic per se. Her first marriage ended in divorce, and she had a string of "emotionless" love affairs during and after the marriage. From the time she was a young woman, Arbus suffered from "bouts of melancholy" and eventually was afflicted with heavy depressions. In late July of 1971, Arbus committed suicide by slitting her wrists in the bathtub of her New York apartment. She was forty-eight years old. It may seem contradictory to call such an artist's work a study in beauty, but in light of Arbus' familial history of depression, her psychological despondency is for the most part irrelevant to her work. Though no one knows the precise reason for her suicide, as she left no direct 'suicide note,' it seems to have been her own inner demons, rather than the sadness that her work surrounded her in, that brought about her ultimate escape. Just a few months before her suicide, she "lectured at the about-to-open International Center of Photography and compared taking pictures to 'tiptoeing into the kitchen late at night and stealing Oreo cook-

ies out of the fridge.'" This interesting analogy indicates Arbus still had a very innocent view of her work, she was almost child-like in her enthusiasm-despite the taxing emotional strain that being constantly amongst such destitution could cause.

Were Diane Arbus to have lived past 1971, she would have undoubtedly been fascinated by the innovations in genetics that are currently being debated. The prevalence of plastic surgery would have also excited her, as both stem cell research and rhinoplasty come from the same desire to control and perfect the human form. In a philanthropic sense, Arbus' photography is therefore an immeasurable treasure, as her portfolio takes stock, so to speak, of the human race and the oddities that emerge from our tangled unions-oddities that may in the near future be sup-

pressed or eradicated. "Beauty is itself an aberration-a burden, a mystery," said Arbus reflecting upon the uniqueness of her photographs. Though her medium is a purely superficial one that can only display an outer appearance, the beauty of Diane Arbus' art lies not in the perfection of her subjects, but in the realness of their appearances, their emotions behind their expressions, even the specialness of their sadness. The span of her photography proves that we are all bound in what can be a gorgeous and at the same time terrifying humanity-but it is nonetheless the most beautiful humanity we will ever know.

*Tahlia-Orbach Smith '06 is the Spring 2003 Watch Essay Competition Winner.*



**A Jewish giant at home with his parents in the Bronx, NY  
Diane Arbus, 1970.**

# SEX, GUITARS AND SLOPPY HEURISTICS

SAM PETSONK

“I learned to play some lead guitar, I was underage in this funky bar, and I stepped outside to smoke myself a J.”

In his song “Late in the Evening,” Paul Simon coolly captures a central social phenomenon of the contemporary period—the guitar. Over the past fifty years, in high schools and on college campuses around the world, guitar-playing has become a universal vogue for both men and women. Why choose the guitar? Why does it appeal to so many? Doesn’t anyone understand supply and demand? There is no shortage of guitar players! What of quality versus quantity? What of moderation? No one is obligated to address these questions, but those who neglect to do so pay insufficient respect to the guitar’s character and history, as well as ignore a useful gauge of psychosexual identity in our time.

The guitar surfaces in 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain as the *guitarra latina*, a four-stringed instrument of waisted body that by the 18<sup>th</sup> century had evolved to the more familiar six-stringed version. Distinct from the larger *vihuela*, played by aristocrats during the Spanish Renaissance, the *guitarra latina* was from its birth the cultural property of the commoners. In 20<sup>th</sup> century North America, guitars are a material livelihood. They liberate us, allowing us to embrace the many cultures whose lives they continually enrich. The character of our guitar has a dual nature in what folklorist Peter Narváez frames as a struggle between “the pragmatic...views toward guitars of African-American blues musicians” and the myth that only acoustic guitar can be a vehicle for democratic expression across the classes. At the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, this folk-boom “myth of acousticity” suffered a prominent fracture at the hands of Bob Dylan and Al Kooper.

Their act of “plugging in” amplified the previously suppressed reality of guitar-playing as an act of yearning, as an unfettered thrust of the self upon a greater majesty.

Contrary to the concerns of some folkies, electricity brings no change in course for the river of adolescence. (To cling to other ideological baggage is, at best, quaint.) The guitar is consistently used to distill the central motives of man in our society. In his book, *Singers and the Song*, Gene Lees defines the “Sinatra effect” as the product of synthesizing shrewd marketing with teenage sexual hunger. Within a decade of Sinatra’s ascent, the guitar allows the “Sinatra effect” to be realized by Elvis Presley and his stupefying tri-chord dexterity. If it had not been already obvious enough from the success of performers such as Leadbelly and Ricky Nelson, Elvis forced the egalitarianism of the six-string guitar—along with its insidious big brother, rock ‘n roll—into the hearts and minds of every American, regardless of class, sexual identity, color, or creed.

Psychology teaches two types of reasoning processes: the deductive and the inductive. Sigmund Freud describes an adolescence characterized by a turbulent struggle to redefine sexual attraction independent of the unconscious taboos associated with the Oedipus complex. We teenagers tend to lack the distance from our psychological chaos to effectively construct premises for deduction, so we leap to the sloppy use of heuristics, shortcuts to help us come up with quick solutions. We don’t act according to supply and demand because we charge through our night wearing blinders, too confused to pur-



sue self-interest with any perspective. By inductive reasoning, we consider a number of different instances and try to determine a general rule for them all. We estimate how often we encounter an event or object in order to make an availability judgment—a method called availability heuristics. Due to our enfeebled memory, we tend to recall those things to which we are most recently and most frequently exposed. Desperate to deliver our-



selves from the land of psychosexual uncertainty, we recall the powerful personification of sexuality that Jimi Hendrix brought from minstrel to megapop, and towards it we scamper. The instrument is used to invest the body of the performer with meaning, to confer upon it a unique identity whose authentic, natural appearance works to conceal its reliance upon artifice and technology. As Jimi's guitar satisfies our phallogocentric ethos, the newbie guitarist unsurprisingly draws the rudest of conclusions. (Thanks, Foucault.)

The old folksinger Hazel Dickens claimed, "it's hard to tell the singer from the song." Jerry Garcia prophesied the same for the axman and his ax: "For me, I think the only danger is being too much in love with guitar playing. The music is the most important thing, and the guitar is only the instrument." Rooted in the Latin verb *instruere*, which means "to prepare" or "to instruct," the word *instrument* is chiefly defined as "a means by which something is done." A million and one drooling teenagers fumble across fretboards towards better sex lives. This is fine and good, and, to be sure, it is a large part of how the guitar is defined in our time. However, I feel that it will be a shame if at least a few of us fail to heed Jerry's warning and allow our guitars to procure for us a path to some deeper knowledge. The guitar—a tool so clearly employed to enrich one's sexual cachet—exemplifies the eternal interconnectedness of body image, the class struggle, the chaotic evolution of the psychosexual self, and the inevitably public nature of all these phenomena. The guitar leads us to produce beyond demand—ie, to defy the canonical prescriptions of economics. Simultaneously, it helps us create an augmented persona, allowing us to define ourselves by our produce. In order to exist as more than a producer of superfluous fluff, the guitarist must know that he first functions as an agent for species proliferation. It is important to obtain this first stage of knowledge.

Second, he benefits by recognizing the ultimate irrelevance of all his creations. Honestly, to believe that the world will be physically changed by one's music is arrogant and imprudent. This is the second stage of knowledge. To view the instrument as the sole end is to languish foolishly in a black hole of narcissism and alienation. By appreciating the guitar as a device for the creation of beauty and for the distillation of emotion, an individual can understand what is revealed by the

## Top Ten Enlighthened Guitarists

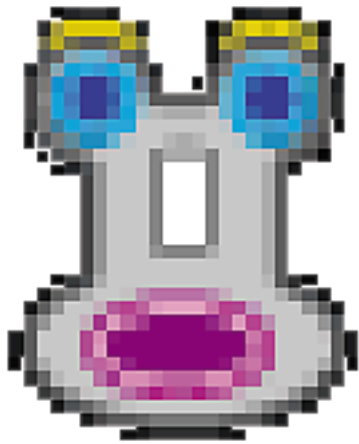
- 10) Rob Buck (of 10,000 Maniacs)
- 9) Zal Yanovsky (of the Lovin' Spoonful & the Mugwumps)
- 8) Noel Paul Stookey (of Peter, Paul, and Mary)
- 7) Etta Baker
- 6) Ray Davies (of the Kinks)
- 5) Sheryl Crow
- 4) John Hartford
- 3) Phil Ochs
- 2) John Lennon
- 1) Paul Simon

unity of guitar and guitarist. There is nothing new under the sun and hence what we produce can never be more than pretty and inert. If this is true, to satisfy oneself with the production of aesthetically pleasing trivia is to secure for self-contentment in life. This is the third stage of knowledge.

The casual defeatism of Paul Simon's late evening narrative is both exalted and overcome through the harmony that Hazel and Jerry propose. Every stage of the knowledge is good, and each is essential. To never acknowledge these stages is to deny the centrality of sexual imperatives in human behavior, as well as shortchange the personal transformative potential of the guitar and all she represents. To hijack notions of the guitar as a black box of romance and revelation from myopic music videos and muddled pop propaganda is, in fact, to succumb to sloppy heuristics, disgracing sexuality and 500 years of music history.

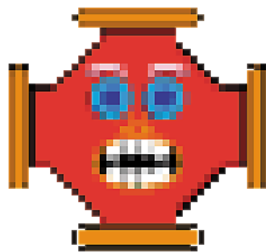
By all means, play the guitar. Create inordinate amounts of beauty. Just don't embarrass the human intellect and the community of manic dreamers by assuming that your appropriation of a laminate wood box necessarily signifies a knowledge of their Never-Never Land.

*Sam Petsonk '06 is a contributing writer.*



DAVID LIBBER

As millions have already discovered, the computer game Snood provides a quirky, entertaining way to escape reality and enter a world of excitement and fun. The game, which is made up of hundreds of levels, involves shooting “snoods” (colorful little characters) into pre-set patterns of snoods in order to eliminate as many pairs as possible. But for many, Snood isn’t just a game; it’s an addiction. Even though Snood is played by millions of people, most don’t know what’s behind the craze: how it was created, what the game is about, and the frenzy surrounding the overwhelmingly popular game.

*Frenzy personified*

### In The Beginning

David Dobson, a marine geology, geochemistry, and sedimentology professor at Guilford College, created the game for his wife Christina, who enjoys games that are similar to Tetris. Snood was released as shareware in 1996, but it was soon discovered by college students, and the Snood frenzy began.

As reported by *USA Today* and Gannett News Service, more than 5 million copies of the program have been downloaded and tens of thousands more download Snood each day. But what makes Snood so popular? As one would expect, there isn’t just one an-

swer. The millions of users most likely play Snood for different reasons, but its popularity can be narrowed down to its Tetris-like appeal. After reading its simple instructions, there’s no doubt as to why it has caught on quickly. To start Snood, you are given one snood at a time and must shoot it into a pattern of Snoods that is on the screen when you start. The patterns you are given can be quite tricky, particularly in higher, more advanced levels. The trick is to match the snood with two or more accessible snoods on the particular level. Once two or more of a specific snoods have come into contact, they disappear and you have fewer obstacles in the way of reaching other snoods. The problem is that the snoods aren’t always accessible (meaning that snoods you have already shot may stand in your way), and the screen quickly grows smaller. When the snoods that have accumulated reach a certain limit on the bottom of the screen, the game is over.

Snood also offers something for everyone. There are five levels of difficulty: child, easy, medium, hard, and evil. It also has a custom setting, to create your own Snood experience, as well as a puzzle and journey setting. The puzzle setting comes with a plethora of distinct levels, each with its own name (i.e. “Gone Fishin,” “Junkyard,” “Let

*Like muppets but flat*

It Snood”).

Snood officials say that the game is particularly good for children because it is “non-violent and non-confrontational, and children can play at their own pace. It develops several basic skills, including matching, calculation of angles, and simple strategic assessment and problem solving. It does not require reading, and the controls are very simple.” Thus, not only is Snood enjoyable, but it is also developmentally beneficial to children.

### Continue? Yes!

Another aspect of the Snood craze is its tendency to cause addiction. Many players jokingly say that they are addicted, but in reality, it is possible to play too much. One link from the Snood website is to a Yahoo! support group for Snood addicts. The support group is more about trading Snood secrets and experiences than coming out as a “Snoodaholic,” but it goes to show that, if played too much, Snood can become an unhealthy obsession.

As many Brandeis students know, Snood has become incredibly popular on college campuses throughout the nation. For instance, Muhlenberg College had a Snood tournament in 2001. In 2000, students at Georgetown University held a “Snood War,” and students at Northwestern threw a Snood Party.

All in all, Snood has become unbelievably popular, especially for a simple game created as a gift from David Dobson to his wife. Snood has recently been released on Game Boy Advance, and will soon be available for Playstation, Game Cube, and Game Boy Color. The question is—When will the Snood fire be put out? Judging by its extraordinary growth in popularity, it probably won’t happen any time soon.

*David Libber '06 is a contributing writer.*

# DEMYSTIFYING THE TA

Y E H U D A H A U S M A N

A determined deconstructionalist exploration into the basic parts and meanings of the word “assistant” can bare far more than the naked fruit of truth. At an institution akin to Brandeis, where honesty, idiocy, and nudity are considered among the highest of idle pursuits, it would behoove us to attempt a disciplined peeling away of the various particulars which enshroud the true essence and meaning of that very befuddling term: “teaching assistant.”

Who are these mysterious “wannabe” professors? Why do they dreg and droop through our hallways, always wallowing in their own peevish mediocrity? We Fresh-minded-women see straight through this pitiful farce. The TA is a fraud, a fake—a mask behind a mask masking mindlessness—reflecting, repeating, and replicating the brilliance of others.

Trust me my fellow seawomen, I don’t mean to be asinine, but chem TA’s can have a real acidic side to them. My advice: don’t take them too seriously. Just look at their title—“ass- cist- ants!” C’mon comrades, were you expecting a sculpted picture of perfection???

By breaking up the word ass-cist-ant into its base forms, we may yet spear through the fleshy externals and uncover the muddy innermost parts. I assume that most of you know what an “ass” is, so I won’t make you endure an unnecessary explanation. But the word “sist” (usually “cist”) deserves some penetrative effort. Topically, we try to peel away at cist-like blotches which tend to congeal about the epidermis. This activity is usually associated with a number of self-pitying mutterings (i.e. “I’m ugly,” “How can I go out today?” and “Thank God there are other curvaceous individuals at Brandeis,” etc. etc). But we should really pity these TA’s.

Imagine if one day you were to wake up and discover that you were in fact a living breathing cist! How would that make you feel? I would assume that few among us would stand quite so proudly and erectly with this sort of self-awareness. Deservedly perhaps, we would feel small, stupid, ugly, and unworthy. However, such an experience would make you feel much like an “ant.”

And there you have it—front to rear—“ass-cist-ant.” We have extrapolated the unsightly chaos embedded within the T.A.. But I remind you once again, let’s show some remorse for these oft sorrow-filled beings. Teacher’s assistants are no artful pictures or poets of assonance. Rather, they are the plainest of sorts. But don’t judge them too harshly; you may one day become a TA.

## Connect Four Corner

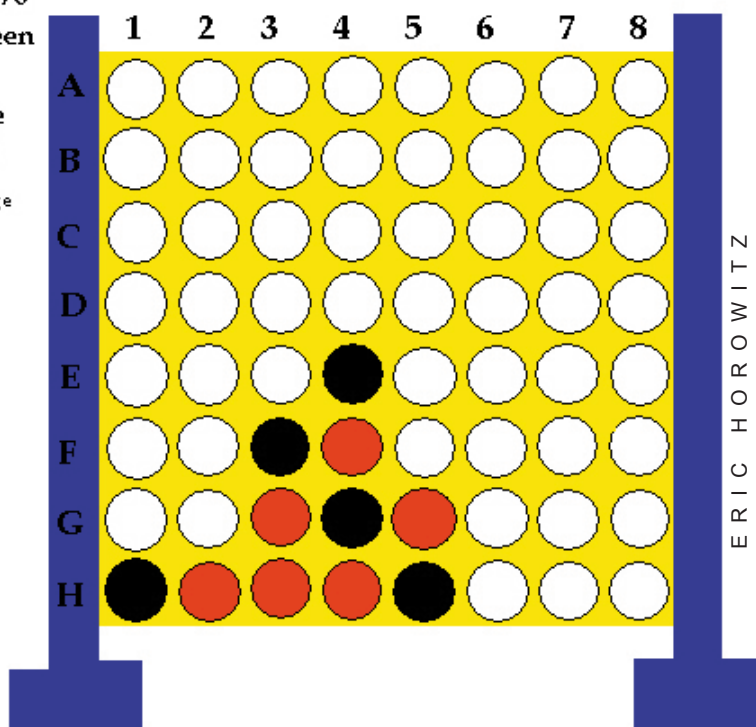
### The Game

Today's Puzzle comes from the 1976 Norwegian Championship between Johann Narmulsson and Sven Kjellberg. Narmulsson found the correct move and won. Can you?

answer at bottom of page

### The Moves

Red to H4  
Black to H5  
Red to H3  
Black to G4  
Red to G3  
Black to F3  
Red to H2  
Black to H1  
Red to F4  
Black to E4  
Red to G5  
Black to ?



answer: Black to G2

# Dear 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,

KEVIN GRINBERG

Dear Mr. President:

I am not a Christian. I am, however, an American, and I am troubled that you do not see me as an equal. Please allow me to explain.

In your public pronouncements, you claim to love Jesus Christ as your savior and even list him as an influential political philosopher. You wear your faith on your sleeve and rarely let a day go by without reminding us that you love God. Unfortunately, you also assume that we all think like you. Let me give you a recent example.

When addressing the nation after the *Columbia* tragedy, you quoted the prophet Isaiah: "Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry hosts one by one and calls them each by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing." You then added, "There's no question in my mind [the astronauts] are finding strength and comfort because of your prayers and because of the Almighty God."

Sir, one of the astronauts who perished on that shuttle, Dr. Kalpana Chawla, was not a Christian. She was Hindu, a religion that does not recognize the prophet Isaiah - or even a single God who "calls each of them by name." What of this woman's family, who turned on the television only to find the President of the United States doing his best to de-legitimize and ignore their daughter's religion in the guise of paying her respect?

Some might call this concern an overdose of political correctness, a wishy-washy ideal of the weak liberal intelligentsia run amuck. I call it being mindful of people's feelings. I call it being aware that the world is not all like you. I call it recognizing that we owe more to our fellow citizens—indeed, to our fellow human beings—than simply *tolerating* their beliefs; we owe them a full, hearty embrace.

You say you understand "that government must not and will not endorse a religious creed, or directly fund religious worship." What about you, Mr. President? Do you consider yourself a member of "the government?" If so, what about your appeals for Americans to "lift me up in prayer?" What is that, if not outright endorsement?

Just days ago, you asked America's religious broadcasters "to rally the armies of compassion so that we can change America one heart, one soul at a time." Mr. President, I am all for compassion. However, my compassion is not of a religious nature, and it certainly does not drive me to change souls. Call me a religious pacifist; I fight for no religion. Mr. President, can I opt out of your crusade?

There are many of us who care for the country but not for God. We believe in the goodness and compassion of the American people; we believe in every man and woman's responsibility to help one another; we believe in the right of citizens to be vocal; and we believe in the duty of a President to lead. But some of us find it difficult to be led by a leader who simply tolerates—if that—the religious beliefs or non-beliefs of others. Believe it or not, Mr. President, not *all* Americans believe in God; of those, not all believe in the Christian God. To be legal, you are obliged to tolerate all forms of belief or non-belief. But to be an effective leader, you must embrace and accept them.

Mr. President, I am a non-Christian, non-religious American. Can you accept me for what I am?

Sincerely,  
Kevin Grinberg

# Time Out!

KRYSTAL KLEIN

Class of '03, the end is finally in sight. With graduation looming just a half-semester away, our class is beginning to bustle with news of the future. It seems that almost every senior I talk to these days is flying all over the country for interviews or anxiously awaiting decision letters from their graduate programs of choice. However, this atmosphere of excitement is rivaled by the increasing anxiety of those who don't have anything lined up after May 18th.

If you are one of those anxious, "futureless" souls, then fear not. No matter what your parents say, you are not ruining your life by taking a time out; in fact, it may be the best possible thing for you. But the key to making your experience valuable is to make sure that you are taking a time *out* and not just taking time *off*.

Follow my logic here. Time off includes such alluring activities as:

Moving back into your parents' house and tanning at the beach every day.

Crashing on your best friend's couch and playing Xbox for six months straight.

Returning to your hometown, getting your old job at the Gap back and hanging out with your friends from high school.

Working at Usdan ('nuff said).

These sorts of plans can be relaxing and pleasurable, especially after three to five long years of grueling university coursework. However, they hardly take advantage of the outstanding opportunity for growth and exploration that has arisen because you decided *not* to throw yourself immediately into "the rest of your life." Not only will you not convince your skeptical girlfriend/mother/professor that you have made the right decision, but before long, you will probably agree with them.

However, a time out is different. Think sports. A time out is a strategic break from the game. You're going back, but not before you work some things out.

A time out can give you new perspective on the world and yourself, whether you're just taking a year off before applying to law school, or you have no idea what you want to do with your life. You can explore a new geographic location or try your hand at a line of work you've been eyeing. You can take a job that means something to

you that you couldn't risk taking if you had a family to support. You can immerse yourself in a different culture. You can spend some time discovering, rediscovering, or rejecting a religion or philosophy. Any type of personal paradigm shift will force you to flesh out and expand your worldview and beliefs and may help you to generate, alter, confirm, or discard your plans for The Future.

Perhaps I've convinced you to take a time out, but you don't know what you want to do with it. Lucky for you, I've started your homework by compiling a sample of time out options. Let your imagination run wild from there.

## Ten Ideas to Whet Your Time Out Appetite

### 1. Have an Antarctic Adventure

If you want to go somewhere new but are sick of traveling the northern continents, then maybe Antarctica is the place for you. I'm totally serious. The United States (like many other countries) sends thousands of people to beautiful Antarctica every year in the name of science. Most of these jobs are actually not for scientists but concern the maintenance of the site; positions range from prep cook to firefighter to analytical chemist to hairstylist. For the most part, they require only a short time commitment, lasting for the Antarctic summer (October to March). According to the documentation, they offer "a well-balanced, comprehensive pay and benefits package." They are not taking applications for the 2003-2004 season yet, but you can start researching the work program at the Raytheon Polar Services website, <http://rpssc.raytheon.com/>, or read about the research on the National Science Foundation website, <http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/>.

### 2. Work for Your Keep... in Hawaii

Are you a staunch supporter of the organic food movement? Then put your muscle where your mouth is. The WWOOF (World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) is a volunteer initiative aimed at helping the or-

**Ten things to do after graduation  
if you're not going to grad school next year  
and you aren't ready to start "the rest of your life."**

ganic movement by connecting organic farms with people who want to volunteer to help out on them. Host farms can be found all over the world, but why go all over the world when you can go to sunny Hawaii? There are WWOOF hosts on the islands of Kauai, Molokai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii, where crops include vegetables, sprouts, macadamia nuts, and exotic fruits. This is how to get in on the action: visit the WWOOF Hawaii website and send in your application along with a small fee. The organization will then send you a brochure containing listings from the different host farms. You contact the farms yourself and make arrangements. Volunteers often stay at each farm for a couple of weeks, then continue to other farms, thereby experiencing a number of different types of organic farming and rural lifestyles. Arrangements are made individually between you and the specific host farm, but according to WWOOF, you will probably be expected to work for at least six hours a day, six days a week. For more information about organic farming in Hawaii, visit <http://www.woofusa.com/hawaii/>. For a list of worldwide WWOOF organizations, visit <http://www.woof.org>.

### 3. Get Rich (or maybe just enough to pay the rent) Quick

The consumerist playground known as the Internet has made it possible to sell goods and services with virtually no capital. If you have great ideas, a few bucks to spend on web space, and rudimentary html skills, your wares could be the next big things to hit the big bad W3. Because big corporations will have you beat out in the areas of practicality, your best bet probably lies in the arty gimmick market, where obscure and creative products enjoy enormous markups due to their peculiar charm. A few existing products that might inspire you to create your own include Origami Boulder (\$10-\$15, <http://www.origamiboulder.com>), ShitBegone toilet paper (\$44.99/96 rolls, <http://shitbegone.com>), the Blenderphone (\$300, <http://www.cycoactive.com/blender/>), and TruckNutz (\$15-\$39.99, <http://www.trucknutz.com>). I could try to describe them to you, but you should really see for yourself. If you play your cards right, you may even receive national media attention. Now that's a bullet for your résumé.

### 4. Serve Your Country

Think it's about time you gave something back to America? If you're a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident alien between the ages of 18 and 24, then you are eligible to apply to be part of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). Should you be accepted into this 10-month program, you will live and work with a team of 10-12 other members, traveling to different communities nationwide and providing service through projects such as disaster relief, tutoring, and housing renovations. In addition to an incredible experience, you will receive housing, a modest living allowance, student loan deferment, health insurance, and a \$4,725 education award that may be used toward further education or paying back student loans. Applications, which can be submitted online, are currently being ac-

cepted for a program lasting from January to November 2004. Learn more at the AmeriCorps website, <http://www.americorps.org/joining/nccc.html>.

### 5. Bring America to France

Perhaps you've always wanted to spend time in France, but thought the language barrier would be too much to overcome. If so, then Nacel's American Village might be for you. This is a twist on your run-of-the-mill camp counselor job because it is a camp for French kids to pretend they are in America. The counselors come from all over the world, but they all pretend to be American, speaking only English to the campers (aged 8-15) and teaching them about life in America. I have a French friend who worked there last summer and had a wonderful time. You get an added bonus if you know some French, as you will be able to understand the kids when they think you can't speak a word of it. And if you don't know French but want to learn, it's a great opportunity as well. Visit the Nacel website at <http://www.nacel.fr>.

### 6. Serve it Up

Hate mornings and love meeting drunk people? Join the other side—of the bar, that is. Bartending can be a great way to earn money, and training options are incredibly flexible. You can receive your nationally recognized certification from any of a plethora of bartending institutions, many of which offer online or home video options (starting at about \$40) in addition to in-school courses (ranging from about \$150 to \$1000). Many schools also offer job placement. Aside from being an opportunity to meet a lot of different kinds of people now, bartending also may be an attractive option for you later. It's a great opportunity if you are planning to attend further schooling but need to work at the same time, or if you ever need to supplement your day job. Even if you don't want to work every night, many cities have bartending and catering services that hire themselves out to parties and functions and allow bartenders to take what jobs they want. If all of this appeals to you, you may want to check out the Webtender's list of bartending schools at [www.webtender.com/index/Bartending/Bartending\\_Schools/](http://www.webtender.com/index/Bartending/Bartending_Schools/).

### 7. Get on TV

A recent study at (mumble) University has indicated that there are now officially more reality television shows than there are people who watch them. If you love to entertain (while pretending to act naturally) and radiate personality (doesn't matter what kind of personality, just so long as it's radiant), then reality television may have a place for you. Oh, and good looks help. These positions can have definite perks, as long as you don't mind coming off as an asshole (which you inevitably will) in front of the entire nation. Many offer large quantities of prize money if you win, most pay for their "stars" to live in pimped-out apartments or hotels, and some shows even include travel to exotic locations. Plus, you have an icebreaker that is good for six months to 12 years, depending on your personal self-respect.

Now don't worry if you don't have what it takes to make it on reality television—there are even more lucrative television opportunities in our midst. I learned that from watching the Subway commercials for the last 5 years. The trick is, you have to find some kind of crazy new angle on a product, something that no one expects. Nobody expected that eating fast food twice a day could help some poor schmuck lose 235 lbs, but since it did, that Jared is *set*. And look at him. He's not cool. He's not attractive. Yet he's been the Subway mascot for FIVE YEARS! That could be you, if you come up with an angle. The weight loss thing is tired, but if you put your mind to it, you could break in with something fresh.

## 8. Live Deliberately

If dominant culture and commercialism has put you down in the dumps, then perhaps you would feel at home at one of the thousands of intentional communities scattered throughout the world. Aficionado Geof Kozeny describes intentional communities [ICs] as including any “group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values.” Beyond this, few generalizations can be made about the phenomenon, because groups vary tremendously in their philosophies, values, and practices. So you'll have to do your own research to decide whether there is an IC somewhere with your name written all over it. You can begin your search at the Intentional Communities website, <http://www.ic.org>. Disclaimer: As with any important life decision, it is crucial that you use common sense and *do your research* before deciding to join an IC. Don't let the negative attention that a small minority of unsafe ICs have drawn dissuade you from a movement that otherwise appeals to you, but be cautious and choose carefully.

## 9. Stretch Your Graduation Cash into a Long Vacation

You don't have to be a trust fund baby to take a fabulous vacation. If you don't mind dorm-style lodging, then hostelling is a great and affordable way for you to travel to exciting locations, nationally or internationally. You can take your own great American road trip, renting beds in U.S. hostels for \$8-30/night. If seeing the States isn't your cup of tea, no problem; organizations like Hostelling International (<http://www.ihf.org>) list hostels all over the world, many of which provide discounts if you become a member.

An alternative to traveling from place to place is picking a location and parking there until your money runs out. This is generally a less stressful option, with the added benefit of giving you a more candid look at life in one area than you would receive if you spent only a day or two visiting its tourist attractions. You may want to consider a place like Java, Indonesia, which has a reputation for drawing unemployed graduates and dropouts, who can allegedly survive on less than \$10 a day during the tourism off-seasons. Learn about Java and other exciting destinations at Lonely Planet's website, [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)

## 10. Join a Grassroots Campaign

Have you been too busy with school to fight for the issues you believe in? Then stop talking about instigating change and get out there and start working for it. Even if you can't afford to commit on a volunteer basis, there are many paid positions available in all sorts of activist organizations. Compensation is generally very low, but it may include benefits. Aside from allowing you to fulfill your civic duty, activist jobs provide great experience and training in such valuable areas as networking, advocacy, public speaking and media relations. Contact your favorite nonprofit organization today and inquire about positions, or you may find listings for interesting positions at the following sites: Idealist.org, <http://www.idealists.org>; the Boston-based Fund for Public Interest Research, <http://www.fundcareers.org>; and *City Limits Magazine*, <http://www.citylimits.org>.

*Krystal Klein '03 is a columnist and distribution editor of The Watch.*

**HATE BAD LAYOUTS**  
**The Watch Does too.**  
**Give Us a Hand.**  
**[thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com](mailto:thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com)**

# A PROFILE OF **TRISKELION** AND ITS UNCLEAR FUTURE

IRENE FISHMAN

"I...closed Trisk for the remainder of 2002. I cancelled all further events, office hours, dorm wraps, and email communication," read the e-mail from Aaron Schwid, General Coordinator of Triskelion. Trisk, as it has affectionately been nicknamed on the Brandeis campus, seemed to hold strong as the major GLBTQSSA group on campus, but was shut down in the middle of last semester. Aaron sat down with me to explain what was going on.

"I understand why people don't last in this position," Aaron stated, referring to Trisk's poor record of maintaining General Coordinators. Despite having a core executive board to aid him, there is just too much that needs to be done, and Aaron says that what's really missing is, "A core group of passionate people who are willing to take an event from the idea level to completion."

Trisk is responsible for maintaining services for several different groups of people in the Brandeis community, and often, meeting all of their needs becomes an almost impossible challenge. Trisk has ten different groups, both on and off campus which it must deal with. First, there are those members who are very comfortable with their sexuality, and have no fears about reactions from the outside world. The second group is composed of people who have had a relatively easy time coming out to their friends and families, but do not feel their sexuality is a defining trait. For those two groups, Trisk is a place to hang out, a lifestyle, or just a group of people with clear common

interests.

The third group, as Aaron describes them, is "quasi-closeted." These are people who attend some Trisk events, but are very shy. Many of them are still uncomfortable discussing their sexuality, and are more sensitive. Trisk acts as a support system for these people. The fourth group is composed of straight supporters, who want to help the community through active participation. Gay people who are not at all involved with, or do not know about Trisk are the fifth constituency. The goal here is to make Trisk public enough for this group to know that it welcomes them. Straight non-supporters make up the sixth group. These are straight people who are homophobic, due to a lack of education. Trisk is responsible for edifying these people, often through campus-wide events and dorm wraps.

Group seven is the faculty, staff, and administration of Brandeis University. Here, Trisk has a variety of duties. If any homophobic event occurs, Trisk must establish its presence and censure the act. Furthermore, Trisk is currently involved in the formation of a Gay and Lesbian Studies Program. Alumni of Brandeis University make up the ninth constituency. These are gay alumni who want some sort of network to keep active in Brandeis's gay community. The tenth group is the most diverse, encompassing several organizations in the rest of the world with which Trisk keeps contact. These include local high schools and their GLBT groups, BAGLY (the Boston Area Gay and Lesbian Youth), NEQCO (the New England Queer

College Organization), and many others.

The result is that no one can agree on how things ought to be done. Some members love Trisk the way it is, and do not want to change it. Others hate it. Aaron feels that the current organization makes it impossible for Trisk to provide the services that all of these groups require. The executive board of Trisk is composed of four coordinators: general, social, political, and educational. There are many spheres, however, where all of these fields intersect. Trisk is also unique on this campus, and Aaron says, "We need people we can turn to who can help us whenever we need them. There is no other group on this campus that addresses social, political, educational, and service aspects that doesn't have at least one part-time professional."

Other groups that have such serious commitments to both the campus and the world beyond Brandeis, such as the Waltham Group, have a staff member or other professional who acts as both a mentor and an organizer. Aaron Schwid feels strongly about this topic, wishing nothing more than to get Trisk up and running properly again. His final comment, an appeal to Brandeis to take rapid action, was, "If the University is truly committed to being a queer-friendly campus, then a full-time member should have been hired long ago." A new staff member would not solve all the problems, but would significantly improve the situation.

*Irene Fishman '05 is business editor of The Watch.*



## We like pretty pictures.

**{and you don't even have to draw inside the lines}  
submit your art to [thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com](mailto:thewatchmagazine@yahoo.com)**

# Why Brandeis Needs Native American Studies

JONATHAN CETEL

Contemporary academia mirrors the multicultural landscape of contemporary American culture. The trend towards increased multiculturalism is not a "trickle-down" process, with governments making legislation that manipulates societal attitudes; nor is it an entirely grassroots movement that exclusively involves minorities. Rather, multiculturalism is a multifaceted, multidimensional social movement that does not follow an easily traceable course.

One thing, however, is certain: Academic institutions play an important role in creating a more culturally aware society. One of the many successes of the Black Power movement was the emergence of African-American Studies programs in most major universities. Likewise, one of the many successes of the Women's Liberation movement was the emergence of Women's Studies programs. The same holds true for Native American Studies (abbreviated NAS), except, of course, for one small difference.

There is neither a NAS program nor a NAS course offered at Brandeis!

It is easy to attribute this fact to the law of supply and demand. There are African-American Studies courses because there are African-American students and faculty. There are Women's Studies courses because there are female students and faculty. This kind of response

rests on the fallacious claim that gender/racial/ethnic courses appeal solely to the group being studied. The legitimacy of this claim is challenged by the mere fact that Caucasian students take African-American Studies courses just as men take Women's Studies courses. The courses' educative value extends beyond the classroom, educating the entire community simply by existing.

The American Studies Department offered a course entitled "The Native American Experience" in the spring of 2001. The course no longer exists. This omission in the course bulletin reveals more than just benign negligence on behalf of the Brandeis faculty. It is indicative of a profound American apathy that devalues the historical oppression and cultural value of Native Americans.

There are three important reasons why it is imperative for Brandeis University to offer a NAS course: First, Brandeis looks inferior in the face of its competitors because most other universities offer at least an introductory course in the field. The following schools offer full programs in NAS: Dartmouth, Cornell, Harvard, UCLA, University of Wisconsin, and UMASS among others.

NAS is not just a politically correct program that schools have adopted in order to appease liberal students. On the contrary, it has become a serious academic field. University of Arizona and UCLA, for example, offer PHD programs in NAS. Brandeis' assertion that it is an intellectual powerhouse, therefore, loses credibility because it completely ignores an increasingly important academic field.

The second reason that NAS should be offered at Brandeis is its perfect conformity to the objectives of the American Studies Department. According to the course bulletin, its objectives are to provide courses that take an "interdisciplinary approach to the culture, society, politics, institutions, identities, thoughts, values, and behavior of Americans...Using materials central to the discipline of American Studies - film, literature, popular and material culture, music, art and architecture, and oral history."

An examination of the Native American experience inevitably includes the discussion of culture, society, politics, institutions, identities, thoughts, values, and behavior. More importantly, a good course in NAS includes the analysis of all the "materials central to the discipline of American Studies." It examines film (Classical Hollywood Westerns & its portrayal of the savage Native American, or the developing independent Native American film industry), literature (there is a rich collection of Native American literature from past to present),

popular culture (Buffalo Bill, cowboys and Indians, sports logos), music (everything from traditional Native American powwow music such as drumming, flute playing, and chanting to more contemporary musicians such as Buffy Sainte-Marie), art (Native American art has become an entire academic field in itself), and oral history (Native Americans are a perfect

case study in the role oral history plays in cultural continuity).

The founding principles of Brandeis University serve as the third and final reason that it is imperative for Brandeis University to offer a Native American Studies course. Brandeis University prides itself on its commitment to social justice and tolerance. Social justice clearly requires the recognition of all minority groups. According to the 2000 census, there are 2.5 million Americans who identify themselves as Native American. In addition, there are 1.5 million Americans who have one Native American parent. Native Americans, therefore, account for 1% of the total US population. Now, this number may not seem overwhelming. Keep in mind, however, that there are only 5,800,000 Jews in the United States, accounting for 2.2% of the population. A small minority group can make a great cultural impact. In order to consummate the spirit of multiculturalism that Brandeis strives for, all minority voices must be heard. The only problem is that there are no Native American voices on this campus. This is a serious problem, but one that can be easily remedied.

Just add one course to the American Studies Department.

That will be a good start.

*Jonathan Cetel '06 is editor-in-chief of The Watch.*

**NAS is not just a politically correct program that schools have adopted in order to appease liberal students.**

# You'll Hear

A D A M M A R K S

My first night home this past winter break was a wild one. I stayed up until 9:30. That's right. 9:30. At night. P.M. I know you may be asking how I could ever accomplish such a feat, so allow me to tell you. I wouldn't let myself fall asleep before watching a high school basketball game on ESPN2. No, my alma mater William H. Hall High School of West Hartford, Connecticut was not taking on cross-town rival Conard High School (that outcome of that game would be inevitable—another loss for Hall). Rather, I watched in awe as a parochial school from Ohio battled a private institution in Virginia. The more specific reason for vested interest—LeBron James. I knew it would possibly be my last chance to see the man-child lace up his green and gold Adidas basketball shoes and proudly take the court with enthusiasm. In the future, he'll be playing for money.

If you have somehow missed hearing of LeBron James, don't worry; in just a few months he'll be the first pick in the NBA draft, and a few years later, he'll be mentioned in the same breath as Michael Jordan. He is the star player for the top-ranked high school team in the country. At 6'7" he combines the shooting of Larry Bird, the passing of Magic Johnson, the all-around skill of Michael Jordan, and the pure athleticism of, well, LeBron James. Pay-Per-View is offers each of his games for \$7.95 in 14 Ohio counties. Nike, Reebok, and Adidas are salivating over James, offering \$25 million for his signature on an endorsement deal. One more detail: he just recently turned 18. Unfortunately, in the day and age we live in, an athlete as gifted as James has no future roaming a college campus. Never will LeBron win the John Wooden Award for outstanding NCAA player, nor will he cut down a net at the Final Four. Instead of visiting colleges, he spent his junior year of high school pondering whether he could obtain a court ruling allowing him to enter the NBA draft instead of graduating. James is simply too good not to play in the NBA, or more specifically, not to play for money.

Dollars and cents continue to dilute college athletics, not only stealing the childhoods of young men by tempting them with dreams

of making millions, but also robbing the ability of teenagers to simply be teenagers. People our age are being deprived of "the greatest four years of life" as higher education fades out of the picture. After their playing careers have ended, each will continue to sell his name, perhaps to a cereal box or fast food chain, to earn a dime. Gone are the Bill Bradleys of yesteryear. A Princeton University graduate, NBA Hall-of-Famer, senator, and most recently, presidential hopeful, is not likely to turn up again soon.



The decision to turn professional is a very personal one. Maybe LeBron is making the right choice for himself, which is who he should be watching out for. But he is depriving fans of college basketball of the opportunity to see perhaps the greatest player ever take the court at the collegiate level. He is depriving himself of the chance to receive a higher education (for free, nonetheless). He is depriving himself of the opportunity to meet many people—best friends, girlfriends, professors—who could change his life. Now comes his next challenge—the NBA, which has destroyed so many great high school players before him and lifted many others to true greatness. Don't worry, either way, you'll hear of LeBron James.

*Adam Marks is sports columnist for The Watch.*

T  
M  
C  
C  
E  
L  
L  
A  
B  
O  
R  
E  
M  
E  
N  
T

ERIC HOROWITZ

In an effort to consolidate funds and maximize efficiency, the Student Union is currently advocating the formation of umbrella clubs. In an article that appeared in *The Justice* on January 21, 2003, Aziz Nekoukar said, "under this new consortium, the clubs would share funding and equipment and be in greater contact with one another." There are many similar clubs at Brandeis University that could potentially be lumped together into one umbrella organization. Here are a few possibilities:

#### **The Genitalia Umbrella Organization**

Vagina Club / Manginah / Swallow The Leader

#### **The Marijuana Umbrella Organization**

The Hack Club / National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws / Brandeis Greens / Hold thy Piece / Muggles United For Wizardry (Harry Potter club)

#### **The Sexual Identity Umbrella Organization**

Triskelion / Bispace / Brandeis Swingers

#### **The Clubs-Begging-To-Be-Made-Fun-Of Umbrella Organization**

Guerilla Physics / Campus Girl Scouts of Brandeis / Canadian Club / The Watch magazine

#### **The Religion Umbrella Organization**

Hillel / Catholic/Christian Alliance / Muslim Student Association / Buddhism Club / Jehuda Reinhartz Fan Club

#### **The Clubs-That-Make-You-Hungry Umbrella Organization**

Culinary Arts Club / Boris' Kitchen / Starving Artists / PEZ

*Eric Horowitz is a contributing writer to The Watch.*

# shades of Grey

by David Friedman

