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MISSION STATEMENT

With our bi-quarterly publication, Diskord, we intend to fill the void that exists between the student community, progressive causes, and the outside world at the University of Chicago.

Our publication will provide a centralized hub for progressives to voice their causes and activities to the greater student body.

We furthermore seek to underscore the relevance of campus student issues to real world current events through an accessible print publication.

Because of our bi-quarterly format we will provide in depth coverage and analysis of international, domestic, and cultural issues.

Also, we will provide a much needed progressive voice currently lacking in student media.

Inquiries, concerns and letters should be directed towards Julie Fry (juliquah@gmail.com) and Ali Winston (ali.winston@gmail.com)

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diskord.uchicago.edu
Liberia – With her November 8 victory against soccer star George Weah, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a Harvard-educated economist and former finance minister, became Africa’s first female head of state. Weah has filed a formal complaint of election fraud, but international observers have praised the process as “free and fair.” Johnson-Sirleaf’s immediate goals for the civil war-torn country include restoring electricity in the capital city of Monrovia and providing free, universal elementary school education.

Sudan – Two Darfur rebel groups have put aside their differences in the hope of easing a seventh round of peace talks with the Sudanese government. The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the smaller Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) reached a joint declaration on the principles of power sharing, wealth sharing, and security, and assigned one chief negotiator to speak for both groups.

Europe

Germany – Conservative Angela Merkel was confirmed as German chancellor with an easy majority in the Nov. 22 parliamentary vote. As the country’s first female leader, Merkel must confront a lagging economy and high unemployment while holding together a shaky left-right coalition government that many expect to fail. In her first major speech as chancellor, Merkel vowed to make Germany “one of the three top countries in Europe in 10 years.”

Vatican City – The Vatican officially released a document detailing its position on homosexuality and the priesthood, in which it prohibits ordaining or admitting to seminary “those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ‘gay culture.’” It does, however, permit those who experienced “transitory” homosexual tendencies that were “overcome” at least three years before ordination as a deacon. The policy only applies to newly-ordained priests.

Middle East

Iraq – Government officials failed to deliver an investigative report into the alleged torture of 173 detainees at the Interior Ministry Jail in Baghdad. With the Dec. 15 parliamentary elections only weeks away, critics were not surprised by the news but urged the need for an independent inquiry. Harith al-Obeidi, a spokesman for the General Conference for the People of Iraq, stated, “We still demand an international investigation because nobody expects that the government would indict itself.”

Israel – Prime Minister Ariel Sharon left the right-wing Likud party to form a centrist coalition dedicated to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The new Kadima party is attracting a politically diverse group of members including the influential support of Vice-Premier and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres. Peres ended his longtime Labor party affiliation for what he called “the more urgent and greater consideration,” but some Israelis see his move to Kadima as an opportunistic ploy to receive a senior Cabinet post.

Asia/Pacific

China – A Nov. 13 explosion at a petrochemical plant in the northern Jilin Province released an estimated 100 tons of benzene into the Songhua River. The spill suspended the water supply of more than 4 million people in the city of Harbin for nearly a week, and the 50 mile slick is expected to reach Khabarovsk, Russia in another two weeks. Authorities are facing nationwide anger for initially attempting to conceal the incident.

Japan – Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has proposed a constitutional amendment that still renounces war but provides a permanent military for self-defense and international peacekeeping. Under the U.S.-drafted constitution of 1947, the government is forbidden to use military force in international disputes or maintain an army for the purpose of warfare. In a Nov. 30 speech, Koizumi said, “Can we defend our country with an organization that has no war capability? It is impossible by common sense.”

Bolivia – Evo Morales, an anti-globalization advocate and former leader of the coca growers federation, has emerged as the leading candidate in the upcoming presidential election. Morales is benefiting from a recent surge in anti-establishment feeling that has ousted two Bolivian presidents since 2003 and has also made President Bush the most unpopular American president ever in Latin America. If he wins, Morales pledges to legalize coca and promote its “industrial use” in exports such as toothpaste and pharmaceuticals.
Dear Diskord Readers,

It's getting painfully cold in Chicago, and as our mobility decreases, the time we spend pondering life, death, and, um, the bliss of anarchy increases proportionately. "All the Pretty Corpses" crept unassumingly into the Renaissance Society, but has found itself in our section center-stage in a scene that can be appreciated more than even we had anticipated. Goth isn't just for freaks anymore; goth, in a sense, is for all of us. We found ourselves re-assessing our relationship to that which is defined, often pejoratively, as subculture; one singular exhibit bloomed into a lazy black web of events, groups, and ideas. Goth is online, death is in metal, and even the Italians are (finally) learning to stick it to the Man. These articles strive, then, to contextualize rather than compartmentalize their subjects. But perhaps we may even achieve progressive living, recognizing that we are all an "other"—and Satan knows that we, too, will be spending the winter in the dark, cursing heaven and drinking 40.

Yours truly,

Sean Anderson and Carolyn Silveira

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It's Dark, but is it Evil?

Pale skin and black leather form the trademark of two very different subcultures

by Carolyn Silveira

"So then Varg Vikernes killed Euronymous with hopes of usurping his title as the most evil man alive," says Mike La Rocco as he recounts the dark and evil legend of the infamous Norwegian Black Metal band Mayhem. I was naive to think that metal-related injuries and death were exclusively the bad luck of mosh-loving concertgoers, and before Mike set the record straight, I was naive to think that goth and metal culture were two sides of the same strange coin. A visit to the current Renaissance Society exhibit, 'All the Pretty Corpses,' prompted me to go to a local source of darkness for insight into what exactly makes one dark, evil, or just plain goth.

La Rocco, himself a Black Metal guitarist in an Indiana Jones tribute band called Sallah, sat with me in the Pub to heatedly talk over the sound of The Cranberries and the Allman Brothers Band and make sense of the often confused subcultures of goth and metal. I want to know: I saw art made by people aren't self-proclaimed goths, so how can theirs be gothic art? At the heart of this dilemma is a particular piece in the gallery—a poster alphabetically listing metal albums from around the world: is that goth, too? Which genre encompasses the other?

We begin by considering the two subcultures, historically concurrent and close on the sociological family tree, as a Venn diagram. "The overlap isn't as great as you might think," La Rocco tells me, and at the heart of that is an inter-group hostility. "Goth people are inherently sissies," he continues, "when you were in high school, that's why those were goths." While goth culture is an offshoot that developed from the post-punk movement across the late 1970s and 1980s, it is now defined by appearance and lifestyle rather than by musical devotion. Metal, on the other hand, is not necessarily something you can see—La Rocco, for example, is wearing a nice black shirt and a blazer that is borderline headbanging music genre. Black Metal is a culture-inclusive exception that will be addressed later.

The genetic links between metal and goth, however, are as undeniable as a widow's peak. Good old rebellious rock is the "missing link" that made possible the evolution of both other genres, though goth had to pass through the punk generation, and they have even intermingled in the Gothic Metal subgenre. And why shouldn't they? They are both explicitly preoccupied with life's darker colors. Each subculture's monochromatic fashion and creation of self-selecting society stem from a strong impulse to break free of and oppose mainstream society.

Scandinavia is the birthplace of black metal, and Norse bands, who have been especially important in metal music, take pride in their heritage and homeland. Their music manifests the fascination with the Nordic landscape's cold, snowy darkness and their cultural pride—or rather their cultural indignation. The sentiment that Christianity overtook Norse culture and religion like an invasive species is forefront in the attitudes of Black Metal bands, "and they're livid," explains La Rocco. Thus the rash of church arson and, um, the bliss of anarchy increases proportionately. "All the Pretty Corpses" crept unassumingly into the Renaissance Society, but has found itself in our section center-stage in a scene that can be appreciated more than even we had anticipated. Goth isn't just for freaks anymore; goth, in a sense, is for all of us. We found ourselves re-assessing our relationship to that which is defined, often pejoratively, as subculture; one singular exhibit bloomed into a lazy black web of events, groups, and ideas. Goth is online, death is in metal, and even the Italians are (finally) learning to stick it to the Man. These articles strive, then, to contextualize rather than compartmentalize their subjects. But perhaps we may even achieve progressive living, recognizing that we are all an "other"—and Satan knows that we, too, will be spending the winter in the dark, cursing heaven and drinking 40.

Yours truly,

Sean Anderson and Carolyn Silveira
Goth/Metal Mania! Fun Facts and First Steps

NECRO-CURIOUS?
www.Gothiccouncilofchicago.com
www.gothicchicago.com

CAN’T TOUCH THIS . . .
The traditional “horns” hand-sign used by metalheads (okay, everyone) is said to originate with Ronnie James Dio of the group Dio—his Italian grandmother used the sign to both give and protect from the evil eye.

GAY AND DOOMSDAY
Italian metal band Nanowar was proudly gay, and Rob How of Judas Priest was known for his leather chaps and riding crop stage outfits.

GET MORE DEAD
Until December 11th, catch the Día de los Muertos exhibit at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum and see great otherworldly band) in rock salt was on display in October at the Whitney in New York.

ALL MEN PLAY ON 10
Keep your ears perked for the “All Men Play on 10” music extravaganza, to be scheduled soon. It will feature the loudest music that U of C bands have to offer. B.Y.O. Adtp.

INK DRAWING

All the Pretty Corpses: A Review
by Sean Anderson

From the dawn of abstract expression, an aesthetic sensibility has vacillated between that of the natural and that of the made, synthetic, or purposeful objects. Harbored in a semi-fractured American setting, the delineation between the Marcel Duchamp of New York and the opposing American bracket led by Alfred Stieglitz formed a debate which crystallized opposing opinions about the correct sources of art. While Duchamp strived to highlight the progress, technology and component parts of modern life through his representation, Stieglitz & Co wanted nothing more than to embody the eternal spiritual quality of nature, despite an increasing technique of systematic abstraction.

The fold between the two sides of artistic sources met and closed into one lapidary clause: nature and technology are both spiritually inspirational and endlessly complex: a rich and challenging source for the artist. We now live, therefore, with an aesthetic sensibility that sources equally from nature and technological progress. It is a matter of purpose to then find the individuals whose work or lives emulate this sensibility. This is not done by prettifying and highlighting the paltry scars of this antiquated schism. The comprehension of this sensibility is discovered no longer in their explanation but is displayed, absolutely, through their very forsaking nature.

Enter now: a possible manifestation of this contemporary aesthetic sensibility. “All the Pretty Corpses,” the current exhibit at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago features projects by eight living and working artists. The tagline of this exhibit as well as the hearsay qualifier is: “Neo-Gothic.” In a stringent art historian’s mind, Neo-Gothic could rightfully conjure an image of an edifice with cascading glass flying-buttresses, gleaming metallic surfaces ornamented by glowing light, buzzing antennae, coiled wires, piling and protruding from bulbous pools, swirling and swelling from seemingly technological, or possibly, bio-technological necessity: a massive totem pulsating with human or human induced activity. One would replace the spires so familiar of our famous Gothic cathedrals with blasting beams of light. Our magnificent stained-glass rose windows could be refitted with enormous plasma screens, displaying continually mutating images. This window would be a monitor of progress, a panoramic surveillance of construction and expansion. This portal, which once served as the delicate filter between the harsh earthly existence of the pre-Renaissance subject and enormously beautiful prospect of heaven, would be in its “neo” incarnate, no longer a filter between squalor and opulence but between the now and the metallic and digital future.

However, as of yet we do not have any edifices which resemble my description. We certainly do have veritable representations of this futuristic reincarnate: films and animated/comic literature offer us a glimpse of this stylized state.

Neo-gothic is mainstream as a concept but its creative fervor is still relegated to the basement hallways of high schools, the midnight salons in diners and in fringe music venues and clubs, and overwhelmingly, on the internet, prosaically qualified as a sub-culture. The Renaissance Society, as an institution, has continuously framed exhibits and featured individuals whose purpose and work could be qualified as experimental, counter-cultural or curious. So here, we find the Renaissance Society reaching deep inside the bowels of society, touching a group, a style and an ideal which has held dominion over the nether-creatures of the counter-culture for nearly three decades.

What appeared most blatantly curious about the exhibit during its opening was the complete lack of gothic personalities. In their clothing, accessories and manner of speaking one found nothing reminiscent of the markedly (i.e. stereotypically) gothic individual. No high-contrast makeup, no black, no leather and no occult paraphernalia. How then, we may ask, is this art neo-gothic if not created by gothic individuals? Perusing web-sites devoted to displaying artwork of gothic sensibility one comes across delicately rendered images of princesses, dragons and satanic creatures. There are Giacometti-like scribbles of suffering lonesome individuals cowered in the corner of vast, cold cemented rooms. One finds pouting young girls with slick, long, black hair staring, plainly forward. One can only imagine that the source of these images, created by persons across the world, is their very selves.

The imagined accessories of the gothic regalia rendered in ink and pencil drawings or actually fashioned from materials seem only to make sense if they come from an individual who appreciated and understood the aesthetics of this sub-culture: someone who would desire to share their creation amongst the like-minded.

So this synthesis of which I write, that cohesive perspective that does not highlight the opposition between nature and technology, but rather, highlights the infinity of creation over the explanation of purpose is achieved through the representation of the “neo-gothic” style by the curators at the Renaissance Society. In codifying several disparate artistic sensibilities in varying mediums of visual arts, the exhibit posits a counter-point to an increasingly insincere period of popularized artistic representation.

Most conventionally executed are the ink drawings of Kacy Maddux. This artist, in utilizing gothic or occult symbolisms—aspects of religious, mythic and the corporeal—has enveloped the urge (or angst) towards the infinity of creation in a series of sizeable pieces which covered an ample portion of the gallery walls. When studying the dynamism of these images, an almost inexhaustible source of inquisition towards a definition of a “what” materializes itself. The drawings are immaculately executed in clean, steady lines and curves and framed for the viewer to stand squarely and study their content. This inexhaustible source of inquisition is not a secondary inquiry into the drawings but is the very content of the drawings themselves.

Maddux explained during a question and answer session at the opening, the drawings are the representation of a folding and unfolding of a repetitive sentiment. This sentiment, impossible to represent directly, is achieved through meticulous and scrupulous expansion and retraction of an iconography of the artist’s invention. An iconography, as Maddux explains, could be conceived as a transitory language. The series of drawings display an extract from a personal catalogue of icons that form the grammar by which this language is constructed. As a reading of Maddux’s drawings carries itself towards a form of representation which expresses in its material and its consistent imagery the actuality of a sentiment or an occasion, her inclusion in the neo-gothic style further substantiates the polarity between a sub-culture and the respected “culture” as such. The images that are found in the wake of Maddux’s pen, working against conventional contemporary culture and its incestuous purveyors of representation, are exaltations of sincerity. This art does

Continued on page 7
by Emilie Sandoz and Sara Blumenstein

No self-respecting hipster or punk in America would ever be caught dead, I suppose the appropriate pun would be, in a place like Transylvania. Situated at the foot of Bologna’s main university street, via Zamboni, the city’s Goth club somehow managed to be both macabre and gimmicky. The basement tables were constructed of plastic skeletons in faux coffins and covered with a glass top, the beer taps had skulls on them, and heavy red velvet curtains hung in the main room.

One night, on a lark, we went to hear a band called Muppet Suicide. We realized once we got there that Muppet Suicide was a Guns ‘N’ Roses cover band. Giggling nervously, we steered ourselves for the performance as the concert venue filled up, people crowding against the fake gravestones that lined the walls.

Looking back, Muppet Suicide’s performance was pretty unremarkable, except for their big hair and tight pants. What I found extraordinary was how engaged the Italians around us were in the performance. All sorts of people were having a great time, the pale, skinny kids with heavy eyeliner singing and dancing and giving rock salutes along with those wearing Jamaican stripes and Bob Marley t-shirts. I could only relate to the music in a really detached way; any actual delight that might have been had in Muppet Suicide’s performance was for me at least mitigated through many layers of kitsch and irony. For the Italians, though, it was just rock music.

Something bizarre was happening here. The certain degree of detachment with which I approached the concert was absent in the people around me, for whom Muppet Suicide was merely another piece of the alternative counter-culture with which to align themselves.

The self-consciousness of the American alternative scene and its implicated categories and sub-categories are subsumed in Italy by this giant hyper-category: someone is, simply, Alternativo. This concept is strange, if not ludicrous, to Americans, for whom the loaded word “Alternative” carries very specific connotations, reeking of 1995 and the word’s enigmatic appearance as a genre whose boundaries we are hesitant to so blatantly put people, and to define them by their situation in opposition to the rest of Bolognese society, their animals and clothing choices in clear rebellion to a town of traditional opulence (Bologna is one of the wealthiest cities in Italy, and houses a school-year student population rising to upwards of 100,000 during exam times). A Punkabestia’s appearance is easily recognizable, and thus so are their tendencies and habits. If you see a Punkabestia, you are supposed to know exactly where they are going and what they are all about.

When, in early spring of this year, Bolognese officials passed a law prohibiting the sale of liquor past 9 PM and likewise restricted public consumption of alcohol, it was an action taken mainly (and overtly) to keep in check the rowdy Punkabestia invading the piazzas with 40s of Peroni during the increasingly warm nights. The enforcement of the law was restricted to the ancient city center where the alternative youth presence was most jarring and diffuse. No one had any doubts as to the group towards whom these limitations were primarily directed. A professor of mine mentioned her satisfaction regarding this turn of events. “I’m glad they’re finally doing something about it,” she said, referencing the new law, “the Punkabestia are getting out of control.”

The negative reaction to this ostensibly specific law was widespread. Posters were tacked up all over town and petitions collected thousands of signatures against the law at bars. The new law’s opponents didn’t see it merely as a civic ordinance; the language of the posters elevated it into conflict between two very different visions of what sort of city center Bologna should have: a vibrant place full of loud, interesting people and their ideas or a museum for office workers and tourists. The breadth of the protest against the law showed the extent to which people identified themselves under the banner “Punkabestia,” and felt likewise placed in this category by the Bolognese lawmakers, a consequence of the fact that the idea of being Alternativo was painted with such broad strokes. To claim this group as your own or to be placed in it meant simply that, in some way or another, you were not the norm. You lived a lifestyle that was opposed to that of the traditional Bolognese elite, and however that became manifest in your clothing choices or brand of humor was irrelevant. Regardless, it fit you.

In America, we are hesitant to so blatantly put people, and to place ourselves, into categories. We do it, of course; we group one another and from that classification make assumptions. But the general paradigm that we adhere to dictates that individuals should be seen on their own terms. You should look at a person and be able to see that person, your vision unclouded by social determinants of identity. That is, Americans belong to groups in a much more conditional way. These definitions are heavily tempered by our specific personalities and levels of engagement with them. We are individuals first, who then find our ways into particular social arrangements. For Italians, another paradigm seems to be at work. Italians appear to lack this self-consciousness for defining people by their groups, evident in their treatment of the Alternative and the Punkabestia. In Italy, personality and self possess an objectivity that they lack in the United States, or at least that we would pretend doesn’t exist. You define yourself first and foremost by the categories that envelop you, your individual self emerging from within their broad character suggestions. The sense of blatant stereotyping (“he is that way because he is from Bari, like everyone from Bari”) is strikingly absent from an acceptable vocabulary in America. To the reader, such a system of identity based on generalizations quite possibly sounds bizarre and unfair. But there remains something almost impressive about Italians in the ease with which they seem willing to assign and embrace certain labels.

While the Italian system for expressing counter-culturalism might seem awkwardly broad, it was refreshing not to feel so hyper-conscious about the groups to which I belonged. In a world where all things “Alternative” were widely accepted by people who identified themselves under that umbrella (and without quotation marks), there wasn’t the intense internal questioning that is so integral to the work of American self-making. I didn’t feel like a tool for liking certain things. Listening to Phantom Planet or Muppet Suicide was not such a loaded question because I already fit somewhere; it was just a choice, a preference, not a sign of how I identified myself or was identified. In America, and, I suppose, specifically at Chicago, I felt simultaneously pressured to be an individual and, at the same time, to conform to certain definitions of individuality.

I suppose that this has been the lasting effect of my exposure to the Punkabestia counterculture in Bologna. Returning to Chicago, I feel somehow more secure in myself. I view things that I like (music and movies that I love or hate, stores that I shop at, neighborhoods I frequent) more as preferences than as definitions. In the end, both paradigms have inherent flaws. Having tried to navigate both systems of self-making, and living now with some synthesis of the two, has made me more aware of who, and not only what, I am.
CIA “black sites” tarnish Bush’s credibility

by Nick Westra

The Bush administration was sharply questioned by Americans and non-Americans alike following the Washington Post's early November article that exposed a network of CIA operated interrogation centers, known as “black sites.” Designed to detain and interrogate suspects with high-level connections to terrorism, these “black sites” have operated with complete secrecy and absolute authority within the boarders of at least eight different countries since 2001. This story has brought damaging attention to Vice President Cheney’s behind-the-scenes advocacy for a mandate of sweeping and uncontained authority for CIA operatives, particularly as his involvement in the development of the “black sites” became clear. In an attempt to contain increasing scrutiny about the nature of these “black sites,” Bush delivered a speech on 7 November that reaffirmed America’s opposition to torture.

Bush's assertions have been met with substantial skepticism. Andrew Sullivan, columnist for the London Times, wrote in a mid-November Sunday issue, "His strained legal definition [Bush's definition of torture] is as absurd as his predecessor Bill Clinton's definition of what constituted 'sexual relations' with Monica Lewinsky. And it is of infinitely graver moral import.

Ensuing investigations into these “black sites” have supported Sullivan's intuitions as interrogation practices that some would certainly consider torture have come to light. While this information can not be confirmed because of the continuing confidentiality of these “black sites,” many unnamed contacts within the CIA and correspondents familiar with the organization's practices including Los Angeles Times correspondent Rosa Brooks have lent credibility to their allegations. Investigators have reason to believe that a series of interrogation practices were implemented within these centers that while inflicting little lasting physical damage, intended to seriously weaken the psychological state of the suspect. These practices are assumed to include simulated suffocation and “waterboarding,” in which the suspects are made to feel like he or she is drowning, among others.

Some have argued that the mere existence of a network of covert interrogation centers around the world is actually a form of torture itself. In an early November investigation of a potential “black site” in Yemen, Amnesty International took particular offense to a former prisoner's testimonial about the disorienting effects of these centers, “Where the detainee has been ‘disappeared’, the effects of enforced solitude are compounded by a pervasive sense of uncertainty and anxiety about the future, which can be similarly destructive [to physical torture].”

The opacity of these “black sites” has also proved troubling, particularly in light of America’s tarnished reputation regarding interrogating suspects accused of terrorism. Senator John Kerry has already called for a Congressional investigation into these “black sites,” warning, “I do know that any administration that tries to keep Congress in the dark damages the cause for which we are all fighting.”

America’s relationship with its European allies has been considerably strained by these revelations, as many European states have expressed significant unease about CIA operatives functioning covertly within their boarders. Already five European countries and the European Parliament have opened preliminary investigations into questioning the legality of covert American operations within various international treaties. Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the European Parliament have serious concerns that the US has transported high-level terrorist suspects within the local infrastructure of host countries.

Furthermore, there is resentment amongst Europeans over the revelation that CIA operatives used force against their own citizens. Italy has claimed that one of its citizens, a Muslim cleric was kidnapped by CIA operatives in Milan in 2003 and taken to a “black site” in Egypt without their knowledge. Germany has supported this claim and now both countries are calling for the extradiction of nearly 20 CIA operatives that they consider involved with the operation.

However, some countries (such as Poland and Romania) have distanced themselves from discussion of these “black sites” and have refused to support any investigations of reports of American violations of international treaties. EU Justice Commissioner, Franco Frattini, has stated that the EU cannot compel states such as Poland and Romania to open up investigations.

“I'm left with a sense of unease and residual doubt when respected organizations have made allegations but we cannot honestly say they’ve been thoroughly investigated.” —Baroness Ludford

In the face of such silence, Baroness Ludford, a sitting MP in the British Parliament, questions what any of the investigations will amount to, as she said, “I’m left with a sense of unease and residual doubt when respected organizations have made allegations but we cannot honestly say they’ve been thoroughly investigated.”

Even if the formal investigations do not result in serious charges, the criticism and attention surrounding these “black sites” has already caused considerable fallout for the Bush administration. Many have questioned why such sites were authorized in the first place. In the Washington Post article that broke this story 2 November, author Dana Priest suggests, “The secret detention system was conceived in the chaotic and anxious first months after the September 11, 2001 attacks, when the working assumption was that a second strike was imminent.”

The exposure of these “black sites” has cast considerable suspicion over the Bush administration's recent efforts to preserve the vague wordings of much of the legislation that was drafted in the wake of 9/11, including the authorizing of these “black sites.” The media has taken considerable interest in Dick Cheney's attempts to convince Senator John McCain to exempt CIA operatives from his popular senatorial amendment, which clarifies that no American may apply torture at any time to prisoners. Former CIA director Stansfield Turner has come to McCain's aid by questioning Cheney's morality, calling him a “vice president of torture,” and deploring the practice of torture, saying “Torture is beyond the pale. It is going too far.”

Whether or not the Bush administration will continue to utilize these “black sites” as interrogation centers is uncertain. Regardless of what Bush chooses to do, there will be many investigations that scrutinize the nature of these centers, exposing yet another within the administration’s original precepts for conducting the war on terror.
Bonfire of the Vanities: French Republicanism under fire

by Josh Segal

On November 14, eighteen days after the first outbreak of violence in the Parisian suburbs, President Jacques Chirac finally appeared on French television to calm a torn and distraught nation. "Let us be lucid, let us be courageous," intoned **Monsieur le Président** with perfect poise and a reassuring tone. "Let us learn every lesson from this crisis."

As the last fires burn out in the Parisian suburbs, the questions posed by Chirac on the 14th—questions of lessons learned and the proper ways to address the inarticulate demands of an entire generation of poor, marginalized, racialized young people—become increasingly relevant. Still, as he himself has demonstrated, lessons are not so easily learned and faith is not so easily restored. Despite all his rhetoric, Chirac's address was far from reassuring, and suggested less a return to normalcy than a sense of perpetual siege and ongoing uncertainty.

The Preservation of Republican Universalism

Describing the riots of the past three weeks as evidence of "a crisis of direction, a crisis in which people have lost their way...a crisis of identity," he told the French nation that "we will respond to this by being firm, by being fair, and by being faithful to France's values." The message—one of constancy and justice—also signaled Chirac's refusal to endorse a radically new minority policy.

As the disenfranchised second and third generation immigrants of France's urban hinterlands rioted across the nation, putting cars and buildings to flame and throwing rocks and firebombs at police officers, they demonstrated the failures of the French state to integrate its post-colonial immigrant minorities. The model of republican universalism—which recognizes only a formal equality of political rights and refusal to officially acknowledge cultural groups or racial inequalities for fear of splintering the body politic—has been put into question. Indeed, the crisis became a platform for some prominent politicians and governing officials (chief among them, firebrand Minister of the Interior, Nicholas Sarkozy) to call for the introduction of new Anglo-American reforms, including affirmative actions programs. Chirac’s claim that the proper response was "not a question of entering into the logic of quotas," was an explicit rejection of notions of reform.

Emergency Powers and the Police State

The most provocative element of the response has been Chirac's demand for a three-month extension of emergency police powers. Even in the face of slowly de-escalating violence, the measure would "give the government the means to act" and reestablish its authority. In his words, "Those who attack property and people have to know that in the Republic you do not attack property and people without being arrested, prosecuted and punished."

Government ministers had first declared a state of emergency on 8 November. The law they invoked dates to the Algerian war and its application immediately called up bitter memories of that conflict and denunciations of the *logique coloniale* that the law implied. Originally authorized for a period of only 12 days, Chirac needed the consent of the legislature to obtain his three-month extension and, only two days after his request, the measure had passed in both the lower assembly and the senate. Among other things, public authorities have been given the right to impose curfews, to outlaw demonstrations and to search private property.

An association of leftist groups immediately decried the emergency measures claiming "it is necessary to substitute a state of police emergency for a state of social emergency so that the acts of governing officials stop contradicting the motto of the Republic." Meanwhile, an editorial in the leftist French newspaper *Libération* argued that the reaction was disproportionate and reeked of political motivations. It was little more than an effort to flex "the biceps of the state, less to impress the rioters than to reassure worried and exasperated electorate which one fears will throw itself into the arms of the extreme right." Above all, the such powers threatened an "underhanded erosion of the fundamental principles of the Republic.

Voluntary Civil Service Programs

At the same time, "to better help the young," Chirac demanded the expansion of a set of five pre-existing civil service programs designed specifically to aid youth "on the way to social marginalization." The five initiatives now grouped under the heading "service civil volontaire," will offer temporary employment to up to 50,000 youths by 2007. The programs are, however, extremely diverse. One promises to give participants "a better knowledge of police institutions" and offers, perhaps eventually, to find them low-level jobs in the police force. Another supports volunteer work in France while still another, run by the EU, supports volunteer work in any European country. In all cases, participants are promised a small stipend and numerous other benefits (housing, meals, transportation).

Members of France political left and right, however, greeted the announcement, with only tepid enthusiasm. Many have called the programming uninspired and point to a marked "lack of ambition."

Whatever the individual merits of the programs, the expansion of pre-existing initiatives suggests that, at least when it comes to social welfare, France's political leaders lack the sort of dynamism and innovation necessary to truly ameliorate ghetto conditions. More of the same old bland programs will generate little more than the same old results and little will change.

Collective Guilt

Speaking directly to the rioting youth of the suburbs, Chirac declared that "whatever their origins, they are all the sons and daughters of the Republic." Still, despite this admission of national paternity, he also suggested that "families must shoulder all their responsibilities. Those who refuse must be punished as provided by the law."

Indeed, in the aftermath of the riots, parents and siblings are increasingly being held responsible for the actions of their sons and brothers. Already, a number of suburban mayors have begun withholding welfare payments to the families of rioters and the National Assembly has considered imposing fines. At the same time, some prosecutors have dusted off a little-used article in the penal code that criminalizes parents for severely endangering the health, security, morality or education of their children. If found guilty, parents could face up to two years of jail time and a fine of up to 30,000 euros. Other structural defects—obscene unemployment rates, a vocational education system that offers little upward mobility, undeniably racial patterns of segregation—are all forgotten in this state-sponsored logic of human guilt and individual defect.

But then this punishment of offenders' families also threatens to collective guilt according to the logic of blood and descent. Those who share an offender's blood will henceforth share his sin. The state has begun to mark off entire families as criminal and, once labeled, they are no longer entitled to its bounty as welfare checks are withheld and criminal records restrict already narrow professional possibilities. That all of these families are of African immigrant origin is an implicit and ever present reality. Even in a state that ostensibly refuses to recognize race, the racial undertones of the new measures are undeniable. The children of the *banlieus* may be "the sons and daughters of the Republic," but some fathers are clearly more responsible than others.

Saturday, December 3 will mark the 22nd anniversary of the arrival in Paris the *Marche des Beurs* (beer is French slang for the descendants of North African immigrants). Organized in the aftermath of similar, though smaller scale, rioting in the suburbs of Lyon, the marchers denounced racism and police violence even as they called for complete integration. By the time they reached Paris in December 1983, they were 100,000 strong. But, as the violence of the last three weeks has demonstrated, little has changed for the masses of disaffected suburban youth.

Still, much as rioting inspired that march 22 years ago, some hope that inarticulate rioting might once more open the doors to rational debate and enlightened reform. But, as politicians assume emergency powers, make perfunctory nods to increased social programming and stigmatize the selfsame people who most need their support, that hope seems tragically misplaced.
The French academic Claude Liauzu has publicly written that “all the ghosts which haunt French society are thrown back from the past.” In a country where police officers abuse detainees with insults alluding to the Algerian war and national legislatures debate the legacy of the past, history is hardly academic.

Talking about history is a way of talking about the place of the still ‘foreign’ second- and third-generation ‘immigrant’ children in France today. Insofar as historical understandings shape the political possibilities available to this marginalized population, talking about history is also a way of talking about rights.

Last February 23rd, the French legislature passed the now-infamous law 2005-158. Calling for, among other things, national recognition of the good works of the French Empire and a new educational emphasis on the “positive role of overseas French presence, especially in North Africa,” the law provoked angry, indignant reactions among mainstream French intellectuals and (some) activists. Quickly dubbed une loi contre Histoire by Liauzu and his ilk, what it (and the reaction it provoked) demonstrated the indisputably political implications of history in France today. In the long-overdue reaction it provoked) demonstrated the indisputably political implications of history in France today. In the long-overdue debate set off by the law, colonial history spoke not just to a distant, sun-burnt past but to understandings of the embodied colonial legacy crowding le bannière de tous les dangers.

The state’s response to the violence that first broke out in the Parisian suburbs in late October has once again demonstrated the all-important function of history in today’s France. As the disenfranchised youth burnt cars and fought with police, Jacques Chirac’s cabinet declared a state of emergency and what amounted to martial law. The law evoked dates from 1955 and Jacques Chirac’s cabinet declared a state of emergency and what amounted to martial law. \textit{The law evoked dates from 1955 and was originally applied to control civil unrest in Algeria during the war for independence.} It reapplication in the \textit{métropole} confirmed that, half a century later and a continent away, the legacy of that last colonial war was still being played out among the children and grandchildren of its original combatants. Battles are fought less with guns and explosives, and victories are no longer measured by bodies broken and high ground taken, but the terms of this new conflict are just as terrifying. At stake is more than just the bodily integrity of the participants—\textit{their ideological autonomy itself has been put on the line.}

On November 29, last February’s law once more came up for debate in the National Assembly. Arguing that the law was “in contradiction with the great principles” of the Republic, that it shielded the nation from “assuming the consequences of decolonization” the French socialist party moved to amend its most controversial provisions. Still, for all the left’s passion, the law remains unchanged. \textit{Claiming that they were motivated to overturn “an official history in which the nation is always humiliated,” the French Right denied the motion to amend by a margin of nearly 2-1.}

The hegemonic vision of the Right denies migrants and their descendants any measure of historical agency and thus seeks to maintain their position in France today. It ignores a history of oppression as if to claim that contemporary marginalization is an inevitable consequence of natural inequalities. This politicized history seems to suggest that existing inequalities are less the result of bitterly fought contests and violent domination than the natural closing note of a gentle and benign historical opera. Before this perfectly harmonious chorus celebrating a glorious and fully-French past, the foreign Frenchman is silent and invisible. Unheard and unseen—historically and physically marginalized—his situation remains unexplained. His condition is inevitable, his action goalless, his hope misplaced. Neglected by official history—neglected the state—he can stake no legitimate claim on its bounty.

If the legacy of the Algerian War is to be finally laid to rest, it needs to be fully exposed and, more importantly, publicly recognized. The president of the socialist party claimed that, especially in the aftermath of the riots, it was necessary to construct “a shared memory.” As one proponent of the amendment put it, “France must look for itself in [its citizens of immigrant descent] and they must find themselves in France.” History, too, they seemed to suggest, required integration. In this sense, history is not simply an academic undertaking in France but an essential political operation. Without it, the post-colonial children of the banlieu will continue to toil under a poorly defined and unacknowledged shadow they can neither name nor escape and, we can be certain, history will once again repeat itself.

But there is more at stake than the fate of France’s post-colonial progeny. Their continued oppression suggests not just the failure of the French state, but the failure of the values it represents. Fair or not, France means so much more than just the Fifth Republic, more than just a culture of cafes, croissants and coffee in little cups—and the conflict being played out within its borders jeopardizes more than just France’s own political stability or national identity. “France” embodies the legacy of 1789 and all the hopes (and contradictions) that it continues to express. The battle being fought there threatens to destroy an entire system of belief. And if that liberal theology cannot resolve its own internal contradictions in its own birthplace than we—the believers, the transnational inheritors of a contested tradition—have lost not just a country, but a homeland. As the French national assembly debated the proposed amendment to last February’s law, Christiane Taubira, a socialist from Guyana, stood up and perfectly articulated the dilemma: she called on the Assembly to speak again in “\textit{cette voix de la France qui donne force et espoir aux opprimés de la Terre, et non [dans] celle qui s’enferme dans la nostalgie}” (that voice of France that gives force and hope to the oppressed of the Earth and not in that [voice] which closes itself in nostalgia). It is that voice, above all, which is at stake in France today.
Haiti’s forests on their last legs

by Ali Winston

The chaos caused by rebel uprisings against Haiti’s President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 were the latest incidents in the history of a nation riven with interneic violence. With the government overthrown and the nation’s population cowed by roving gangs of militants and racked by grinding poverty, Haiti is at best an ailing country, at worst on the brink of utter collapse. Lurking in the shadows of the political and social strife is a matter of even greater concern – the deforestation of Haiti. Currently, only 88 hectares of Haiti’s territory are covered by forests, or 3.2% of the nation’s total land area. Deforestation, at the rate of -5.7% per annum (1999–2000 rate), is directly linked to soil erosion and declining productivity of arable land. The central government’s lack of authority over its citizenry, dismal living conditions, and unregulated consumption of Haiti’s natural resources paint a foreboding portrait of ecological disaster.

Haiti won its independence from France in 1804, following a long and protracted guerilla war waged by the colony’s slave population against their imperial rulers. The verdant forests of Hispaniola’s eastern end provided refuge and sustenance for the rebelling slaves, who mounted their initial assault on the town of Le Cap (now Cap-Haitien) from the overlooming mountain forests of the Morne Rouge on August 22, 1791.

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Commentary: Chasing Genocide

by Nick Juravich

There is a school of economics, based right here at University of Chicago, that suggests that discretionary economic policies, either fiscal or monetary, do not actually have the power to lessen the effects of the business cycle or, more specifically, to pre-empt recessions. There are a number of reasons for this, but the primary one is a simple problem of time: recessions take about 7 months to run their course, while the effects of monetary policy aren’t felt for at least a year or two. Fiscal policy is even more problematic—institutional delays and political posturing result in the sort of comical headlines that give economics professors belly laughs, such things as “Congress Passes Recovery Bill” a year after a recession has ended.

A study of world responses to genocidal conflicts in the recent past suggests that a similar problem exists in world politics. At the panel on Darfuri genocide reviewed in this issue, a panelist remarked that while the situation in Darfur has at last begun to get the international attention it deserves, no intelligent response has yet been put together during the two years since the genocide began. In something of a sad nod to the handling of such matters, he stated that Darfur is no longer even the worst conflict situation in terms of war crimes in the world—that title now belongs to Eastern Congo. These comments drew resigned sighs from the crowd, frustrated acknowledgement that even the best efforts of concerned individuals are too little and way too late.

Without extensive historical background information, suffice to say that since the collapse of the United States’ intervention in Somalia (a genocidal famine, given the pseudo-government’s handling of food aid), there has been only one attempt on the part of the world’s richest and most powerful forces to stop genocide—the work of coalition forces in Bosnia and Kosovo. Whether or not these forces had any success in their endeavors is a matter of considerable debate, but far more frightening is the fact that in the 13 years since the Somalian famine first made headlines, genocides or near-genocides (definitions seem almost ludicrous when there are people dying by the hundreds of thousands) in Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, the Congo, and other zones of tremendous conflict have taken place, without so much as a UN intervention.

Even when the truth of these genocides is woefully apparent, first-world entities and powerful international organizations do little besides pass meaningless resolutions (Congress voted over a year ago to declare the violence in Darfur a “genocide,” but for what—nothing has been done). For the non-governmental organizations and aid groups that wish to provide help to victims of these human tragedies, this problem is especially frustrating, for they are unable to fulfill their objectives because the areas in which such disasters occur are so unstable and dangerous.

There is a remarkable bleakness about such an outlook. It seems as though the international community is doomed to remain one step behind in their responsive efforts to stop genocide or horrific conflict while new violence erupts around the world. What then might be the solution? The Chicago economists who criticize discretionary economic policies offer their colleagues automatic policies as a more effective alternative. They suggest that systems already in place, such as unemployment compensation and the increase of the money supply by 3% yearly, are better suited to mitigate the effects of recession. Therefore, automatic responses to genocide must be considered in the realm of international politics.

Certainly such a suggestion is laden with problems—putting an end to genocide requires involving a sovereign state’s territory, not to mention risking lives and massive military budgets. There are many kinks in such plans to be worked out, and the UN’s current woes suggest that the creation of a force that would be designed to automatically respond to genocide would be extremely difficult.

It certainly would. But that does not change the fact that under present geo-political organization, genocide is allowed to continue, and the world powers that have the strength to stop such tragedy are guilty by their silence. There is a political argument to be made that perhaps nations would gain legitimacy and prestige in the world by providing the means to stop genocide, but beyond this self-interested argument a world commitment to the end of such atrocities is necessary. Whether through the UN, regional organizations like the EU and AU (currently deployed to capacity in Darfur, to the detriment of other conflict situations in Africa), or an entirely new body, automatic responses to the sort of atavistic violence that occurs in today’s world must be developed. In that respect, creating a response system seems easy enough: if people in any nation begin to die unnaturally at a certain rate over a certain period of time (not attributable to natural disasters) an investigation could be conducted in the span of no more than a month, accompanied by a protective military force. The findings might entail further military action, depending on the decision of some governing body but not the input of the contributing military forces. No case would be closed, and no instance of potential genocide would go uninvestigated.

Discretionary policy in response to genocide has failed in Darfur, as it did in Rwanda. It would be hoping against hope that this failure might be the last, but nonetheless, let us hope.

A recap of “Genocide in Our Time”

by Qaid Hassan

On the third tier of the Divinity School, on November 15th, 2005, several panelists set out to tackle the complex, misunderstood and often overlooked situation in Darfur. Nearly 125 people were in attendance. The panel was intended to help dispel the sense of disconnection many feel towards the genocide in Darfur, to clear up misunderstandings, and to spur us towards action.

Of primary importance is an understanding of the historical elements that have shaped political, economic, and social life in Darfur. This was Rhode Island College professor Richard Lobban’s starting point. Professor Lobban described the economic aspects, ethno-ecological relationships, and the role of religion in Darfur. He also explained the conflict between the SLA (Sudanese Liberation Army) and the JEM (Justice and Equality Movement), two main actors in the Darfur conflict.

The next speaker – John Hefferman, of Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) explained his organization’s involvement in documenting the genocide of Darfur. Physicians visit the affected areas to “arm” themselves with documentation of abuses, which they collect and disseminate to international organizations that encourage intervention in Darfur. Dr. Hefferman suggested that transnational organizations and political groups consider establishing a compensation committee so that once the genocide has been quelled, and the aggressors are in isolation, the natives of Darfur might have access to resources necessary to rebuild their lives.

Because the US has acknowledged the atrocities in Darfur as genocide, “it has a moral imperative” to see that it ends.

The final panelist to address the audience was Sallie Booker of Africa Action. He reminded us that the word “genocide” initially came into reference when referring to Nazi Germany and was intended to serve as a stigmatizing label, leading me to wonder, what happens when words aren’t sufficient to deter?

Despite this, few nations have officially termed the situation in Darfur “genocide.” Though many believe that the Darfur killings are justified by the rhetoric of religious difference, they still refuse to apply a label that holds such powerful meanings for so many. Mr. Booker concluded by stating that because the US has acknowledged the atrocities in Darfur as genocide, “it has a moral imperative” to see that it ends.

The situation in Darfur is quite multilayered and interdependent. Crimes against humanity in Darfur include rape, poisoned food and water supplies, theft, and torture. However, even simplified and visceral explanations of the situation that has terrorized the desert communities of this portion of North Africa have not been enough to motivate neighboring nations, nor the international community, to coordinate a relief effort.

Often, refugees seeking asylum are not even treated as human beings by their neighbors. Most of the refugees, now stationed in Chad, will not return to their homes unless convinced that their land, security of person, and prospects for a living were ensured.

During the questions and answer session that followed, the panelists explained how journalists, especially in the US, have given too little coverage to not only actions in Darfur, but the African continent as a whole. The genocide in Darfur requires attention in order to ensure its eventual abolition. But in order to do this, we must first rid ourselves of the notions we hold of Africa—gloomy images of a far, far, faraway. We are compelled to act in situations that we are familiar with, ones we can identify with, and ones we relate to. We find nothing wrong in Darfur because there is nothing amiss in our verdant backyards.
News coverage of the aftermath of Katrina showed us images of a city devastated and destroyed. Yet the CNN reports left large gaps of understanding between the images flashing across television screens everywhere, and the experiences of the people on the ground in New Orleans. The media certainly got some things right: FEMA’s fumbling and ineffective response, the unfathomably high desertion rate of Orleans Parish police officers, thousands of people homeless, hundreds of looters rampaging through the streets, chaos taking hold of the city. The media certainly got some things right: FEMA’s fumbling and ineffective response, and their unfathomably high desertion rate of Orleans Parish police officers. Thousands of people homeless, hundreds of looters rampaging through the streets, chaos taking hold of the city. It’s true -- the vast majority of those living in poverty are black. No statistic I’ve found on the poverty level of blacks compared to that of whites in the city do justice to how it really feels when you’re there. Many African-Americans were living in absolute abject poverty before Katrina hit New Orleans.

It’s also no coincidence that the rich, white people owned the biggest houses with the sturdiest walls. If you look at a topographic map of the city, the richest neighborhoods are all on the highest land. Those who were swept away in the storm were people who lived in the poorest neighborhoods. In the middle of the city, a low income neighborhood known as the Ninth Ward is gone with almost no chance of repair. This isn’t just a matter of not having the money to rebuild houses; the houses are literally gone, and only flat ground remains where the Ninth Ward once stood. Most of those who stayed did so because they didn’t have the means to leave. People who lived in the poorer neighborhoods didn’t have cars. The ones who did have cars were forced to stand in hour-long lines at gas stations moments before the storm was expected to hit. An impossible situation for people who barely had the money to live their everyday lives.

There is no doubt that the system New Orleans lived by was inherently divided by race, and this was made much of in the news coverage following Hurricane Katrina. To some in our nation, the thousands of black faces plastered across television sets represented continued racism in the aftermath of the storm. The process of evacuation and relief was characterized by the seven eloquent words of Kanye West, “George Bush doesn’t care about black people.”

But there are other stories that are beginning to be told, that highlight a different side of New Orleans. With so much speculation as to what actually happened during the storm, it will no doubt be necessary to look at events on a case-by-case basis. Yet every story that I have been told has reinforced the notion of colorblind behavior by the rescue teams that entered New Orleans.

Take for example, a story that was recounted to me by one of my neighbors, Mr. John Sanford, a resident of Orleans Parish. He decided to ride out the storm with his wife and daughter, but like so many others, got stuck in the American Venice following the storm. After the levees broke, he and his family were forced to evacuate their house on a boat. They ended up on a highway running through New Orleans entitled Causeway Boulevard. Many new stations captured the horrifying images of these elevated roads in the center of New Orleans, and the Sanfords were stuck in the middle of one of them.

Although they had managed to escape the water, this was just the beginning, for soon Sandy, Mr. Sanford’s daughter, needed medical attention due to the conditions after the flood. But there were many others who had also fallen ill; according to Mr. Sanford, when the ambulances came, “they took the sickest people,” and “they didn’t look at color.”

From Causeway, the Sanfords were placed on an ambulance with two other patients, both black, each on dialysis, and neither wearing anything but their hospital robes. They were being transported to Louis Armstrong International Airport, which had become a temporary hospital, as one of the few remaining buildings with power. Upon arriving, they waited in a line to enter. As they waited, they noticed a sign which read, “One Family Member per Patient.” Mr. Sanford was willing to be the one to stay outside, while his wife accompanied his daughter in the hospital. When one of the dialysis patients realized what was happening, though they had never met before, the patient turned to Mr. Sanford, and said “You’re my brother.” I think Mr. Sanford’s response characterized the mindset of all in New Orleans when he said, “I’m glad to be your brother.” Everyone who stayed for the storm was in the same situation; each just trying to get out, and for a few brief weeks, the color that had divided New Orleans for so long became irrelevant in the face of much more significant challenges.

In essence, the problem was not with the relief effort or the “racism” of public officials. The problem was and still is the code New Orleans has lived by for so many years. Some analysts think that the city is going to come back even stronger because the long time build-up of localized problems will be eliminated. All the people who lived in high crime, low income neighborhoods were forced to leave and are in all likelihood not coming back. They have no where to come back to. This is a sad thing for all of the honest, hardworking people that are stuck at the bottom of a system stacked against them. However, as much as this is a disaster for the city, it is a clean slate and a chance for change.

New Orleans, although in shambles right now, will rise again. This is a chance for the city to take the spotlight that has been placed on it and use it in the right way. The concentration of poverty seems to have been dispersed and with a chance to rebuild high crime neighborhoods, the city also has a chance to improve itself. The corrupt political history of New Orleans will now come under more intense scrutiny than ever before. Why wasn’t there a better evacuation plan? Why didn’t the levees hold? Why did the pumps break? With the opportunity to look back on mistakes from as far back as fifty or even a hundred years before, maybe things can change. It is time for New Orleans to take a hard look in the mirror and learn from her mistakes.
The place of intelligent design

by John Payne

This past Election Day, voters throughout the country took sides in one of America’s most contentious issues: intelligent design. Even in an off-year election, the issue has been ubiquitous. The debate has escalated so rapidly over the past couple of years that it now seems impossible to escape. However, the implication of putting any religious belief, particularly intelligent design, into a scientific setting has been largely ignored.

While I am strong believer in the separation of church and state for the sake of religion as well as the state, I believe there are many additional problems with putting intelligent design into a scientific setting.

Because religious and scientific terms often hold different meanings for different people, it is important to define the terms “science,” “faith,” and “intelligent design.” Briefly stated, faith (religious or not), is a belief in a particular truth, person, or other agent. The idea, particularly in religious faith, is that material evidence or proof is not a prerequisite. Religious beliefs cannot usually be proven. While this does not mean proof and evidence are discouraged, or that faith must always be blind, proof is simply not needed in order for faith to exist.

Science, by contrast, is a field of ideas that can be proven through empirical observations. While some proponents of Intelligent Design question whether theories like evolution have been conclusively proven, those arguments are irrelevant because evolution is an idea that can be evaluated through scientific inquiry, unlike intelligent design.

Intelligent design is a particular religious belief stating that the universe has been created by a higher being. Because the universe was not created randomly, it must have a distinct, thought-out pattern or design. Putting faith and science together makes proof a prerequisite for faith. Yet by definition, faith does not need to be proven – and when a Board of Education places faith in a science class they do exactly that. Such a placement assumes faith should not only be tested, but also that it must be proven in order to exist.

As a Christian, I cannot prove that the Virgin Mary was actually a virgin, but because of my faith, I don’t need to. Nor would anyone have a Catholic priest perform mass in a chemistry lab to prove transubstantiation through chemical analysis. One would not perform an MRI on a follower of Hinduism to try and see the presence of past lives. Faith is just not something that needs to be proven or tested in this way.

Aren’t there better tests for those of us with religious faith in this world, such as the suffering of those with terminal disease, corrupt and unjust governments across the globe, and even the suffering we feel in our own lives? These problems can produce a healthy skepticism that allows us to question the foundations of our faith, while at the same time helping us find meaning in our lives and strengthening the very faith we question. There is nothing morally wrong with doubt – I personally believe that if God didn’t want us to question our beliefs, then He would not have given us free will. However, religious faith is unique because it can be tested and strengthened without ever being conclusively proven.

I am now going to turn to a specific problem arising from intelligent design being placed in the classroom. Because intelligent design is the belief that a higher power shaped the universe using a specific pattern of design, putting this idea into the realm of science creates a new problem: hubris. To combine the idea of a pattern or design with the scientific method of inquiry into that design implies two things: First, it imagines that we can empirically analyze faith. But secondly, and even more troubling, it also assumes that human beings have the ability to understand God’s plan.

I believe that we can never understand the exact workings of God’s mind. If we assume that we can understand a plan that spans the history of time, we claim to be equal in ability to the divine. Even if I knew the exact history of our planet – the path of every atom in our solar system – I believe God’s plans and design of the universe would still be beyond my comprehension.

Though I do believe that the universe is thoroughly planned out and was created with a design, I also believe that many so-called “accidents” could be part of a larger design. Perhaps intelligent design and evolution are not in conflict. But that does not mean I could prove through simple observation what such apparent accidents might mean.

Science investigates and creates knowledge by looking at the past, whether using experiments preformed earlier that day or fossil records from millions of years ago. If we apply this to intelligent design we imply that we can predict the plan and design of God, perhaps the deepest hubris imaginable.

Intelligent design has a place, but it is in the spheres of philosophy, theology, and the dialogue within and between different faiths. Placing faith in a science classroom demands that faith be tested and proven, which runs contrary to both the definition and the foundations of faith. What is worse, in applying scientific methods to a religious belief, we are, in effect, claiming the ability to understand and predict the plans of an unknowable God. As a Christian, I believe intelligent design is a powerful, meaningful, and accurate view of God’s role in the universe. It deserves to hold a place in our modern intellectual discourse. However, I do not believe that the appropriate place is in a science classroom.

“On the Way to Dona Rosita”

Reading Lorca on the red line, pressing poem-flowers between maps of Belmont— we perform the sacred rites of personhood (solemn nod, slight smiles, a gentle no to the man with the grey scarf). Will you buy a seat next to me on this train? Cross your legs, memorize the pathways of my veins (the train stops at my wrist, my knuckle, returns with bustling up my arm). If I trace your pin-stripe collar with these green irises will you buy me a rose— will we fall in love? Your name is a secret, hidden in the folds of your laughter, but I see flames engraved in your palm. So wind me in the vines of this untouchable moment. Plant me in your memory, water me with glances, for I am yours—until Chicago.

“untruth”

you verify nothing— you cannot make me true or address letters to my unending.

so follow me gently, hold my rose petal memory in the palm of your crisis-ridden smile. I will whimper at your thumb or address letters to my unending.

I weave no absolutes through this field of wonder, there are only bending daisies, hidden beneath our dreams.

“A defense of myopia”

Love me without watches, like me without foresight— when the sun explodes, we will wear our glasses, but now! Discard them! Favor madness. Let us rejoice, make splendor out of question marks.

—Amanda Machin
The Daley administration has spent millions of taxpayer dollars on legal fees to defend Burge and his accomplices

But Burge's diligent and conscientious facade concealed a cynical, sadistic, and systematic torturer. Under his direction, the Area Two precinct became known as Area Two "probably the most documented case of systematic torture and abuse in the history of the republic." When the Area Two station terrorized 135 individuals (all poor, male, and African-American) into signing spurious confessions by inflicting physical abuse and psychological trauma. Former Governor George Ryan cited the grim history of Area Two when granting pardons to four death row inmates whose convictions were secured by confessions elicited by Burge. Dozens of former inmates have civil suits pending against Burge and the city, and a special prosecutor has been appointed to investigate the possibility of criminal charges against all officers who were complicit in torture. Proof, it would seem, that the system works.

The reality is murkier. The Daley administration has opted for obstruction and obfuscation rather than truth and reconciliation. It has spent millions of taxpayer dollars on legal fees to defend Burge and his accomplices despite the statement over ten years ago by lawyers for the CPD that "alligator clips were placed on suspects' testicles, suffocating plastic bags were wrapped around their heads, and radiators were used to burn their bodies.

Allegations of torture surfaced as early as 1972, but were dismissed by prosecutors, who depended on Burge for high-profile convictions. Other police captains openly admired him, and sometimes sent him their own recalcitrant suspects. But during the interrogation of Andrew Wilson, Burge became overzealous and left unmistakable physical evidence of torture, ranging from contusions and fractures to burn marks on lower extremities. Wilson's conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court, which cited the "excessive force" used to gain a confession. Andrew Wilson recovered $1 million from the city in damages. After an impassioned public outcry, the CPD professed it was shocked at the rogue commander's unsavory techniques and quickly fired him.

The wheels of justice grind slowly. Since 1993, when Burge was fired from his post as precinct captain, his gruesome legacy of systematic and illegal torture of criminal suspects has been an open secret. In an court opinion last year, a federal appeals judge put the matter succinctly: "It is now common knowledge that in the early to mid-1980s Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and many officers working under him regularly engaged in the physical abuse and torture of prisoners to extract confessions." An internal investigation conducted by the Chicago Police Department conceded that "a pattern of systematic torture and abuse did occur under Burge's command" over a period of "more than ten years."

Moreover, influential nongovernmental organizations ranging from Human Rights Watch to Amnesty International have filed meticulous reports outlining how Burge and his accomplices at the Area Two station terrorized 135 individuals (all poor, male, and African-American) into signing spurious confessions by inflicting physical abuse and psychological trauma. Former Governor George Ryan cited the grim history of Area Two when granting pardons to four death row inmates whose convictions were secured by confessions elicited by Burge. Dozens of former inmates have civil suits pending against Burge and the city, and a special prosecutor has been appointed to investigate the possibility of criminal charges against all officers who were complicit in torture. Proof, it would seem, that the system works.

The reality is murkier. The Daley administration has opted for obstruction and obfuscation rather than truth and reconciliation. It has spent millions of taxpayer dollars on legal fees to defend Burge and his accomplices despite the statement over ten years ago by lawyers for the CPD that "alligator clips were placed on suspects' testicles, suffocating plastic bags were wrapped around their heads, and radiators were used to burn their bodies.

Although Burge was discredited and ultimately terminated, he continues to draw a generous police pension while living in a state of semi-retirement in Florida. The special prosecutor is three years into his investigation and has yet to file any charges or issue any findings.
The ethics and application of physician-assisted suicide

by Adrienne Timmel

The right to die, or the right to physician assisted suicide (PAS for short) is an emotional issue for both liberals and conservatives. As is the case with both homosexuality and abortion the issues are often reduced to privacy rights versus societal harm in the public debate. Unlike either of those issues, however, the societal concern behind PAS may be less ideological and, upon analysis of facts, far more obvious. Despite the right to personal privacy that has developed through a series of supreme court rulings, the negative societal effects of physician assisted suicide provides valid concerns for both liberals and conservatives to be cautious of legalizing PAS on a federal level and perhaps on a state level as well.

In his famous 1973 Roe v. Wade opinion Judge Blackmun states, “The Constitution does not explicitly mention any right of privacy. In a line of decisions, however...the Court has recognized that a right of personal privacy, or a guarantee of certain areas or zones of privacy, does exist under the Constitution.” Herein the notion of a right to privacy was brought to existence. Americans generally embrace this right. Nevertheless, Blackmun admits that the right of personal privacy “is not unqualified and must be considered against important state interests in regulation.” This echoes J.S. Mill’s notable “no harm principle,” in which individual freedom is valued and advocated but not unconditional. Indeed, individual freedom is “properly limited when individual acts are unduly harmful to self, others, or the whole, even if the harm is indirect.” One must ask, what are the possible repercussions of PAS as implemented in American society?

The late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William Rehnquist, addressed the issue of state interest concerning the prohibition of PAS by the state of Washington in the 1997 case Washington v. Glucksberg. Foremost, Rehnquist scrupulously noted that Washington’s ban on PAS protects the impoverished, the elderly, the disabled, the terminally ill and “other vulnerable groups from indifference, prejudice, and psychological and financial pressure to end their lives.” Lastly, Rehnquist makes the so-called slippery slope argument: by adopting an anti-PAS policy, the state avoids a dangerous slide towards sanctioned, controversial methods of death, such as voluntary or involuntary euthanasia where a lethal dose of drugs are administered to the patient directly by a doctor, so that the doctor is, in every respect, the agent of death. In this way, Rehnquist spoke for the majority, upholding Washington’s ban on PAS.

This ‘slippery slope’ argument may be the biggest cause of concern for both liberals and conservatives alike. Alan Shewmon of the University of California highlights his concern in an essay entitled “Active Voluntary Euthanasia: Opening Pandora’s Box.” Shewmon makes the case that an analysis of the Dutch experience with legalizing PAS has resulted in an ever expanding number of cases in which PAS has become legal. “Dutch courts have steadily expanded the circumstances in which a doctor may avoid prosecution if he kills – with case law now permitting euthanasia for patients with such non-terminal afflictions as multiple sclerosis or simply the physical ravages of old age.” Secondly, Shewmon and many other thinkers are concerned that, as time goes on PAS might become less a choice than an obligation. Shewmon is concerned about circumstances in which the lives of comatose patients are being decided by a proxy that may or may not have any emotional attachment to the comatose patient. This concern for the patient’s agency is not strictly limited to those who oppose a right to die. Professor Michael Green of the University of Chicago Philosophy and Human Rights Departments believes that there is undeniably a right to die but cautions against the legalization of that right. According to Green, if PAS became more popular the ailing elderly might feel pressured to end their own lives as the cost of living becomes higher and their families become more reluctant to visit.

These concerns are not trivial, particularly because many of the reasons that individuals ask for PAS are not limited to pain issues but are also motivated by dignity issues. It seems that if the loose term ‘loss of dignity’ was considered a legitimate reason to ask for PAS, then a definition that evolved over time could eventually result in the merely elderly asking for PAS. Thus the horror stories of the slippery slope argument discussed above would come to fruition. This case is well documented in the Netherlands, as mentioned above. Additionally, Dutch advocates of euthanasia have warned against the legalization of PAS in the US in as liberal form as it exists in the Netherlands. They claim that the results of voluntary euthanasia in America could be very unconstructive in America because of the largely private and stingy healthcare plans available to residents of the United States.

But, could Americans avoid this sort of Dutch-style misapplication of PAS by strictly limiting PAS to those in immense pain that can not be controlled by any other means? This does seem like a plausible option that could be expanded so as not to expand into ‘dangerous’ territory. However, if there is a constitutional right to die, then it would be difficult to draw such a distinction.

As Rehnquist mentions in his Glucksberg opinion, the court cannot be in the business of awarding protection of the 14th Amendment to partial rights but instead only to fundamental rights. As Rehnquist says, the reservations of the 14th for fundamental rights is necessary because, “it avoids the balancing of complex competing interests in every case.” That is to say that the 14th Amendment can only be used for legitimate, clear, and fundamental rights. If there exists a fundamental liberty to die, how could the court possibly limit that right to the incurably ill, let alone the terminally ill? It would only be a matter of time before an elderly man or woman claimed that she had a fundamental right to die as expressed in said ruling. As Rehnquist claims above, the court can not say that only terminally ill people have a right to die or only those with extreme cases of illness have a right to die.

There are two assumptions underlying the slippery slope. First of all, there is an underlying assumption that whatever a society gets used to will eventually get legislated. If we become accustomed to permitting some peoples’ deaths, we may allow the death of others. This may seem like a tenuous assumption but it is not implausible. Furthermore, it has been observed in the Netherlands. The second assumption regarding the slippery slope is that there exists no threshold at which the slope will cease to be slippery. This is true for the federal government as explained above. The federal government does not have the ability to cut up the 14th amendment and proclaim fundamental rights for some people and not others. The question then becomes a matter of whether the states are capable of disjecting rights in that manner.

The fact that the Supreme Court does not have the authority to pass partial rights does not mean that the states are similarly bound. Oregon has passed legislation allowing PAS for the terminally ill only. Perhaps Oregon can be used as a testing ground for the safety of state regulated PAS. However the Seventh Annual Report on Oregon’s Death with Dignity Act, conducted by Oregon’s Department of Human Services still provides only incomplete information. Since the enactment of PAS, doctors have prescribed lethal doses of drugs to 326 men and women in order to commit PAS, of which 208 have actually carried out PAS (63.8%). Both the number of people prescribed PAS and the number of people who consume death via PAS has increased since 1998, from twenty-four prescriptions written in 1998 producing sixteen PAS deaths, to sixty prescriptions written in 2004 incurring thirty-seven PAS deaths. Furthermore, the median age of those electing to perform PAS has dropped from seventy (1998-2003) to sixty-four. Disturbingly, the DHS reports that the percentage of patients referred to a psychological specialist has decreased from thirty-one percent in 1998 to a mere five percent in 2004 and that men and women who have either never married or divorced are two times as likely to utilize PAS as widowed or married residents of Oregon. Moreover, the concern most frequently cited by individuals who were prescribed PAS was “a decreasing ability to participate in activities that make life enjoyable” (92%).

The fate of PAS has obviously not yet been decided. However, it is clear that despite the natural opposition of Americans towards legislation that limits their rights, the concerns of legalizing PAS are worthy of consideration. Thus while it is certainly possible that states may ultimately be able to regulate PAS safely, both sides of the debate will need to observe the experiment in Oregon with constant vigilance.
Born on May 22, 1946 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, George Best is a legend in English and International soccer. Blessed with an uncanny talent that stemmed from a youth kicking tennis balls around the streets of his council estate, Best thrilled crowds and tortured defenders with his sublime skill on the ball. An unorthodox winger who loved to make mazy dribbles through the opposing team, Best played for Manchester United from 1963 and 1974. Under the eye of manager Matt Busby and alongside players such as Bobby Charlton, Denis Law, and Nobby Stiles, he won the league twice in 1965 and 1967. Best’s crowning achievement, however, was Man U’s European Cup victory over Benfica in 1968, the same year he was named European Player of the Year and Football Writers’ Association Player of the Year. However, until his retirement in 1984 his career was curtailed by womanizing and alcoholism. Liver and stomach ailments resulting from his substance abuse plagued him through the 1990’s and 2000’s, and on November 25, 2005, he finally died from a lung infection and multiple organ failure. Best was soccer’s first international superstar, and his style of play, carried on by Thierry Henry and Cristiano Ronaldo, continues to influence the shape of the modern game.

LOUIS SÉVÈKE

On November 15th, 2005, 41-year old Louis Sévèke, a prominent Dutch political activist, journalist and writer, was murdered in the center of his home town of Nijmegen, Holland. Witnesses reported that after the killer shot Sévèke twice, he walked up to the body, calmly checked to see if his victim was dead, and walked away. Because of his investigation of illegal police, secret service and covert government activities in the Netherlands, Sévèke’s murder has caused an uproar in the Dutch media and, in light of his controversial work, has prompted suggestions that his killing was a political assassination. Some of his most important work consisted of investigating the collusion between ‘false flag’ covert groups (operating under a fake nationality or organization) from Holland, the United States, and Israel in the international ‘War on Terror.’

IN MEMORY OF MATT GARBER

Keep ahold of those strong bones that keep you up, ossified.
Keep alight of those dark passageways, leading inward and winding together like entwined fingers in the night.
Keep awake to the pulling calls of men beyond men chiseling their place in the fiery furnaces of calling.
Keep on eating, lick the platter clean.