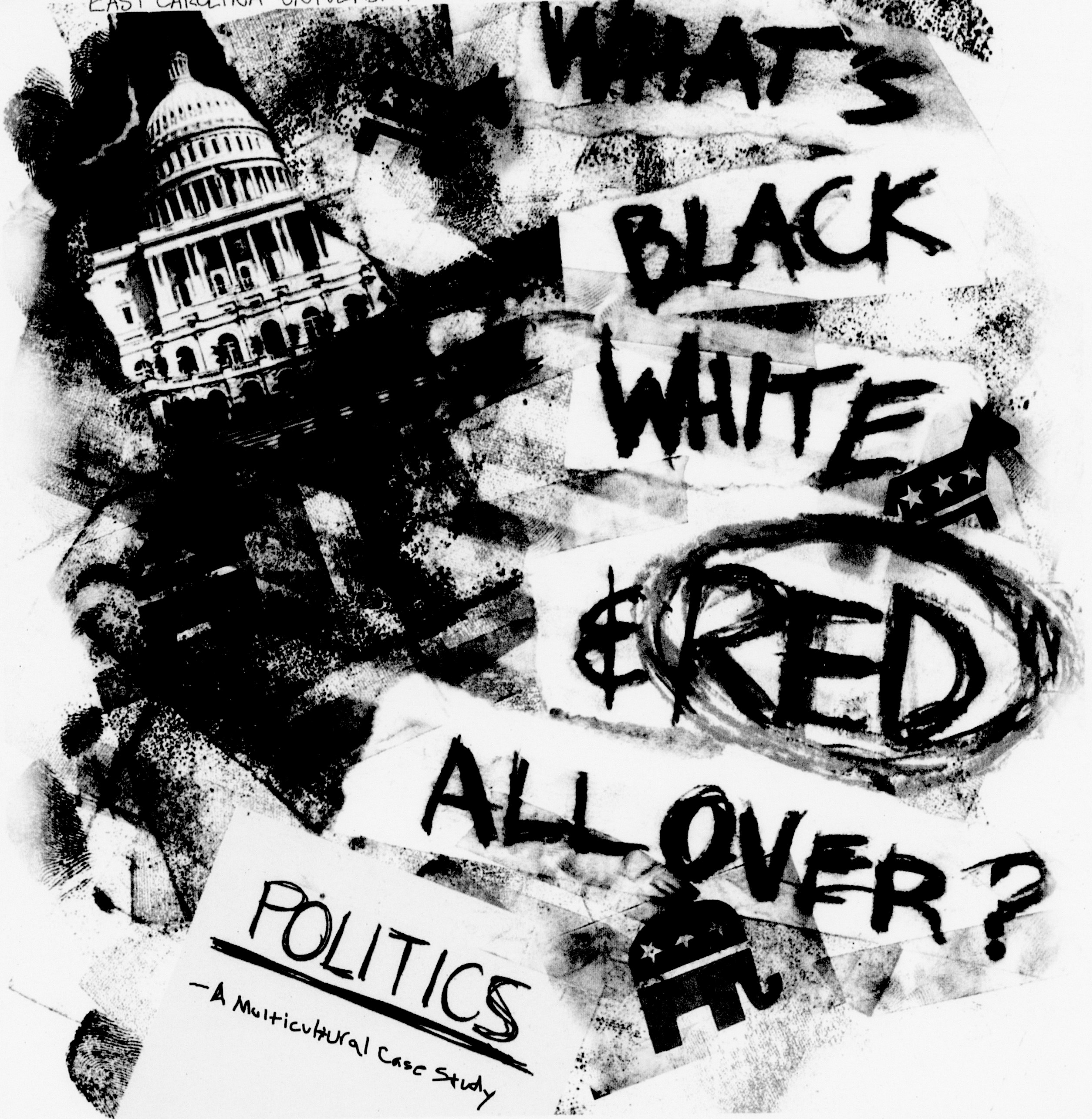


EXPRESSIONS

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY'S MINORITY PUBLICATION SPRING 04 > > ISSUE 04



EXPRESSIONS

Magazine is East Carolina University's minority publication that strives to provide an alternative voice to address the special concerns and problems of minority groups on campus. The definition of "minority" is ANY group of students that feel outside the norm or "mainstream." The student's sense of neglect may be the result of belonging to a specific ethnic or religious group (for example, Native American, Asian American, Hispanic, or African American). The lack of being in the mainstream may also be due to a student's special concerns that other publications are not adequately addressing (for example, international students, non-traditional students, physically challenged students, or veterans).

The responsibility of Expressions is to present the opinions and attitudes of various minority voices, to inform, entertain, and affect social change and understanding. Expressions is not a publication solely for minorities. We hope to cover issues of concern to students belonging not only to a minority group, but also those students that other campus forums have left unfulfilled.

US vs THEM
IS THIS IDEAL?

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WZMB > Thursdays 7pm-8pm

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



Cover illustration by Napoleon Wright

Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters -Abraham Lincoln

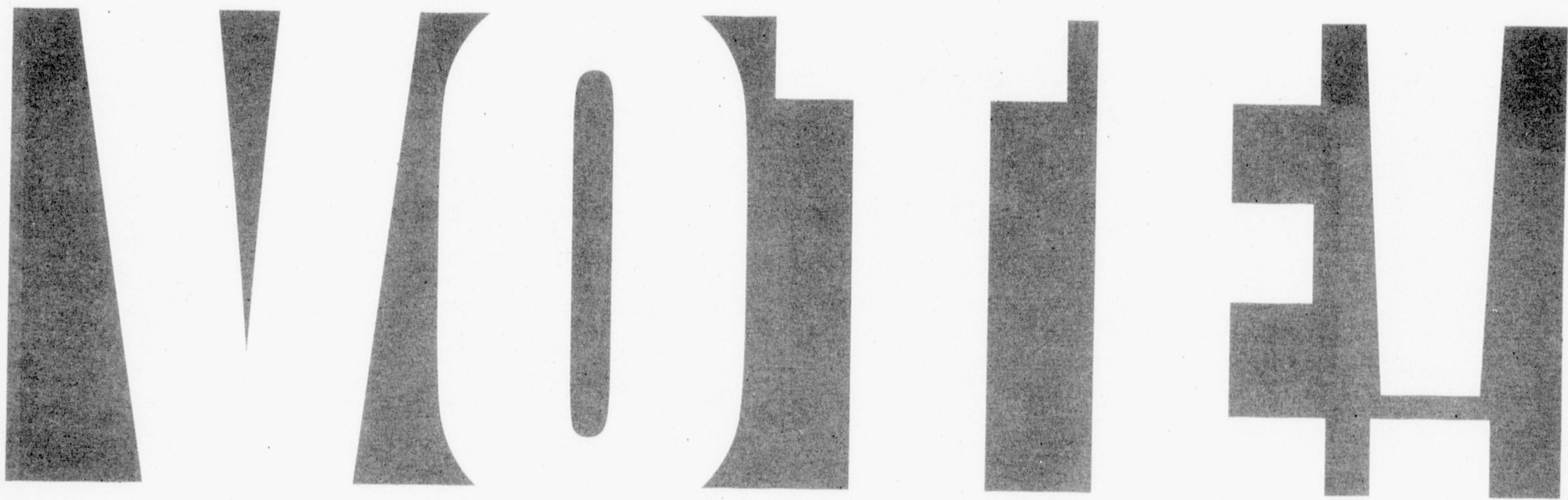


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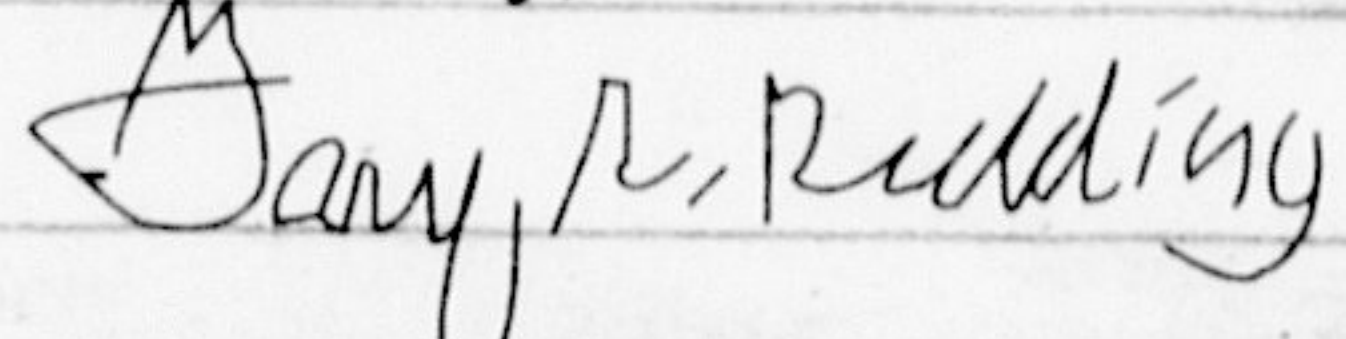
FREEDOM!
FREEDOM!
FREEDOM!

Welcome to the newest issue of *Expressions*. As students and student leaders, we are entering a new season of the 2004 political election.

We have reason to exercise our youthful magnanimity and intellectual wit to read and study the issues that affect our daily lives, and to actively participate in the election process. As young Americans we have a distinct identity in language, personal creativity, and political value. Register to vote. Be aware of registration deadlines in whatever state, county, or municipality you are eligible to vote. Let's all be apart of a national dialogue on such issues as cutting college tuition, affirmative action, "Leave No Child Behind," racism, freedom of speech and individual rights.

We welcome your letters and comments. We look to your contributions of articles, poetry, and art work. Let's enter this semester with a sense of mission for the new political season, dedication to excellence, and the discipline of good conduct and making our parents happy with good grades.

Sincerely,



Gary R. Redding
Managing Editor

Intercultural Organizations

Alpha Kappa Alpha
Alpha Phi Alpha
Amnesty International
Anthropology GSO
B-GLAD
BSW Student Association
Black Student Union
Buddhist Meditation and Study Group
Circle K
The Coalition
Delta Sigma Theta
DROPHEAVY
ECU Gospel Choir
East Carolina Native American Organization
Epsilon Chi Nu
Expressions Magazine
Folk and Country Dancers
Iota Phi Theta
Independent Movement of Independent Thinkers
Intercultural Student Senate
Italian Club
Habitat for Humanity
Japan League
Ladies Elite
Minority Association of Pre-Health Students
Model United Nations Club
Muslim Student Association
NAACP, ECU Chapter
NC Rural Health Coalition
National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc.
National Society of Minorities in Hospitality
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
Omniance Modeling
Omicron Delta Kappa
Phi Beta Sigma
Sigma Gamma Rho
Sigma Omicron Epsilon
Sisters in Transition & Revival
Student Association of Latino-Spanish Affairs
Student Government Association
Student Planning Association
Student Union Cultural Awareness Committee
Swing Dance Club
Thespians of Diversity
Visual Art Forum
Zeta Phi Beta

If your organization is not represented on this list,
just call us at 328-6927. We will be sure to include
your organization in our next tabloid edition.

For more information on
these organizations please
contact the Ledonia Wright Cultural
Center at 328-1680.

"A healthy family is sacred territory."
-- Unknown



Photo by Napoleon Wright

BABYLON, ~~ORWELL~~ ORWELL,
HEGEMONIC

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

"We, as individuals, are fast losing our reputation for honest dealing. Our nation is losing its character. The loss of a firm national character, or the degradation of a nation's honour, is the inevitable prelude to her destruction."

--**William Wells Brown**, Abolitionist author and playwright

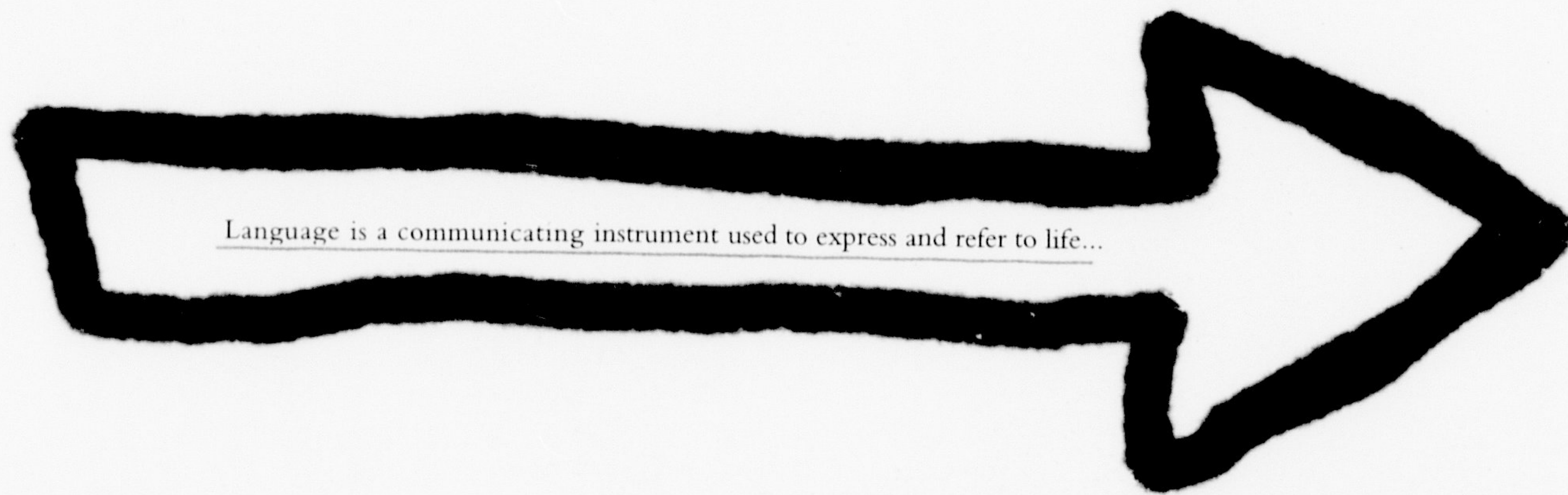




Illustration by Jonathan Graham

"Cary, NC: Fourth Safest Place to Live in America"
(Newspapers Report)

by Jennifer Clift

A shrill ring wakes Sue.
She rises, stepping over an American history book.
A haughty voice laughs
And advises her to retrieve her prize in her boutique
Downtown.

Sue numbly unveils:
hundreds of wedding dresses slit with razors.
stolen money.
masturbating stick figures on the furniture.
black swastikas on every wall.
saliva plastered on the front door-
dripping, oozing.

Uniforms sluggishly arrive:
"Sorry it took us so long."
Flash bulbs pop.
Fingerprint samples?
"They probably used gloves."
The coffeemaker gurgles in the sewing room.
DNA from saliva?
"The State won't pay for the test."
Smells waft in from the bakery next door.
Hate crime?
"Surely not here, across the street from the police
department."
Papers are shuffled and notes are taken.

Calling the press would only cause more trouble.
Insurance pays its duties then denies her.
Nausea solidifies to outrage.
Outrage liquefies to tears.
Tears trickle to sweat-
in an attempt to rebuild.

Sue's culpable sins:
Not owning an SUV.
Not being married.
Having a foreign accent.
Living as an American.
Worshipping as a Muslim.
Still praying for her family.
Remaining a native Iraqi.



I've Learned
by Tina Rodgers-James

To depend on me for the happiness
I desire within.
To praise myself no matter
If I lose or win.
To truly love who I am and
Not care who you desire me to be.
And just accept myself and be free.
I've learned not to look to another for their love
Or acceptance.
But, how to take what they do or say,
As obstacles being placed in my way.
Obstacles,
I'll just push my way through.
Because at the days end
I've learned to accept, love, and depend
On me and not you.

Hyphen
by Andre McDowell



I'm stuck between two rocks
and neither of them wants me
around
sounds of the Ivory Coast beckon
me
Home
where the heart is...or at least
should be
Absolutely ready for the Serengeti
Ready to ripen myself on Nile
water
to prepare for my trip through the
desert to the pyramids
but even though the land itself
screams my name
the sentiments of the people might
not be the same
it is though they hate me
because of my complacency
my ability to conform to a system
structured to hold me down
hate me because I won't REBEL!

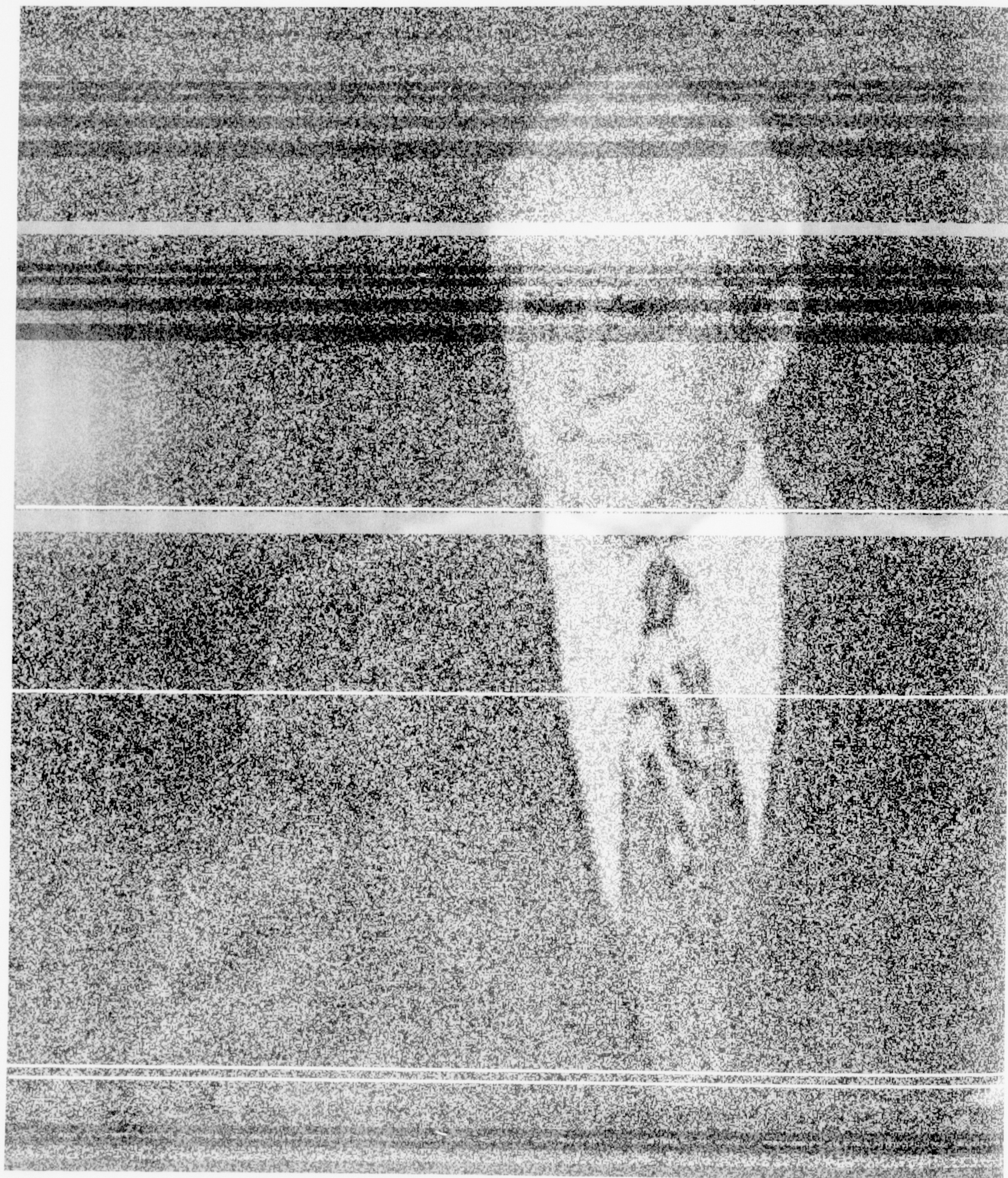
I'm stuck between two rocks
and neither of them wants me
around
sounds of Jazz and a black renaissance
beckon me
Home
Where one can feel safe...or at
least should be
Where the streets are paved with
gold
Or is it milk and honey?
Whoever's heaven you've heard of
will suffice
Where ballpark hot dogs can be
the best meal in town
Where technology is at the forefront
of every storefront
Where all men are created equal
So long as equal equals male,
Christian, heterosexual, republican,
wealthy and white
But if you're like me then you are
equal BUT different
And in that case will never quite
be
What the ones who are equal want
to see
Bottom line; they too hate me
Hate me because of my strive for
equality
For my militant nature in the face
of fallacies
Hate me because I REBEL!

I am an African-American
An African HYPHEN American
Stuck in between Africa and
America
Wondering if I'll ever find a home.

Pain in Full
by Akanimo Mike Ikpe



The midnight thirsts for cool
Knees are lead to rippled reflections
At the shore of continuity
Where Musa met George.
Gentle gazes into the deep waters;
Eyes mirrored reveal the image Of
One-the soul of many brothers float
across the ripples under the Cool
moon; the acknowledgment Of
crimes committed against an African
commencement antonymous And
synonymous, they drink from The
pool of ambivalence to atone For
syndication that bled a nation And
rippled its children across an ocean--
A confederate nation.



HAS YOUR SOUL LOOKED
IN THE MIRROR TODAY?

"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."

--**Malcolm X**, Activist and Black Nationalist

The Literacy of Patriotic Politics

Language is merely a tool for expressions of facts. Whoever insists on language sacrifices the truth and will be confused forever. For instance, if a rock is thrown at a dog, the dog will go after the rock; but if a rock is thrown at a lion, the lion will go after the person who threw it. When investigating the language of Zen, you should be like the lion and not the dog.

-Zen Insight



LANGUAGE is a communicating instrument used to express and refer to life and the web-ring of passive and active actions that instigate reactions. Alejandro Portes, a Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology at Johns Hopkins wrote how this affects cultures: "U.S. history does not register a single case of 'negotiated' ethnicity. Linguistically differentiated ethnic groups have therefore only emerged through the two other alternatives: conquest and immigration" (Schmid). Language spreads in four different fashions: through initial colonization of an unoccupied region, divergence, convergence, and language replacement. How then has the English spread throughout America?

America's founding fathers believed the English language was superior and the most ac-

curate way to express American life. John Jay wrote in the *Federalist Paper*, "Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people - a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government" (Schmid). The pressure to assimilate and to have English as the nation's primary language is an unofficial requirement to become an American citizen.

Benjamin Franklin expressed a similar opinion the Pennsylvania colony by stating, "Why should the Palatine boors be suffered to swarm in our Settlements, and by herding together, established their Language and Manners to the exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our anglicizing

them" (Schmid)? Franklin here is quoted in a blatant xenophobic (fear of different cultures) remark geared towards the assimilation of any culture or language that was not of Anglo descent. Franklin later realized the error in his thinking and deleted this passage from his collection of essays referring to language. It is important to understand when someone omits a statement, the omission is often more important than the statement itself.

"From the onset, Europeans did what they could to eradicate Native American languages. The colonists set out to civilize and Christianize the Indians, forcing them to assimilate to Western civilization and to speak English," explained Carol Schmid, author of *The Politics of Language*. The government even liquidated fifteen thousand dollars per year in order to bring the Native Americans into the ways of An-

glo-American cultural identity. Since they were considered to be uncivilized, the extermination of these barbaric people seemed necessary to insure national security. In fact, tribal groups have always been a problem for civilization because they require an abundance of land and typically do not succumb to absolute authoritarian control without conflict and resistance.

The United States government passed multiple laws concerning the Indigenous people in the Western Territories. In 1830, Congress voted for the Indian Removal act, which underhandedly stole the land from the Indigenous Native Americans west of the Mississippi River. They were placed on land reservations with barely enough sustenance to maintain the hunter-gatherer's existence. In 1855, the Nez Percé signed a treaty with the American government, granting the Native Americans most of the terri-

tory that was lost in the Indian Removal Act.

A couple of years later, the Gold Rush was announced and thirty thousand Anglos hurried into the Western territories. The government soon came to the conclusion to reduce the Native American's territory once again. The Government thought this reduction of territory was in the Native American's best interest because of the United States inability to protect them from incessant attacks by white settlers. These Acts were the first steps, whether conscious or unconscious, in the assimilation of the Native American's heritage. The early Americans thought it was their destiny to civilize and conquer the New World. General Sherman, one of the key members of The United States Military said, "the sameness of language is produced through the sameness of sentiment and thought, customs and habits are molded and assimilated in the same way, and thus in the process of time these differences producing trouble would have been gradually obliterated...In the difference of language today lies two-thirds of our trouble" (Schmid). The hegemonic ideals imbedded within these words are the misconception of Sherman's reality, diluted by supremacy and the lack of humility.

Through the underlining political agenda that has been seen throughout America's history in relation to language and colonization, it is not surprising that after the Mexican-American war in 1848, large amounts of land was handed over to America, including parts of Colorado, New Mexico, California, Arizona and Texas. As a result, all indigenous people within this territory automatically became American citizens. In 1849 at the Monterey Constitutional Convention in California, a vote implemented that all legal documents would be written in Spanish and English. A year later, the Gold Rush spread over the western part of the nation. This, in effect, increased the white population to become the majority in several states, including California. In 1894, California inundated new laws announcing that only citizens who could read and write the English Language would be allowed to vote. Obviously America's view on national identity in the 19th Century was based on language and belief structures. During this time Spanish culture, newspapers, and bilingual schools were flourishing, but California still was not providing an equal disbarment of funds to all United States citizens. The Anglo school children would receive 51 dollars pure child, were as the Mexican student would receive 35 dollars in state funding.

In 1884, the New Mexico public school population was a mere 5% white and 69% Hispanic, yet 26% of the students were bilingual. By 1912 the Anglo population exceeded the Mexican population. Only then did New Mexico become a state in the United States. Carol Schmid highlighted this population fluctuation

in *The Politics of Language*. "[T]he emphasis on English-language instruction was part of the broader struggle over land, which was developing between the English-speaking white settlers and the Mexican Americans in New Mexico." With the loss of one's native tongue comes the loss of particular words, the change in semantics, and the eradication of a perception that is distinct from other cultures.

According to the original Spanish Education laws in New Mexico, each voting district would make the decision on which language would be taught in the local school system - Spanish, English, or both. However, in 1910 the Enabling act was passed, which required English to be taught in public schools. Legal documents were published in Spanish for another twenty years, but like many other languages in America's history, Spanish ceased to be used in legal documents.

America has a long line of forced and socially situated pressures that have helped in conquering the Western territories. About this time students who spoke Spanish on school grounds would receive detention and possibly beaten. Between 1870 and 1920 the Native Americans had similar experiences. Seventy-seven boarding schools were established simply for assimilating the indigenous cultures, their languages, their clothes, their spiritual practices, their sociological makeup, and their knowledge of wisdom. Not only were they forced into these schools, but they were also punished for not cutting their hair, wearing their own clothes, and using their own dialect. They were hog-tied for hours, tied to stoves, made to stand out in the blistering cold, and beaten with sticks for any insubordination. The idea of having bilingual studies accessible for Native Americans was not at all considered because they were seen as barbaric, uncivilized, savage people who needed to be saved.

When Puerto Rico was acquired by the United States after the Spanish American war, it became the next in line to be assimilated into the Anglo way of life. Some political leaders thought it was for Puerto Rico's benefit to become part of the United States. Explains Schmid, "There was a conscious policy of 'Americanization,' with the intent of converting the island's Spanish speakers into Anglophones. The principle vehicle of this change was the public education system" (Schmid). Most of the education during 1903 to 1949 was delivered in English. Even patriotic exercises such as flag raising, saluting, and singing the national anthem became a common spectacle on the Island of Puerto Rico. Dennis Baron once said, "Language in Puerto Rico has always been more a political issue than an education one, tied up with issues of statehood or independence, cultural pluralism and Americanization." In the 1950's political unrest started to escalate as Puerto Rico began to crave a sense

of nationality independent of the United States. To this day, Puerto Rico is still an independent nation.

The veil that covers the Eye of Horus (Horus is the ancient Egyptian god that represents wisdom, health and prosperity and is represented by a single eye, which is depicted on the back of the dollar bill) illustrates the multi-cultural perception, which is negated in the justice and freedom inherently present in rational thought. We, as citizens, must critically examine language and our attitudes towards language. It is important to understand where the facts are coming from, not just the facts themselves. Failing to insist upon multiple historical accounts and relying upon books and politicians to produce answers leaves us open to hegemonic perceptions of reality. It is the job of United States citizens to see the inequality that is hidden in-between the lines and draw our own lines, if necessary. If we do not watch the hand that writes the laws and watch the people who write the books, this manifest destiny that covers our eyes, mind, and soul will continue to pollute the creativity of life.

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New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

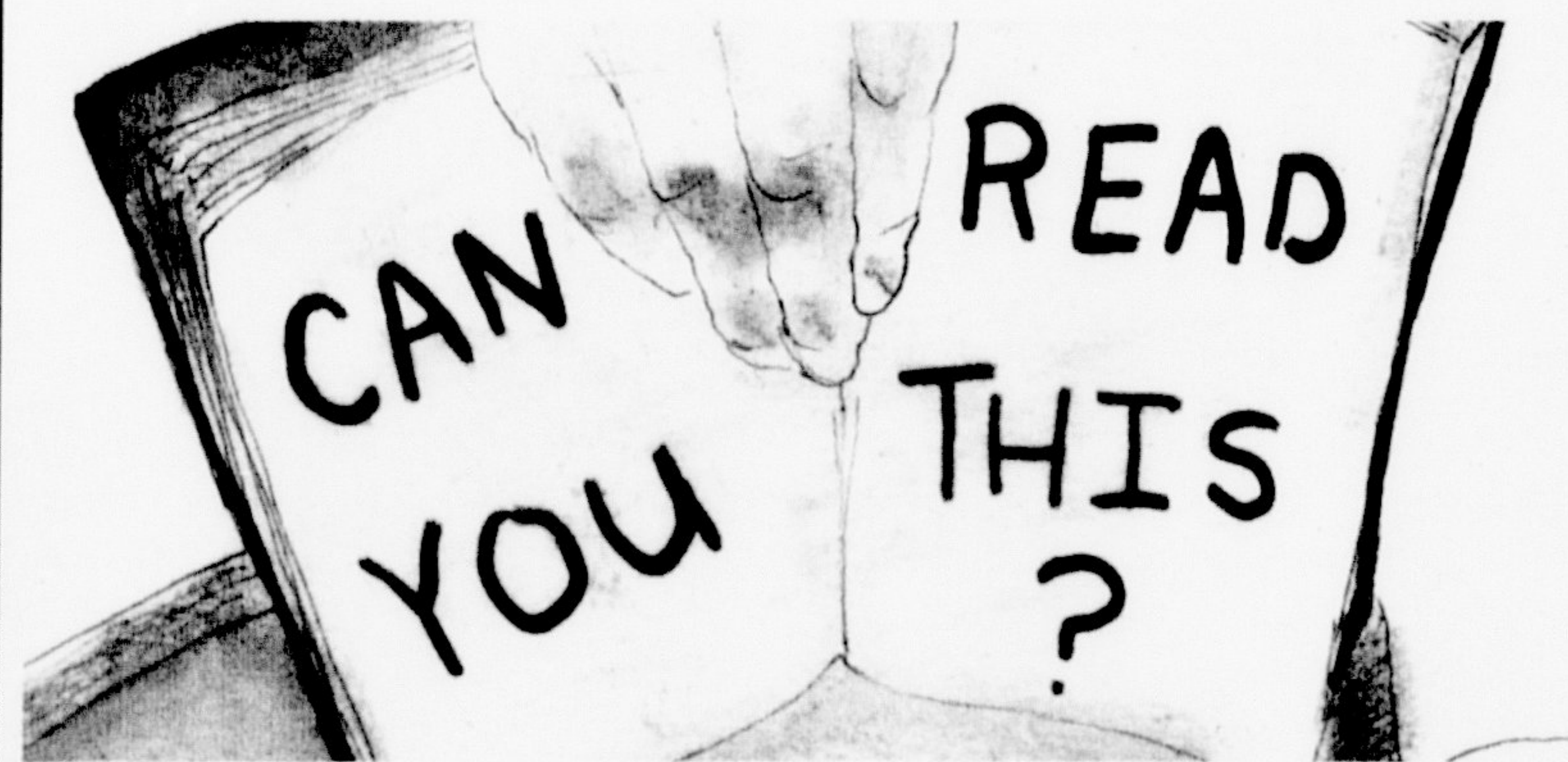
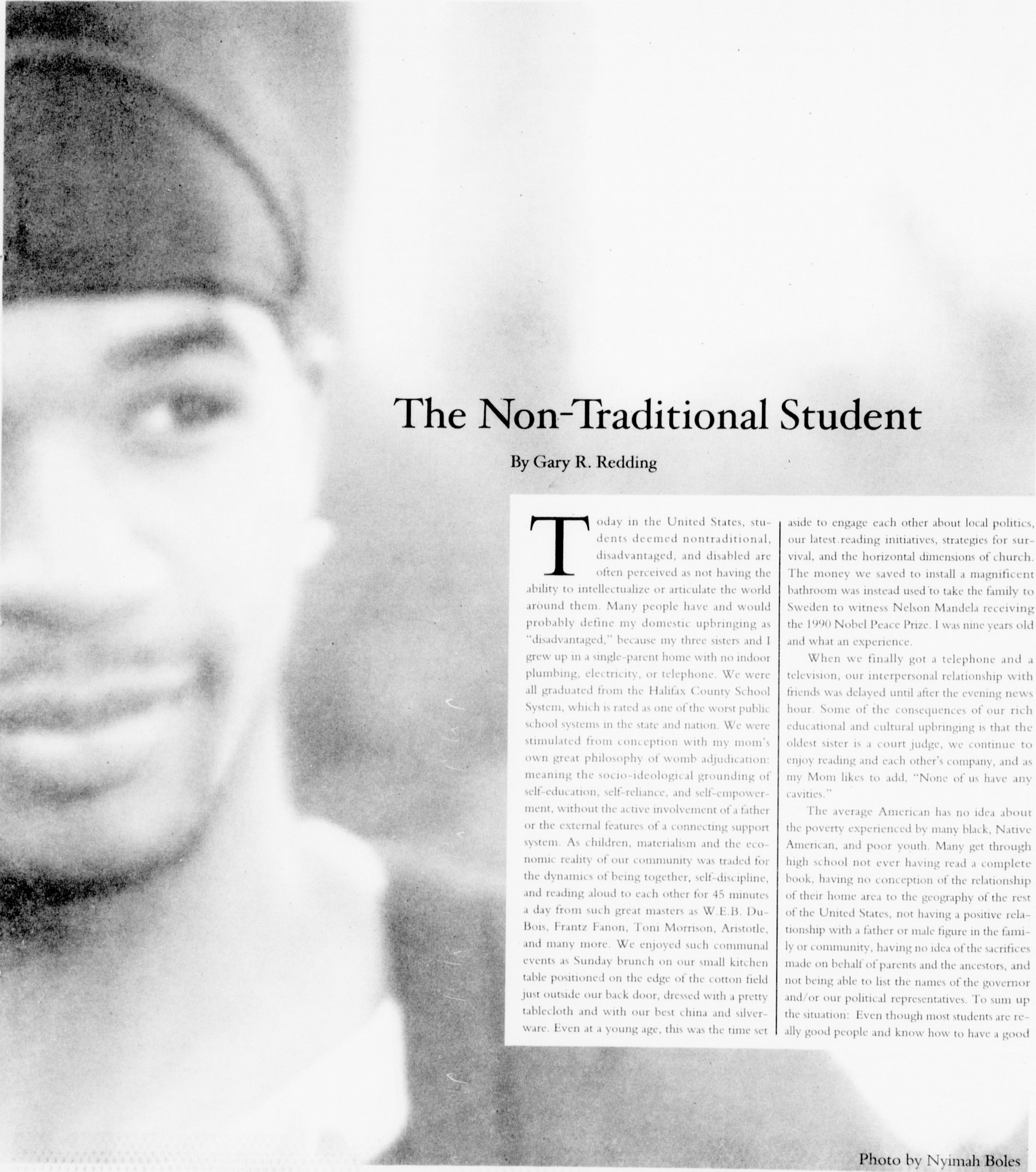


Illustration by Lionel Williams



The Non-Traditional Student

By Gary R. Redding

Today in the United States, students deemed nontraditional, disadvantaged, and disabled are often perceived as not having the ability to intellectualize or articulate the world around them. Many people have and would probably define my domestic upbringing as "disadvantaged," because my three sisters and I grew up in a single-parent home with no indoor plumbing, electricity, or telephone. We were all graduated from the Halifax County School System, which is rated as one of the worst public school systems in the state and nation. We were stimulated from conception with my mom's own great philosophy of womb adjudication: meaning the socio-ideological grounding of self-education, self-reliance, and self-empowerment, without the active involvement of a father or the external features of a connecting support system. As children, materialism and the economic reality of our community was traded for the dynamics of being together, self-discipline, and reading aloud to each other for 45 minutes a day from such great masters as W.E.B. DuBois, Frantz Fanon, Toni Morrison, Aristotle, and many more. We enjoyed such communal events as Sunday brunch on our small kitchen table positioned on the edge of the cotton field just outside our back door, dressed with a pretty tablecloth and with our best china and silverware. Even at a young age, this was the time set

aside to engage each other about local politics, our latest reading initiatives, strategies for survival, and the horizontal dimensions of church. The money we saved to install a magnificent bathroom was instead used to take the family to Sweden to witness Nelson Mandela receiving the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize. I was nine years old and what an experience.

When we finally got a telephone and a television, our interpersonal relationship with friends was delayed until after the evening news hour. Some of the consequences of our rich educational and cultural upbringing is that the oldest sister is a court judge, we continue to enjoy reading and each other's company, and as my Mom likes to add, "None of us have any cavities."

The average American has no idea about the poverty experienced by many black, Native American, and poor youth. Many get through high school not ever having read a complete book, having no conception of the relationship of their home area to the geography of the rest of the United States, not having a positive relationship with a father or male figure in the family or community, having no idea of the sacrifices made on behalf of parents and the ancestors, and not being able to list the names of the governor and/or our political representatives. To sum up the situation: Even though most students are really good people and know how to have a good

Photo by Nyimah Boles

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time, we are the generation of pain, contempt, illusion, and a prolific mire of neglect, depression and other health problems.

The structural differentiation of education for whites and blacks, and other minorities in this country is sometimes appalling. I attended school with hundreds of disenfranchised black students who never had access to books other than outdated textbooks, to a school library, or to a proficient English teacher. Most of these students were direct descendants of a local slave heritage and of grandparents who were denied the right to read and write by "Jim Crow" laws. Many of the parents of these students struggled also with economic despair and lack of political power and awareness. The spirit of education was also stagnated by a lack of welcoming involvement in the school system and by the authoritarian and inhibiting moral law of their local church. Subjugated and colonized minds often turn to group creative ways of expression and new and sometimes unhealthy insights by way of hip-hop music, strange fashions in clothing, and by becoming single teenage parents. Crime, drugs, and an increasing appetite for unsafe sex are also products of subjugated minds.

Despite the notion in some quarters that the probability of nontraditional students succeeding is little or none, the dominance of this country in music and the creative arts would not be what it is without their contributions. Three monu-

mental examples of people who have overcome unhealthy and desolate circumstances include:

(1) Wilma Rudolph was born poor and with polio, an acute infectious disease that attacks the spinal cord, often resulting in muscular paralysis. Rudolph, a native of Tennessee and Tennessee State University graduate, bravely learned to walk, transforming herself into a young promising track athlete. In the 1960 Olympics, Rudolph sprinted herself into the record books by becoming the first American woman runner to win three gold medals. Before her untimely death in 1994, Rudolph served as a track coach, an athletic consultant, and assistant director of athletics for the Mayor's Youth Foundation in Chicago. (2) Stevie Wonder is an award winning musical prodigy who was born blind. Wonder's heightened awareness of sound developed into a comprehensive model of musical genius and a political energy addressing serious racial, social, and spiritual issues. Wonder's discography includes 40 albums, many written, arranged, and produced by him; (3) Sherman Alexie, a native of the Spokane Indian Reservation, in Wellpinit, Washington, and a graduate of Washington State University, was born hydrocephalic with water on his brain. Even though doctors predicted that he would live with severe mental retardation, Alexie learned to read by age three and has become a world renowned novelist, poet, and movie producer.

To date, Alexie has published fourteen books, produced two movies, and recorded five CD's. All three of these great Americans of color turned their physical challenges into creative vehicles of magnetism, achievement, and a monetizing system to not only take care of themselves and their families, but to employ others and bring joy and understanding to the world.

Whatever your physical, mental, or economic and cultural challenge, we owe it to ourselves and to the ancestors to make a better world. The 2004 national political election is approaching. If you are eighteen years old or older, you have the responsibility to register to vote, and then be sure to vote. The Bush administration has cut billions of dollars from programs and services for the mentally and physically challenged and for non-traditional students. Small communities, colleges and universities, and the society at large now face the consequences of these monumental cuts.

Every human person has indisputable value, influence, and significance. This value is tied to the responsibility of involving ourselves in new strategies for a better world and to each of us dedicating ourselves to being the best person we can be.

Public Policy and the Homosexual

by Nyimah Boles



Ellen DeGeneres, Eleanor Roosevelt, James Dean and Richard Chamberlain: A prominent comedienne, the political helpmate to the former president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and two well known and respected actors despite their backgrounds, each had one thing in common: homosexuality. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community has been prevalent in the United States for over 30 years but has seen very little progress in legislation concerning their "civil" rights and their well being. This lack of legislative progress is due to innumerable obstacles, a few being: the widespread misconception held about homosexuality being a mental illness, and current public policy concerning sodomy and marriage.

Prior to 1973, homosexuality was considered a diagnosable mental illness. The misconception that homosexuality is a mental illness has contributed to the lack of legislative progress for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. This assertion has been linked to problems like substance abuse, depression or an inability to be a happy and fulfilled individual. It wasn't until 30 years ago that the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. However, this misconception has had negative and positive effects on public policy concerning sodomy and marriage.

Generally, sodomy laws restrict or prohibit sexual behaviors such as oral or anal sex, even between consenting adults. Public Policy, as of July 2002, states that in 26 states and the District of Columbia, sodomy laws had been repealed through legislative action. In nine additional states the courts had declared the laws unconstitutional and unenforceable. Four states (Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas) have sodomy laws that target only same-sex behavior. Though rarely known, these sodomy laws punish a category of sexual behavior and in turn punish a particular sexual orientation. The discrimination based on sexual orientation is also seen in current same-sex marriage policy. Housing

discrimination disputes are a consequence of lack of legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Though states set sodomy and same-sex marriage at their own discretion, the federal government hasn't made an initiative in support of same-sex marriage and the benefits of such a union. In fact, President George Bush, Jr. was quoted as saying that he "would support a bill that would ban same-sex marriage if it had to come to that." The inability of homosexuals to marry a person of the same sex prohibits them from the benefits of a legal union such as: the ability to file joint tax returns, Social Security benefits, Veterans benefits, access to Medicare, the right to visit a spouse in the hospital and a host of others.

Though public policy is just one of the attributes that continues to put a halt on the progression of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community, it does hold a very large weight. Once public policy begins to let go of the reins that are binding the homosexual community, their forward movement would possibly occur more rapidly.

No justice
No Peace

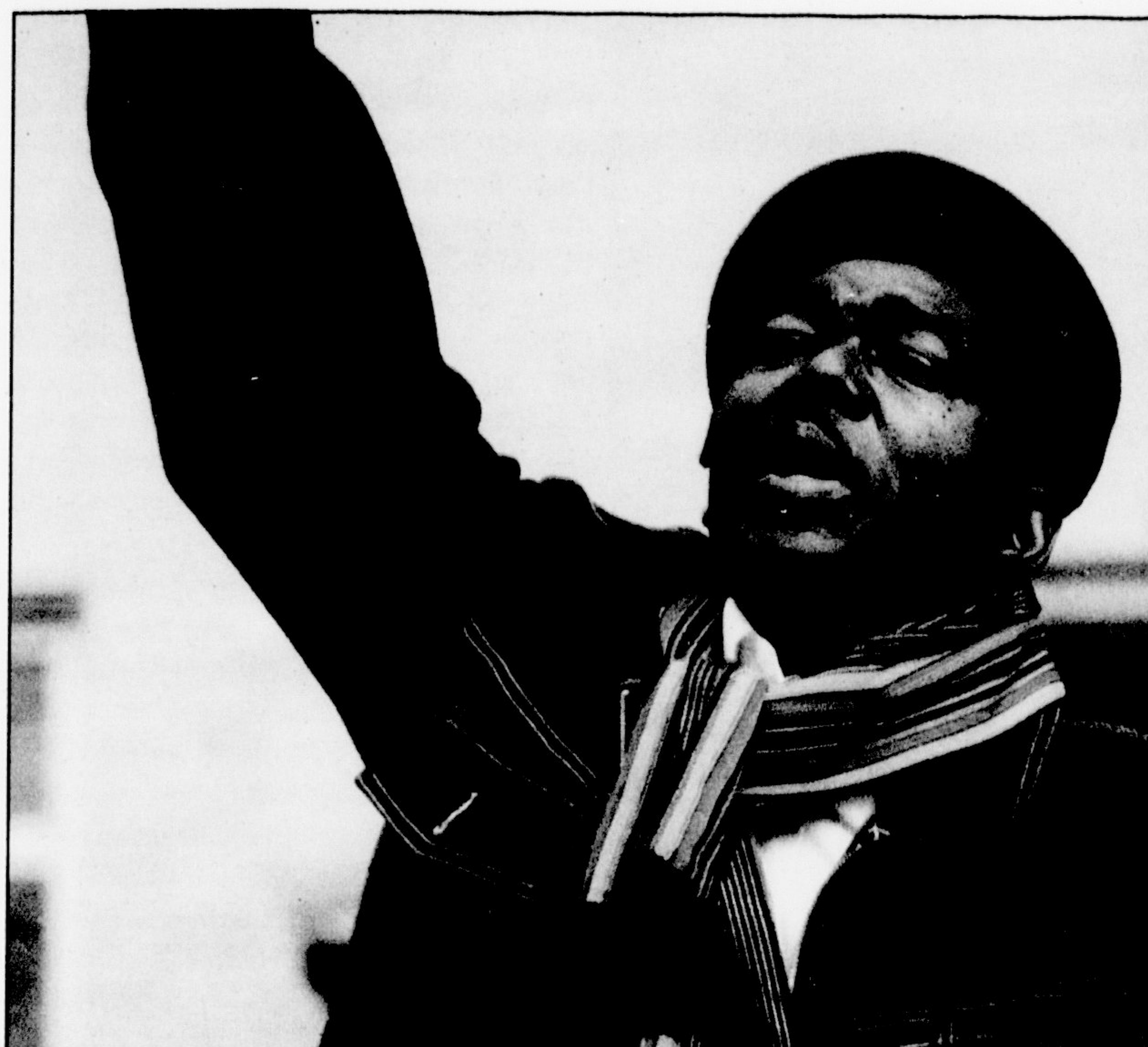


Photo by Tenesha Sistrunk

Black Politics

By Knick Dixon

For the past couple of years I have followed U.S. presidential election campaigns in utter misery and disgust. I have been forced to sift through publicity stunts by the President elect, and biased media outlets politicizing human atrocities as acts of heroism. Yet I am not positive if it's the theatrics associated with a candidate's campaign rally in inner cities or my dedication to Dr. King's teaching that keep me engaged in a political world that seems to care nothing about the Black man.

Blacks have been integral cogs in American society, since they first arrived in Jamestown in 1619. However, despite the remarkable achievements Blacks have made in this country, they are considered insignificant until Election year. As November 7 approaches presidential candidates are stroked with an intuitive grasp of reality that forces them to lobby for their only chance of victory—the Black vote. My experience as a voter and as an intern with Democracy South, a non-profit organiza-

tion that seeks to eliminate special interest in elections, has led me to believe that the Black vote is essential for a candidate's victory but means nothing a day after the election.

This will be the second public election that I will participate in, not because I have faith in any of the candidates but simply because it is a right my forefathers died for. Again this year I will vote not for the best candidate but for the man or woman that will do my community the least damage. You see I am a member of a segment of Black voters who suffer from political paranoia exacerbated by memory; we remember the "Great Communicator," Ronald Reagan, greatly eradicating years of gains in Civil Rights. In 1982, President Reagan planned to reinstate tax-exempt status to private institutions that discriminated against African-Americans. His vice president and successor George H. Bush and Dan Quayle's assertion that the L.A. riots and intergenerational poverty were a result of loss of family values as opposed

to years of social inequality and misdirection in the way of race relations by the last three Republican administrations. Quayle said "the intergenerational poverty that troubles us so much today is predominantly a poverty of values." Lest we forget President Clinton, widely hailed as the "First Black President," because he played the saxophone, and displayed coolness around minorities that had never before been seen. However Clinton failed to lessen the sentence disparity between Black and White criminals and could not ossify a commission on police brutality or reparations. George W. (Who, What, When, Where) Bush has totally neglected the "color line" in favor of undermining at least three rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, (due process, free speech, and search and seizure), in the United and Strengthening America Act also known as the Patriot Act. What is patriotic about a document that infringes on civil liberties?

I could easily conjecture that the American government is a racially biased institution without regard for anyone but White America. But to speak of the government as the progenitor of one mind, body, and soul, would demonstrate a shallowness of opinion. Therefore, I will assume that the United States of America is ambivalent to the demands of Black America. Our Black political and intellectual leaders have not vigorously demanded anything of this government since the 60's and 70's. This crisis in Black leadership and the lack thereof in our churches, college institutions, and community have led to a denigration in Black politics. With the exception of one political rhyme artist and frizzy haired activist, Black leaders have ceased to demand anything from those who have a stranglehold on politics. Most of our Black intellectuals situated in academia spend more time deciding which Ivy League institution to call home instead of feverishly demanding solutions "to race" the problem we have in America. Until Black leaders and "Blacks that lead," concoct a meaningful Black agenda we will forever be swallowed up in the veil of multiculturalism. Thus the problem of the 21st century will remain the "color line."

Maynard Jackson, the first Black Mayor of Atlanta, suggested in a conversation with Randall Robinson, founder and director of TransAfrica, that a Black Race Card be created that had a list of questions tailored to the needs of Black people. The card would be distributed to all Black voters at the time of their registration. Each time a candidate, White or Black solicited the Black vote, someone would whip out the card and inquire about

their stance on affirmative action, record on civil rights legislation, police brutality, domestic terrorism, AIDS, sentence disparity between crack and powder cocaine, economic stimulation in Africa, trade with third world countries, educational resources (aside from testing measures that only seek to categorize the student population with minimal efforts to improve the quality of teaching), and REPARATIONS! The card never came into fruition but one can only guess how few candidates would have been deemed worthy of the Black vote.

To some, going against the political norm seems hopeless and will turn the clock on the racial progress we have made. In response to these nay says, I commission you to study the roots and personality of the American, French, and Bolshevik Revolutions, or the resistance movement in South Africa. You will find that working outside of the box has resulted in some of the greatest social revolutions in history. So it is time for Blacks to follow in the footsteps of the former "La Raza Unida" and create a viable third political party. La Raza Unida was a Mexican-American faction bred out of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement that forced the federal government to pass the first Farm Labor Union Act in United States History. Their success is encouraging to those of us who are fighting small battles in the inner city with hopes of landing the ultimate victory of racial equality. I am convinced that until a grass roots contender pushes forth the principles of the Black agenda built on the foundation of attaining racial equality and racial healing, equality will remain an elusive concept.

A political party centered around, but not limited to African-American issues is essential for all Americans to understand the history of plight of African-Americans. As Caesar Chavez stated, "our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others—in the struggle—for their sake and for our own." However, too often Black Republicans and Democrats are forced to compromise what is considered a radical position on race. A Black political party would be able to promote dialogue among the races without having to compromise the goals of their agenda.



Islam and Democracy

A Theoretical Perspective

By Ameena Mohyuddin

Is democracy the whims and desires of the tyrannical rulers or their cronies? Is it a place to jail and incarcerate its fighters and a place to torture its proponents? This notion stretches across the oceans as world leaders stray from the true meaning democracy. Democracy's original meaning has been lost and in this day and age it has transformed into something almost tyrannical. As the world has changed, governments have fallen and changed and so has democracy. It has become entirely difficult to bring about change without coups and bloodshed.

Throughout history, the concept of Islamic law (along with other cultures and societies) has been argued and debated over for the simple purpose of understanding whether or not it can be practiced under the structure of democracy. If the Islamic states adhere to democratic behavior, would this action benefit the states themselves, as well as the remainder of the world, or would this action cause for more violent outbreaks across the globe?

Though we can understand that the principles of democracy have so far been successful in most western nations such as the United States,

Canada, and Sweden (to name a few), we must also recognize that democracy was formulated at a time when dictatorship was despised and society was willing to go towards great lengths to flee the authoritarian system. It is comprehensible that democracy has a possibility to "rule the entire world," including the Islamic world and not just the western world; for the further betterment of all mankind.

As democracy focuses on ruling by the people, the reputation of Islamic states infer that decisions are based on the decision of a few elites, and not by a majority rule. However, the Muslim belief system agrees that consultation is a must when it comes to selecting a potential leader for a nation-state. The principles of a true democracy can be applicable to the constitutionality of Islamic law, and theoretically speaking, could possibly lead to the benefit of the Islamic state, as well as the remainder of the world.

Democracy has been known to be the form of government that could possibly be the cornerstone of a stable society. Based on its formal definition, a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, but is indirectly exercised through a system of representation and delegated author-

ity periodically renewed, the essence of the meaning is truly what a modern society needs in order for there to be a civil sense of freedom and impartiality for all mankind. However, once viewed through the lenses of diverse ways of life, from religion to culture, can this democratic system of governance truly suffice to the attitudes of all individuals from different parts of the world, or is it fit for only certain divisions of humankind?

Democracy was first established as a system of authority and ruling for the Greeks during a time of anarchy and unstable society in the 6th century, BC. Liberty, majority rule, and equality are all important aspects of democracy in the sense that society needs these basic rights in order to survive in a fair manner. The true essence of democracy continued onward into the Roman Empire, as well as toward the Middle Ages (despite the outburst of Feudalism), and finally in Europe, which paved the way to what we know now as the modern democratic system of governance. Rousseau claimed that all people should have an input in how their government should function.

There are a few essential characteristics of a legitimate democracy, whether western-based or not: it is the people who are chosen, not the leaders, to freely make choices without government intervention; when electing the leaders, it is essential that every vote must represent in an equal manner, hence, one vote for every person (adult). For this equality to occur, all people must be subject to the same laws, have equal civil rights, and have the allowance to freely express their ideas. Minority rights are also crucial in a legitimate democracy. No matter how unpopular their views, all people should enjoy the freedoms of speech, press and assembly. Public policy should be made publicly, not secretly, and regularly scheduled elections should be held. Since "legitimacy" may be defined as "the feeling or opinion the people have that government is based upon morally defensible principles and that they should therefore obey it," then there must necessarily be a connection between what the people want and what the government is doing if legitimacy is to occur.

Today, the United States recognizes a system of representative democracy, which embodies the three branches of government for equal representation. As other nations use the principles of democracy to help manage their government, it must be noted that not all systems are exactly alike. Some democratic European nations still exercise monarchies, however, and use parliamentary procedure to assist people in having more power to rule. Thus, democracy is essentially universal, allowing room for interpretation for all nations, cultures, and societies (i.e. the Islamic World).

The principles of Islamic law are now

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referred to as the Shari'ah consisting of rules developed by Muslim jurists through the process of consensus and analogy. Of the Shari'ah beliefs include the idea of changes in circumstance and time and how those changes may result in further interpretation of Islamic Jurisprudence. The idea of public interest also goes in accordance with Islamic law, further approving the idea that democratic principles can be applied to the governance of an Islamic state. The process of consultation (shura) must be applied to the rulings of any Islamic state, regardless of the structure taken. Muslims also believe in the fact that God is the head of the state; however, His followers are not necessarily His representatives.

As far as shura and democracy are concerned, it can be understood that the process of decision making is a requirement for an Islamic government. The Quranic verse: "...and consult them in important matters. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in God [and execute it], for God loves those who put their trust [in him]" (3:159). Implying the obligation of consultation within an Islamic state. In order for the success of the Islamic state, the exercising of shura implements a compatibility between Islam and democracy, which further guarantees a civil society among the eastern and western worlds. The notion of consultation led to a peaceful form of interaction between most societies at the time; consequently, the process of shura could possibly lead to the democratization of the Muslim world. The shura itself as open to interpretation because the word of God has never been denied.

At the time of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon Him), he was chosen as the leader for the followers and from there after, several successors were elected in a similar way. This idea was adopted over generations of rulings, however, historically speaking; there are no claims of rules by divine right. The process of selecting leaders is called bay'ah, which literally means "selling" (al-Hibri 68). In a sense, this idea refers to the process of declaring and accepting a ruler. Even so, the process of consultation comes into place as a group of individuals come to a consensus, thereby nominating the individual most fit for the position of a leader. Secondly, the general public then gives their bay'ah to the selected individual. This, therefore, infers that a majority must accept the potential ruler after he makes the declaration, thus further proving that Islamic law is potentially able to function in a democratic fashion.

This was in no way, a form of authoritarian rule, even though in the present day we see an abundance of these authoritarian rulers across the Middle East. Authoritarian rulers came into existence basically through the process of istikhaf. This literally means, "choosing your own ruler." (al-Hibri 69). This form of authoritarian rule occupied some of the Muslim

world after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon Him), as Muslim communities grew and there was a necessity to develop new ways of selecting the potential caliphs. Since the Quran does not give a precise view of how exactly to select a leader, interpretation was left for the Muslims and therefore gives them the authority to decide how to choose the caliph (as long as consultation is exercised).

Caliphs have the responsibility of several major world leaders today. The caliph must acquire certain characteristics, such as charisma, wisdom and faithfulness, which not many individuals attain today. The Islamic ummah (community) refers the Muslim citizens of the world. For this reason, a caliph of the Muslim ummah would not qualify as a democratic principle, so the necessity to modify the role of the caliph was adopted so that there could be a caliph representing each nation-state as opposed to the ummah as a whole (al-Hibri 70). This further supports the notion of a democratically structured Islamic state, through the idea that a leader does not make all decisions on his own, as he also consults with cabinet members and the like.

Islam itself is a religion based on the peaceful submission to God. As the religion relays peace, so does the governmental system, democracy. With this simple statement in mind, it may not be completely convincing that Islam is obviously compatible with democracy. The authentic Islam is friendly to human rights and freedom of conscience, which in turn are compatible with democracy, and prone not to war and violence but to the quest for justice and peace (Sachedina).

Democracy, a form of government in which freedom is thoroughly defined, cannot be any more definable than what shura is to Shari'ah. This brings us to the major similarity between Islamic law and democracy: the process of consultation. Along with the other characteristics of Islam that make it compatible with democracy, including consensus and public interest, shura is the single most important factor that implements the principles of democracy into an Islamic form of government.

Islam believes in the general, pure Quranic teachings that are the basis of a mutually understanding democratic relationship among Muslims and non-Muslims. A society where all people can reunite in a euphoric state of mind, when civilians value each others dignity and human rights is what democratic pluralism attempts to thrive on (Sachedina).

With everything said, it can be noted that Islam, a religion of peace with a belief system in equal human rights, can apply its law to the structure of a basic democracy with almost no questions asked. As democracy implies rule by the people, Islamic law entails consultation as the first step in leading a society. Shari'ah con-

forms to the democratic system of governance based on Islam's ability of interpretation of the general guidelines given in the Quran and in the Hadith into specific laws suitable for each society's specific customs and needs.



Illustration by Lionel Williams

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BUA

A Personal Account

Never has there been a more influential artist of this era other than Justin Bua. His ability to distort everyday realism with urban themes has made his artwork some of the most popular today. Not only have his paintings received recognition all over the world, but his art work is among the best selling on college campuses. Having been a professional breakdancer, it is no surprise that some of the rhythms and movements of this dynamic dance would be prevalent in his art. For example, in the piece entitled *The DJ*, his use of light and movement through the DJ's arm into the turntables is extraordinary. It is as if the DJ is becoming the record. "The influence is huge! The way I paint, I rarely sit when I work. I get up, move around, kick a move -- its huge!"

Politics is the theme of this issue of Expressions, and we were granted an interview with Bua before his scheduled visit to the ECU campus, sponsored by the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center. Bua commented that politics play a major role in creating his art. "I've always been a political person," says Bua, "I'm working on a painting right now as a matter of fact called *The Artist*. It's about a Graffiti writer looking back at the public space claiming what is his. Tagging is frowned upon and isn't seen as an art form. My art has always been indicative of a culture whether it be jazz, b-boying, DJ'ing -- I'm growing more political."

Like any artist, in order to grow one must continually take risks and try new things. Becoming great at one thing is not enough. Being able to make mistakes and learn from them only makes you a stronger artist of life. Bua explained, "I find myself evolving and getting more compositions. Painting bigger -- just bettering myself." Hip-Hop music has also been an influence on Bua and his style of art. He shared that, "Hip-Hop isn't about the money, girls or any other materialistic thing. It is a universal oneness -- It allows people to come together from all walks of urban life."

Having gone from tagging the trains in New York City, to attending the High

School of Performing Arts where he studied visual art to getting accepted into the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA, to now being a prolific professor at the University of Southern California, the transition was an event in itself. Bua admitted that, "It was kind of weird because I'd like to say that I look young and it's funny because the kids are like -- Who's this guy? They look at Graffiti as being weird as well, but I find that I can relate to them."

Bua has created a style of painting that is all his own and he is constantly getting better with every stroke of the brush. From Jazz scenes to urban environments, Bua's prints appeal to everyone from all walks of life. For more information on Justin Bua and his prints, visit his website at www.justinbua.com.



Revolving Current Events:

Politics: Massachusetts Senator, John Kerry wins Iowa & New Hampshire primaries

Law: Reparations law suit thrown out of a Chicago Illinois court room

Science: Geologic evidence from Mars suggests was once wetter, and possibly more hospitable to life than it is now

Education: (1) UNC Chancellor's receive bonuses ranging from 12,000\$ to 25,000\$. Zero of these (11) Chancellor's were from ECU

News: David Kay, X-weapon Hunter for the U.S. says all evidence before the War indicated weapons of Mass Destruction, but now ~~there~~ none exist,...

Calendar of Events

Ledonia Wright Cultural Center Spring 2004

February, Black History Month

- 1 Chinese New Year
- 2 Student Union Visual Arts: An Exhibit of Prints by Justin Bua, Mendenhall Student Center, through February 27
- 3 Justin Bua Slideshow and Poster Signing, 7:00 p.m., Hendrix Theatre
- 4 Summer Opportunities and Co-op Internship Fair, 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Bate Building
- 4 Slam Poetry Contest, Mendenhall Student Center
- 5 African American Movie Night, 8:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center
- 6 African Storyteller Shindana Cooper, 7:00 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center Great Rooms
- 7 The 5 Elements (A Hip-Hop festival) featuring a DJ, MC, DROPHEAVY, and Graffiti Art, 9:00 - 11:00 p.m., Pirate Underground, Mendenhall Student Center
- 8 Sexual Responsibility Week, through 14
- 9 Dialogue on Diversity; topic will be HIV/AIDS, 6:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center
- 12 Industry and Technology Fair, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Willis Building
- 12 Poetic Expressions: Readings, Rhymes, and Rhythm featuring a guest host from the Triangle-area, 7:30 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center
- 13 Jazz at Night, 8 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center, Great Rooms
- 13 Decision Science Career Fair, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., third floor, Bate Building
- 14 Contra Dance, 7:30 p.m. (lesson), 8:00 - 10:30 p.m. (dance), Willis Building (tickets at the door)
- 15 National Brotherhood and Sisterhood Week, through 21
- 15 History of the Negro Spiritual featuring Dorthea Taylor and Dr. Louise Toppin, 5 p.m., Sycamore Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Hooker Rd., Greenville, NC
- 16 Emanuel Cleaver, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m., SZ-307 Science and Technology Building
- 17 Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 19 The Grapes of Wrath, 8:00 p.m., Messick Theatre, through 24
- 19 African American Reading Day, 2 - 4 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center
- 19 Carnivale (Mardi Gras: Around the World), TBA, Mendenhall Student Center (Sponsored by Partners in Campus Life)
- 19 Writers Reading Series, Theresa Williams, 3:00 p.m. Science and Technology Building, room 309 and at 7:00 p.m., Sheppard Memorial Library
- 20 Salsa Dance, 7:30 p.m. (lesson) 8:30 - 11:00 p.m. (dance), Willis Building (tickets at the door)
- 23 Orthodox Lent begins
- 24 Dat Phan and Ant (Comedy Series) 8:00 p.m. Hendrix Theatre
- 25 Ash Wednesday
- 25 Tango y Tango, Afro-Cuban dance group, 7:00 p.m., Wright Auditorium
- 26 African-American Movie Night, 8:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center
- 26 Town Hall Meeting: Community and Domestic Violence in the African-American Community, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center
- 26 Education Career Day, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Mendenhall Student Center
- 27 Day of Reflection- Culture and Consciousness: Gender and Ethnicity, Sistah Dr. Pamela K. Safisha Nzingha Hill, 7:00 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center
- 29 Dances of Universal Peace, 4:00 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center, 244

March, Women's History Month

- 1 National Women of Color Day
- 1 Ladysmith Black Mambazo, 8:00 p.m., Wright Auditorium
- 1 Eating Disorder Awareness Week
- 4 David Byre-Tyre, Art exhibit and reception, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center
- 4 Swash Improve Group (comedy), 8:00 - 10 p.m., Pirate Underground, Mendenhall Student Center
- 5 Celebration of Ledonia Wright Cultural Center featuring Ms. Susan L. Taylor, Editorial Director of Essence Magazine, 3:00 - 6 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural Center and Mendenhall Student Center
- 5 Jazz at Night, 8 p.m., Mendenhall Great Rooms
- 6 Kellin Watson (Women's History Month Concert), 9:00 - 11:00 p.m., Pirate Underground, Mendenhall Student Center
- 8 International Women's day
- 8 Kris Betts, Universities at a Peek into the Crystal Ball, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m., SZ-307 Science and Technology Building
- 8 Russell Simmons Def Poetry on Broadway, 8 p.m., Wright Auditorium
- 10 Harriet Tubman Day

10 Ledonia Wright Cultural Center Meet and Greet Social, 7:00 p.m.
Ledonia Wright Cultural Center

10 Women's History Movie Night, 8:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural
Center

11 Paragon Ragtime Orchestra, 8:00 p.m., Wright Auditorium

13 Contra Dance, 7:30 p.m. (lesson), 8:00 - 10:30 p.m. (dance), Willis
Building (tickets at the door)

14 Spring Break, through 21

15 Second Annual Diversity Week, School of Medicine, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.,
Brody Building, through March 20

19 Salsa Dance, 7:30 p.m. (lesson), 8:30 - 11:00 p.m. (dance), Willis
Building (tickets at the door)

22 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

22 Dialogue on Diversity, topic TBA, 6:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural
Center

26 Cinderella, Moscow Festival Ballet, 8:00 p.m., Wright Auditorium

27 Pow Wow, bottom of College Hill, sponsored by the East Carolina
Native American Organization (call 328-1680 for details)

30 Writers Reading Series, Ethelbert Miller, 3:00 p.m., Mendenhall Stu-
dent Center, Social Room and at 7:00 p.m., Willis Building

April

2 Student Union Visual Arts: Illumina 2004, call for entries, 3:00 - 8:00
p.m., Great Room Mendenhall Student Center

4 Daylight Saving Time begins

5 Student Union Visual Arts: Illumina 2004 Exhibit, Mendenhall Gallery,
Mendenhall Student Center, through April 22

6 Passover

6 Nonprofit and Volunteer Career Fair, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Multipur-
pose Room Mendenhall Student Center

7 World Health Day

9 Good Friday

10 Contra Dance, 7:30 p.m. (lesson), 8:00 - 10:30 p.m. (dance), Willis
Building (tickets at the door)

11 Easter Sunday

12 Dialogue on Diversity, topic TBA, 6:00 p.m., Ledonia Wright Cultural

Center

14 Social Justice Institute #2: Brown vs. Board of Education: Fifty
Years Later, lecture by Juan Williams, journalist, 7:00 p.m., Mendenhall
Student Center

16 Salsa Dance, 7:30 p.m. (lesson), 8:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. (dance),
Willis Building (tickets at the door)

17 Bolcom and Morris, 8:00 p.m., Wright Auditorium

19 Ambassador Fredrick M. Bush, Scholars and Scholarship in a New
World, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m., SZ-307 Science and Technology Building

21 Student Union Visual Arts: Illumina 2004 Awards Ceremony and
Closing Reception, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center

22 Earth Day

22 Clothesline Project at Barefoot on the Mall

25 Dances of Universal Peace, 4:00 p.m., 244 Mendenhall Student
Center

26 Classes end

27 Reading Day

29 Ledonia Wright Cultural Center Open House, 12:00 noon- 2:00 p.m.

May

1 National Day of Prayer

5 Cinco de Mayo

6 Baccalaureate Ceremony, 6:00 p.m., Mendenhall Student Center

8 Commencement

9 Mother's Day

18 First Summer Session classes begin

Quotes

"A violinist had a violin, a painter his palette. All I had was myself. *I* was the instrument that I must care for."

--**Josephine Baker**
Singer and dancer

"One is responsible to life: It is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return."

--**James Baldwin**
Author

"I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it."

--**Alice Walker**
Author

"Our creator is the same and never changes despite the names given Him by people here and in all parts of the world. Even if we gave Him no name at all, He would still be there, within us, waiting to give us good on this earth."

--**George Washington Carver**
Educator and innovator in the Agricultural Sciences

"Impossibilities are merely things of which we have not learned, or which we do not wish to happen."

--**Charles W. Chesnutt**
Author

"Like snowflakes, the human pattern is never cast twice. We are uncommonly and marvelously intricate in thought and action, our problems are most complex and, too often, silently borne."

--**Alice Childress**
Actor, director, and playwright

"Pride, like humility, is destroyed by one's insistence that he possess it."

--**Kenneth B. Clarke**
Writer and psychologist

"When you educate a man you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

--**Johnetta B. Cole**
First black female president of Spelman College

"Anger and humor are like the left and right arm. They complement each other. Anger empowers the poor to declare their uncompromising opposition to oppression, and humor prevents them from being consumed by their fury."

--**James Cone**
Theologian

"The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect, a party or a class. It is the cause of human kind, the very birthright of humanity."

--**Anna Julia Cooper**
Educator and author

"Jails and prisons are designed to break human beings, to convert the population into specimens in a zoo - obedient to our keepers, but dangerous to each other."

--**Angela Davis**
Radical Black activist

"Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground."

--**Frederick Douglass**
Orator, author, journalist, and antislavery leader of the 19th century

"If the 1st Amendment means anything, it means that the state has no business telling a man, sitting alone in his own house, what books he may read or what films he may watch."

--**Thurgood Marshall**
American civil rights lawyer, and first Black justice on the Supreme Court of the United States

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."

--**W.E. B. Dubois**
Author, educator, and activist

"The quality of strength lined with tenderness is an unbeatable combination, as are intelligence and necessity when unblunted by formal education."

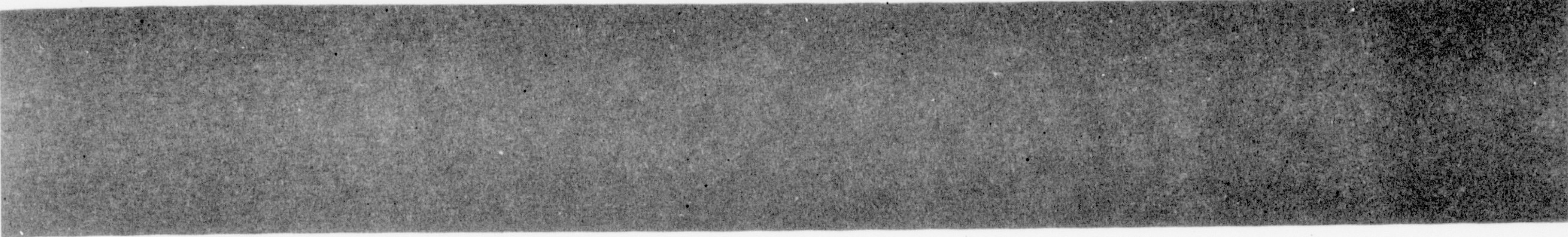
--**Maya Angelou**
Author, poet, and entertainer

"Racism systematically verifies itself anytime the slave can only be free by imitating his master."

--**Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin**
Activist

"Politically I beg to differ in the views of freedom. We are victims of a capitalist system. As workers we are exploited. As people we have no power over our own lives. No self-determination and no ability to reproduce the things we need for ourselves. So we are dependent in people who historically have beaten us, jailed us, lied to us etc. I don't see any freedom in that."

--**Stic from Dead Prez**
Rap lyricist



"I'm going to introduce legislation to have universal military service to let everyone have an opportunity to defend the free world against the threats coming to us...I'm talking about mandatory service...When you talk about a war, you're talking about ground troops, you're talking about enlisted people, and they don't come from the kids and members of Congress...I think, if we went home and found out that there were families concerned about their kids going off to war, there would be more cautiousness and a more willingness to work with the international community than to say, 'Our way or the highway.'"

--Rep. Charles Rangel, D-New York
Politician, Korean War Veteran

"In this time of war against Osama Bin Laden and the oppressive Taliban regime we are thankful that OUR leader isn't the spoiled son of a powerful politician from a wealthy oil family who is supported by religious fundamentalists, operates through clandestine organizations, has no respect for the democratic electoral process, bombs innocents and uses war to deny people their civil liberties. Amen."

--Aaron McGruder author of the "**Boondocks**" comic strip

"A wise person speaks carefully and with truth, for every word that passes between one's teeth is meant for something."

--Molefi Kete Asante, writer and philosopher

EXPRESSIONS

Democracy's original meaning has been lost and in this day and age it
has transformed into something almost tyrannical. -Ameena Mohyuddin

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