



BARNARD BULLETIN

Volume XCIX

Number 14 Monday October 19, 1992

MacKinnon Attacks Pornography





ATTENTION! ATTENTION! If you see your name on this list, you must go to the Registrar's Office in 107 Mulbank

immediately: Botvink, D., Bruton, F., Cahn, M., Carrillo, Y., Carville, C., Chandler, A., Choudhury, S., Chung, M., Davis, D., Davis, L., de Leon, X., Dobbein, M., Douvogiannis, M., Graves, K., Greeves, A., Hughes, G., Jayson, P., Joor, I., Kim, Sylvia, Koepsell, J., Laghezza, A., Lee, Suzanne, Lynch, M., McConaha, E., McGoogan, M., Michaels, K., Miller, Z., Mnuchin, V., Moon, H.S., Nunez, J., Ogata, C., Orer, D., Polzak, V., Rafferty, H., Rosner, S., Rust, S., Schlesinger, T., Schorr, J., Shore, R., Stein, A., Stone, A., Sull, C., Tamminga, C., Vallow, K., Wang, P., Warach, J., Wong, Betty, Yi, S.

JUNIORS WHO HAVE NOT DECLARED MAJORS

DO IT! Go at once to the Registrar's Office for a choice of major form. Take the form to your major department for the appropriate signature and file one copy with the department and the other with the Registrar. If you have questions or need some further assistance, see Junior Class Dean Schneider. **Following is a list of juniors who, as of this writing, have not declared their choice of major and should pick up a Major Elective Form at the Registrar's Office immediately:** Baron, S., Beale, N., Bona, M., Borek, D., Botstein, S., Butterfield, A., Card, T., Cavanaugh, P., Chapman, A., Cheng, L., Chun, E., Chuong, F., Clement, L., Colas, V., Colletti, C., Cowin, J., Davis, L., Fallon, M., Feinstein, S., Fisher, A., Fleet, K., Froelich, S., Gorham, A., Griggs, N., Gross, S., Grossman, E., Gullov, I., Herman, A., Hernandez, D., Heyer, A., Hidalgo, K., Hollingsworth, I., Holstein, S.L., Honda, C., Kim, E., Kinderman, L., Lamm, A., Lauren, J., Lee, H.I., Lipsitz, R., Llinas, W., Markarian, Y., Murphy, C., Parker, J., Pflum, M., Porter, J., Rodov, F., Rosenbaum, J., Rubin, J., Sanchez, N., Schapira, J., Serajuddin, H., Shulman, L., Taveras, D., Van Dongen, R., Ward, R., Woo, A., Wrinkle, N., Young, D., Zabb, A., Zicarelli, A.

PROGRAM PLANNING FOR SPRING 1993 is only three weeks away! Even though you are probably still taking midterms, you

should consult the Catalogue (spring course numbers end in 'y') and the Course Resource File in the Dean of Studies Office. The file supplements Catalogue information with details supplied by the instructors themselves. If you notice that a spring course in which you are interested is not on file, please notify Dean Bornemann or a staff member so that the information you are seeking may be secured before the end of this semester. In addition, be sure to check your status on fulfillment of degree requirements (pp. 31-36, Catalogue) and consider the electives you want to take. Remember that the second semester of elementary-level foreign language (or a more advanced course if you qualify) must be satisfactorily completed if you are to receive credit for the first-semester course. Students are expected to focus and take early action on their selection of courses for the semester ahead during the weeks preceding Program Planning Week. Schedule an appointment with your adviser to discuss your program **before** Program Planning Week, which begins November 9.

PROGRAM PLANNING MEETINGS

First-Year Students must attend one of the required Program Planning meetings scheduled for Wed, Nov 11, 12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m. and Thurs, Nov 12, 5:15 p.m. - 6 p.m. Meetings will be held in 304 Barnard Hill and Dean Denburg will address important procedures involved in planning your spring program. **Sophomores:** Program Planning meetings will take place Mon, Nov 9, 5 p.m. and Thurs, Nov 12, 12 noon in 304 Barnard. A representative from Career Services will be there to speak on the choice of major and career opportunities. **First-Year Students and Sophomores should also note** that the deadline for filing tentative spring '93 programs with the Registrar is Thurs, Dec 3. Juniors are reminded to consult their major advisers and departmental bulletin boards for announcements of majors meetings. Sign up for courses with limited enrollment as soon as possible to minimize disappointment.

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED A NOTIF in your mailbox requesting that you see your adviser or class dean, it is important that you take appropriate action immediately. Problems that require your attention will not silently go away; it is your responsibility to take care of them as quickly as possible.

ROOM SWAP INFORMATION IS NOW

AVAILABLE at the Housing Office for sophomores, juniors and seniors. Hours are Mon - Fri, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. in 203 Sulzberger Hall. See your Resident Adviser for details. The deadline is Fri, Oct 30, 1 p.m.

SENIOR CLIPBOARD

Diploma Name Cards for Feb '93 graduates should be turned in at the Registrar's Office, 107 Mulbank, **now**. Essayists interested in the **Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics** should consult Dean Schneider. If you are applying to a graduate program in the humanities (which here includes History) and have a GPA of 3.6 or above, you might qualify for a **Mellon Fellowship**. The application deadline is Mon, Nov 4; if interested, see Dean Schneider.

INTERESTED IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS?

On Thurs, Oct 22, from 3 - 5 p.m. representatives from graduate schools of international affairs will be at a recruitment fair on the 15th floor of the School of International Affairs at Columbia.

HELP FOR ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

The Math Help Room is open Mon - Fri, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., in 404 Altschul. **The Physics Help Room** will be open every Tuesday from 7 p.m. - 10 p.m., in 502 Altschul. For **Biology, and Chemistry**, go to your professor's office hours and schedule help sessions. **The Writing Room** is open Sun - Thurs. Sign-up on the appointment schedule posted on the door of 121 Reid Hall, or call x48911.

CAREER SERVICES

CAREER PANELS: **Not-for-Profit/Advocacy**, Tues, Oct 20, **Communications**, Thurs, Oct 22, **Fashion**, Wed, Oct 28, **Public Health**, Thurs, Oct 29. For more information, call OCS at x42033.

PREMFDS are reminded that the final two interview workshops for students who are applying for admission to medical school for September 1993 will be held on October 30 and November 13 from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Please sign up in advance by contacting Jayma Abdoo in the Dean of Studies Office, x42024.

BARNARD BULLETIN

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The Barnard Bulletin is published on Mondays throughout the academic year. Letters to the editor are due in our office by 5pm the Wednesday preceding publication. Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are those of the authors, and not necessarily of Barnard College.

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cover: Professor Catharine MacKinnon
photos by Keri Kotler

Barnard Security Erases Survivors

The current statistic for rape nationwide is "one out of three women is raped each year." Another statistic quotes "One out of four women is raped on college campuses each year" which is not unreasonable when you consider the frightening statistic which found that "51% of college men said they would rape if they could get away with it." The statistics that Barnard College gathered, however, in compliance with the Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, as amended in September 1992, tell quite a different tale. Because when they considered all the different kinds of rape that occur on campus, including acquaintance-rape, date-rape, stranger rape, etc. and when they added them all up together, they arrived at an incredible figure: zero. That was the statistic for number of "incidences" of rape that occurred anywhere on Barnard campus and in all campus dorms from August 1, 1991 through July 31, 1992. According to those number(s), there may be no need for the Rape Crisis Center, after all. Because according to the statistics, no one is being raped. It is almost superfluous to explain why this is problematic, especially to students that have been raped and/or assaulted (and the number of assaults also came in at a record-breaking zero), and for those that have attended Take Back the Night rallies on this campus, which this year ran until around 8 AM. But given the grave importance of this situation, some points definitely need to be addressed. Firstly, although it does not say so on the pamphlet entitled "Safety & Security on the Barnard Campus," the statistics were taken solely from crimes reported directly to Barnard Security, whose records show that zero rapes have been reported to them. The number printed does not include any and all rapes reported to the Dean of Student Life, the Rape Crisis Center, St. Luke's RAPI Crisis Intervention Program, CAVA and Resident Directors. Not stating exactly where the statistics originated only serves to imply that no rapes have taken place at all. And while this may suggest a spotless record for Barnard College, it can be devastating to the students who have already undergone an unforgivably traumatic experience.

Imagine a rape survivor opening her mailbox and seeing that number. Among the many thoughts that may run through her confused mind, she will probably consider one of the following: (1) "Maybe I wasn't really raped." (2) "I have been raped, but I guess I'm the only one." (3) "Other women have been raped but are not coming forward. Maybe I shouldn't either." (4) "Others have come forward, but no one believes them. They won't believe me either." (To facilitate this idea, there is a disclaimer printed below the statistics that reads: "The above figures do not include alleged incidents

which, upon investigation, were determined by appropriate law enforcement and/or College and University authorities not to constitute criminal offenses.") Or, she may decide simply that the statistic is wrong and toss it away without another thought.

But this last is highly unlikely for an abused woman who already feels intense emotional guilt and shame. Why isn't this college, which prides itself on an atmosphere of women's empowerment and freedom, going out of its way to show this woman and the many others like her that their abuse is taken seriously? A simple note enclosed with the pamphlet—explaining that while the administration may have had to comply with certain regulations, it understands that the statistics are hardly all-inclusive—may have saved many women on campus a great deal of anguish and self-doubt.

Perhaps one could argue that if students would just muster up the courage to march right into security and say "Hello, I've been raped!" then the problem would be eliminated. Right? Wrong. *First*, we need to make this a safe haven in which to come forward, provide the necessary support and encouragement and then we can only hope that students will feel up to reporting the details of their humiliating abuse to total strangers, aka Barnard Security. This raises an equally significant question: Is security sufficiently concerned over the fact that not one single student feels comfortable enough to come to them in a crisis? Are they planning ways to make themselves more accessible and trustworthy? Do they care at all?

But, perhaps the real question to ask is: whose Right to Know is it, anyway? Is it the parents' right to know? Is it an alumna's right to know? Maybe. But more importantly isn't it the student's right to know what is really happening on her campus, her home for four years? Isn't it a first-year student's right to know that rapes can and do happen here and that she should take precautions seriously? And what about the student who has been raped or sexually assaulted on campus— is it not her right to know that she is not alone?

Barnard College cannot claim that "the safety and well-being of students is of paramount importance" and then print a rape statistic like zero. It's a slap in the face—and the very last thing we need. What we do need is confidence that the administration we depend on respects and believes us and is doing what it can to make our burdens easier to bear. After all we've given to the Barnard community, don't we deserve at least that?

Class Officer Criticizes Lack of SGA Coverage in the Bulletin

Dear Editor,

I am writing in regards to the last four issues of the Bulletin. As stated in your constitution, Article II, Section I, "The Barnard Bulletin is a weekly newsmagazine for the Barnard College community, devoted to the coverage of relevant on and off campus issues." Above all other University publications, the Bulletin should effectively represent the Barnard student body, reporting on issues that are pertinent to the College and the community.

In the past, the Bulletin was committed to keeping the Barnard Student Body abreast of all issues related to Barnard, hence the Bulletin dedicated a column in each issue to the Student Government Association. Student Government is comprised of eighteen elected students that represent the issues on this campus. In addition, the Student Government Association functions as a liaison between all of the Barnard recognized clubs and organizations, governs ten Tripartite committees including Health Services and Security and provides activities in which the community can take part such as , regular blood drives, Winter and Springfest , Leadership Retreat and many other activities. The Bulletin was a vital link between the Student Government Association and the the student body. Unfortunately, this year the Bulletin has failed to represent and support Student Government and the Barnard community. The Bulletin has neglected to represent the Barnard Community in the following areas:

1. Bulletin has not sent a representative to the open weekly student government meetings. At these meetings, the representative council discusses important issues regarding campus life, in which the student body should be informed. Note The Spectator has been present at each of the Rep Council meetings this semester. It is embarrassing when there is no Barnard Bulletin representation. If our own Student paper does not support our efforts and is not dedicated to informing our student body, then who will?

2. The Bulletin has not only neglected to report on Student Government, but they have been unresponsive. Several calls and request have been made to the Bulletin about the above issue and they have yet to respond.

3. Just last week SGA completed first year class officer elections, in which the Bulletin traditionally prints a "Special Edition" on the election. This year there was an overwhelming turnout from the first year class, eight students ran for the office of President, and all other positions had at least one running mate. Unfortunately, there was no report on the occurring first year elections in the Bulletin.

(However, the Spectator featured eight students vying for Class of '96 Spot, on Tuesday, October 6, 1992)

Furthermore, the Bulletin is a club that the SGA supports and funds. This year we were committed to helping improve our student newspaper and our total allocation of \$15,500.00 as of September 30, 1992 should speak for itself. I strongly feel that the Bulletin should rethink their decision not to cover SGA meetings and other related events. If the Bulletin and Student Government work together we could build a more powerful and united community.

Wanda T Cole, BC '94

SGA, Vice President of Student Activities

The Bulletin Responds:

Wanda Cole's letter to the editor raises questions as to the relationship between SGA and the college newspaper, and a more important question as to the role of the Bulletin in relation to the Barnard community.

First of all it is misleading to suggest that in the past the Bulletin was committed to covering SGA meetings in each weekly issue of the Bulletin. The SGA column has sporadically appeared in the Bulletin, as some Editorial Boards have chosen to include it and some have not.

The last four issues, contrary to the opinion of Cole, have fully complied with Article II of our Constitution. Every article and editorial has been written for the Barnard College community, by members of that same community. Furthermore, every one of these articles has been relevant to that community. We have covered cultural events on and off campus, guest speakers, events of national political significance, local environmental issues, new college staff members, women's health issues, the twentieth anniversary of the Center for Research on Women, the history of student activism at Barnard, and coverage of recent works by faculty members. We have certainly displayed our commitment to reporting on issues which are pertinent to the College and community, and have received no other complaints that we have failed in this task.

We contest however, Cole's claim that we must necessarily strive to represent the student body. We can only represent ourselves, we strive to *speak to* the student body - to provide information which may or may not be readily available elsewhere, to reflect the wide range of issues which impact the lives of the women at Barnard, and to provoke thought and discussion. The current editorial staff also seeks to address communities that have hitherto been largely ignored by the Barnard Bulletin. We also welcome responses and suggestions from anyone or any group.

The charge that the Bulletin has been unresponsive in the face of several calls and requests from SGA is simply untrue. The editor in chief received one phone call regarding the absence of an SGA column in the Bulletin on Tuesday,

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Republican Expresses Anger Over *Bulletin* Editorial

To the Editor

In response to the editorial entitled 'College Republicans Display Homophobia and Racism' which appeared in the 5 October issue of the *Barnard Bulletin*

In reading the above mentioned article I was struck by the usual assortment of myopic, absurdly self-indulgent assumptions. However, there are only a few key points which need to be made in reference to said editorial in order to demonstrate the fallacy of the whole.

First, the author (who in some inexplicable burst of wisdom chose to remain nameless) has concluded that the juxtaposition of 'students and faculty of color is racist. To publish a flyer which, though stylistically similar to another organization's publicity, removes any consideration of race is not racism. It is *satire*. We purported to present a flyer which would say, in effect, 'We do not give a damn if you are black, white, yellow, red, or orange. We welcome your presence and opinions.' As far as I can tell the only thing intended by the BOBW flyer was 'African-American people come drink some punch. Everyone else feel free to feel excluded.' Everyone else read exactly what we wrote in our flyer? Why didn't you?

'Targeting BOBW and Outreach is a display of ease of duplication, not this delightfully vapid concept of 'white heterosexual privilege' you toss around like a beanless hackey-sack. We chose to lampoon these posters because there was a way we could present our own views by doing so. We presented our views, much to the amusement of the remainder of the University community. Don't bother asking

any of your friends if they thought the flyers were funny. Nobody you would be seen in Birkenstocks with would dare so.

Finally, I will gladly answer one of your many rhetorical questions. You ask, 'Who is able to mock these groups?' Well, we've already shot down your whole 'mocking argument, so let's go on to ask what gives the ISO, Outreach, or BOBW any greater moral credibility or immunity from scrutiny than, for instance, the Columbia Chess Club? Is this concept of moral superiority you presume to foist on the rest of us rooted in supportable fact or is it another fine example of 'we are right. We won't say why but we are anyway so shut up, you?'

Place an African-American man, a homosexual man, a white man, a Native American, an Asian-American, a lesbian, and a blind, one-legged Tasmanian hermaphrodite with scabies in a room. When they all complain it's hot do you think it is acceptable to cut the voice box out of only the white man? No, it isn't, not when everyone is treated equally and with equal regard for their opinions and desires. We never presumed to treat anyone in any other fashion. The fact that you call to silence only *us* shows that, in your mind, only those who qualify as minorities are 'equal.' Does the phrase 'All animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others' ring a bell? It should. It is your basic belief, and the basis of your entire argument.

Christian J. Rollow BC 94
College Republicans

The Bulletin Responds:

We, at the *Barnard Bulletin*, stand by our editorial. We would first like to point out that Rollow obviously does not understand how staff editorials work. There was no 'inexplicable burst of wisdom' to not sign the editorial, they are never signed for they reflect the general, consensual opinion of the editorial board.

Rollow's disturbing letter demonstrates an ignorance of historical context and the meaning of white heterosexual privilege that is to be expected from someone who finds the *College Republicans'* flyers humorous. She accuses us of trying to 'cut the voice box out of the white man.' This statement is absurd. The voice of the white, heterosexual man has been the dominant voice, the voice with power, and the voice that has silenced and oppressed throughout history. The analogy Rollow uses of an "African-American man, a [homosexual] man, a white man, a Native American, an Asian-American, a lesbian, and a blind one-legged Tasmanian hermaphrodite with scabies" having the same complaints reveals her refusal to acknowledge the historical reality of inequalities of power. This analogy operates on and perpetuates the myth that all of these people are in the same place with the same complaints.

Furthermore, Rollow's interpretation of the BOBW flyer as 'African American people come drink some punch. Everyone else feel excluded' is a gross distortion. The flyer was an invitation to the University community to welcome all new faculty and students of color. If Rollow feels excluded, perhaps it is because she feels threatened. Rollow's claim that the *College Republicans'* flyer 'removes any consideration of race' is false. The decision to use the word 'irrespective' as opposed to 'people of all colors welcome' is the root of the problem. It is extremely disrespectful of BOBW's identity and purpose. The *College Republican's* version of BOBW's flyers is not merely harmless satire, it is racist satire that, again, does not consider historical context.

Finally, Rollow accuses us of trying to silence the white man and the *College Republicans*. How does speaking out against racist and homophobic flyers through an editorial silence the *College Republicans*? In fact, the day after the *Bulletin* was published, the *College Republicans* posted flyers that targeted this newspaper and contained a misogynist wordplay on "cunning stunt."

We, at the *Barnard Bulletin*, reaffirm our opposition to the racist, sexist, and homophobic flyers of the *Columbia College Republicans*. We continue to urge the community to fight against the instigators of hate.

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Response to SGA Letter

October 13th, and attended a meeting with SGA representatives the very next day.

Cole's mention of the amount of money allocated to the Barnard Bulletin in connection to her suggestion that the Bulletin "rethink their decision not to cover SGA meetings ..." is threatening and inappropriate. We accept neither the suggestion that the Bulletin somehow "owes" SGA for its budget nor the threat implied by Cole's inclusion of the budget allocation in her letter.

Yes, the Bulletin can serve as "a vital link between the Student Government Association and the student body," but the Barnard student-run newspaper is much more than that, and it is *not* an SGA newsletter.

The Barnard Bulletin is willing to work to maintain a good relationship with SGA, but the goal requires an understanding that the Bulletin's financial dependence does not mandate responsibility to SGA in terms of what is reported. Cole's letter does not demonstrate such an understanding.

Kinn - Ming Chan

Tamara Cohen

Melanie Fallon

Janie Iadipaolo

Rebecca Layton

Jocelyn Leka

Cheryl Prince

Urmilla Ranadive

Sarah Sheffield

Rebecca Shore

Stephanie Staal

Carol Sung

Judy Yu

Members of the Bulletin Editorial Staff

Editorial Policy

In order to be considered for publication all letters to the editor from an individual must be signed by that individual and/or from a Barnard SGA and/or Columbia Student Council recognized campus organization. Signed editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the Bulletin.


Interested writers and artists, contact Janie at x48119.

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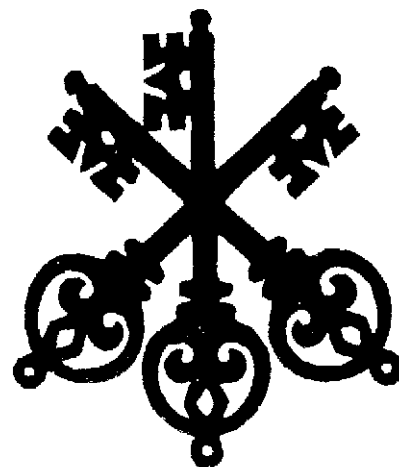
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Barnard Bull

This week the Barnard Bull prowled campus inquiring "Why did you decide to go to an all women's college?"



Kate Gallagher (BC '93)

"Well, I went to an all girls' high school. There wasn't any competition with men in the classroom like I saw with my friends at public school I guess I thought that would be good at the college level too -sort of like a continuation."



Rebecca Dew (BC '96)

"Frankly because I didn't get into Columbia College. I'm not regretting it though. If I had known more about Barnard, I would have chosen to come here first. Overall, I think both schools, especially Barnard need more exposure."

Barbara Andoh (BC '96)

"I don't really know. I guess to have better relationships with girls. I've always had guy friends. Also, a women's college in New York City is really something wonderful."



Lilian Lee (BC '96)

"Because I wanted to be respected for my intelligence, and I felt that at Barnard, because of the environment and the structure of the classes, that's what I would get. I went to an all women's high school. I never thought I'd end up here."



Alia Einstein (BC '92)

"It wasn't because it's an all women's college. It's a small school with close interaction with teachers. I feel that is really important for a better education"



Colleen Quill (BC '93)

"Well, because I didn't apply anywhere else. I'm a transfer and I didn't really think of anything else."

photos by Keri Kotler

MacKinnon Speaks Out Against Pornography

During a time of increasingly charged polemics over the legal parameters of free speech, University of Michigan law Professor Catherine MacKinnon spoke on Thursday October 15 in the Jerome L. Greene Lounge as part of the 1992 Gross Lectures in Criticism. Addressing a packed audience composed of students and faculty, MacKinnon maintained that freedom of speech under the first amendment and the conception of equality are on a collision course, especially in the controversial area of pornography.

The crux of MacKinnon's discussion centered upon a statute establishing that pornography be subject to law on the basis of sex discrimination. Pornography is defined as sexually explicit pictures that subordinate women, according to MacKinnon. The statute formulated in collaboration with writer and radical feminist Andrea Dworkin drew upon numerous studies

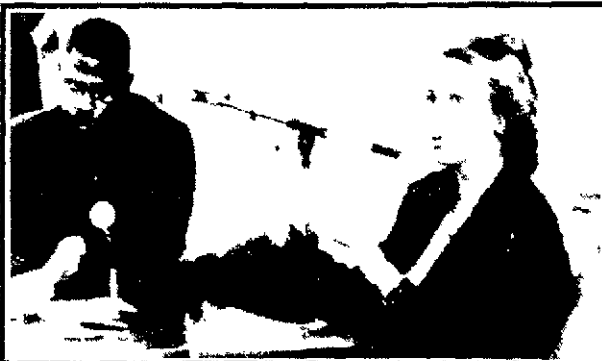
documenting the damaging effects of pornography on women. However, it was struck down recently since its value as speech was more important than any harm it did, said MacKinnon in quoting the judge's decision. "What the court seemed to have missed is that [pornography] is not the expression of ideas but the subordination of women through trafficking, forcing things upon them, coercion and causing assaults," she said. "The moment at which we decided that pornography is sexual harassment, we get told that it is people expressing themselves," said MacKinnon, adding that rape and cross burning are also expressions.

MacKinnon pointed out the two separate spheres which have emerged in the United States for equality and free speech. There seems to be developing a notion that there is a specially protected first amendment to engage in bigoted behavior, asserted MacKinnon, citing the example that conspiracies to commit a murder are crimes, but bigoted conspiracies to commit murder [if prosecuted] that is thought control. Aiming to fuse together these areas of the law, MacKinnon demanded the need for "a square fight on some sort of constitutional terrain."

Members of the audience questioned MacKinnon on the application of her statute to gay and lesbian publications that depicted sexually explicit and violent images. "It is difficult for gays, lesbians, and women as a group to assert their sexual pleasure. Your position requires the erasure of their

claims to sexuality and sexual pleasure," proposed the moderator of the discussion, Columbia University Law Professor Kendall Thomas. MacKinnon responded by asking, "does it matter to you that someone may be assaulted because of that beautifully consensual sex scene? It is outrageous to say that only heterosexuals are going to have their civil rights protected when they are violated by pornography."

Another topic of discussion examined the repercussions of



Catharine MacKinnon photo by Keri Kotler

women's fashion magazines and the advertisements in *The New York Times* in promulgating sexual harassment. Although MacKinnon agreed that these portrayals of women are negative, she contrasted such venues of communication with those materials she defined as pornography. "We don't have women coming to us saying 'I was raped because he read my *Cosmo*' and we do have that from *Playboy*." Porn has a terminally self-escalating dynamic,

Pornography, according to MacKinnon, molds the material presented on television and in magazines. In turn, the prevalence of pornography and other facsimiles of violent sexual acts become cannibalistic, desensitizing its audience and creating higher thresholds of excitement that require gratification. "[Pornography] escalates because [the media] needs to get the response out at the consumers that they want," explained MacKinnon. "men want to see women looking like what they see in [the media and pornography], so they can be turned on."

When women are constantly confronted by offensive material, there is a sense of danger that is often not acknowledged. "The experience of offense has been trivialized through the law. There is a sneer around the word offensiveness, sort of like 'you should have more backbone or take it like a man,'" said MacKinnon. Noting that according to statistics, 25 percent of women have survived completed rapes while the numbers rocket to over 40 percent when taking into account attempted rapes, MacKinnon confirmed that there is a sizable population of women who are being re-traumatized when they come into contact with pornography. "[It is material] in which you are a cunt, you are slave, you are sludge. This is constitutionally protected. People see this and they feel it." *Stephanie Staal is a Bulletin News Editor and a Barnard College senior.*

Rachlin Unveils Cross-Cultural Themes

Reading a short story entitled "The Calling" from her book *Veils: Short Stories* and a personal essay called "Would I Have Become a Writer Without My Sister?" Barnard creative writing professor, Nahid Rachlin, led a discussion on Iranian and women's cross-cultural themes at a lecture sponsored by the Committee on Race, Religion and Ethnicity (CORRE) on Wednesday, October, 14.

Rachlin entitled the collection *Veils* "partly to suggest the area of the world, but also to symbolize a psychological veil the characters have because they stand apart from others." Containing ten short stories set in Iran or in the United States, *Veils* describes "[Iranian] characters that feel as if they don't belong and their yearning for something else," said Rachlin.

In "The Calling," Rachlin narrated the account of two Iranian sisters in the United States trying to maintain their Iranian traditions and beliefs and the discourse they have with their Iranian children who have adapted to American culture.

Rachlin drew upon her childhood and her relationship with her sister in her essay "Would I have Become a Writer Without my Sister?" to explain her use of writing as a "desire to bring into the present a reality no longer there."

In the discussion following the reading, Rachlin explained a "suppression of her Iranian

childhood and upbringing to adjust to American life." She then related how writing allowed her to recall her past and to fondly remember her earlier life in Iran. However, the suppression of women's rights in Iran far outweighed any joy she had felt in her homeland. "The culture severely discriminates against women," Rachlin said, and it was this which convinced her to leave Iran to study in America in the 1960s. Illustrating the lack of women's rights in her native country, she told of her sister's experience. After divorcing her husband for physically and emotionally abusing her, she was not given custody of her son.



Rachlin photo by Deanna Welch

In comparing women in the United States and women in Iran, Rachlin said, "Women tend to be closer in Iran because they don't go out with the opposite sex like in America. Friendships develop differently here." Barnard Assistant Director of Financial Aid, Afsie Aslani, who immigrated to the United States from Iran in 1980, commented on today's Iran. "There is total censorship and all women's rights are gone."

Aslani found the readings to be "sentimental." "I could relate to the family unity, the culture and the memories. You tend to romanticize the past and forget the painful memories," said Aslani.

Amy Leavey is a Barnard College first-year student.

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The Big Lie:

Approximately 10 years ago a student was raped and killed on Lehigh University's campus. Her parents began campaigning for more rigorous national security laws—laws that required campuses to make their crime statistics available upon demand to the general public. The result was the Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (amended in September 1992), requiring colleges to publish annual security reports concerning policies and procedures and crime statistics—both violent and non-violent. In compliance with this law, Barnard College distributed a pamphlet to each student on campus entitled "Safety and Security on the Barnard Campus." The report discusses the Barnard Security Department, lists emergency telephone numbers, advice for crime prevention and the drug and alcohol policy. On the back of the pamphlet, the statistics of criminal offenses that have taken place on Barnard campus for the period of August 1, 1991 through July 31, 1992 are listed. Startlingly, according to these statistics, the number of rapes that occurred in the past year comes out to zero. Since this figure sounded a bit contradictory to what I myself witnessed this past spring at the Take Back the Night rally (not to mention cases I knew of personally), I decided to investigate a bit. This is what I found. Neither the NYPD 26th Precinct, listed in the Barnard handbook as a resource for women who have been raped or sexually assaulted, nor the NYPD Sex Crimes Unit received any reports of rape. Likewise, no rapes were reported to Barnard security in the past year.

However, members of the Rape Crisis Center said they have encountered more than a few rape cases. Dean of Student Life, Georgie Gatch recalls two cases of rape reported to her. A woman working with St. Luke's Rape Crisis Intervention program, while she did not have statistics on hand, literally laughed out loud when I mentioned the zero

figure. "What? Zero? Who gave you that information? That's incorrect, because we've definitely seen a few." Clearly, there was some discrepancy and further investigation was necessary. But, to be perfectly honest, after days of searching and questioning, I am still more than a little confused.

Initially, I learned from various sources that the figure only included the number of rapes reported directly to security. Hence, the statistic did not include rapes reported (unofficially) to Dean Gatch, Resident Directors, or the Rape Crisis Center. If security was not informed, then they did not get involved and the rape could not be included in the statistic. And according to Acting Director of Security, Betty Weems, no students reported rape to Barnard security in the past year. If it's brought to our attention, then we're aware of it," said Weems. "But if it's not brought to our attention and it's something special like a date or acquaintance rape, that's something we might not know about, for reasons of confidentiality. In other words, a student may report a rape to Dean Gatch but may request that the information be kept confidential and withheld from security. Gatch said that strictly enforced confidentiality is of paramount importance in cases of rape.

People need to be able to go and talk to somebody and not feel like what they're saying is going to be reported," she said. That's why something like Take Back the Night is so powerful and so important. Because it allows for that public information in a way that an institution or an office or a dean can't. However, many students said that while they would not be willing to speak on behalf of all survivors, they themselves did not consider a number count to be a breach of confidentiality.

On the other hand, a student may report a rape to Gatch and decide to prosecute. But one need not report to security in order to bring formal charges. Since there are cases of rape where security is never involved, the

question is, why are the statistics being drawn solely from the security department? It was generally felt that a blanket statistic such as that was misleading and implied simply that no rapes had taken place on the campus period. If it's going to be statistics just taken from security, it should say that specifically," said Sarah Sheffield (BC '93), a counselor at the Rape Crisis Center. Stephanie Marks (BC '93) agreed. "They should have attached a qualifier, a statement that said, these are only the incidences reported to security," she said. When I first saw it, it looked like something very serious. But then I saw the numbers and I thought, how can I take something like this seriously? So I threw it away. The consensus was that having inaccurate statistics put a question mark on the rest of the information. We should look further into these statistics," said Leilyne Lau (BC '93), President of SGA. The basis of their evaluation should be made public.

Students also voiced serious skepticism when suggesting possible other motivations for publishing the statistic as is. Zero looks better, said Alisa Gruyer (BC '93), who has been a coordinator of Take Back the Night.

What happens if that pamphlet gets into the hands of parents and it says 100 rapes on it? What happens when it gets into the hands of rich alum? Emily Klein (BC '94) agreed. It doesn't surprise me that they want to make the school look better," she said. But we all know what's going on. I don't know who they're fooling.

Kathryn Rodgers, Vice President of General Counsel, is aware that the statistic is not all-inclusive, but said that the process of compiling the data was tricky. We are reporting what we understand the law to be. We know that things are happening and we know that they've got to be happening on Barnard campus and not just at Columbia fraternities. But it has to be reported to us," she said. People trying to comply with both the letter of the law and the

Barnard 'Safety' Pamphlet Misleads Students about Rape and Sexual Assault on Campus

spirit of the law are having trouble trying to figure out the most meaningful way to get this information."

I was later told that the statistic *would* include rapes reported to Student Life staff as well as security. But it only included cases where the rape was prosecuted and the perpetrator found guilty. If that is true, then another crucial question leaps to mind: The statistic for number of burglaries was 42. Did all 42 of these burglary victims prosecute and win their cases in the past year alone? Perhaps, but it seems doubtful, considering the time it takes to go through the legal system. And if not, then that means a report of burglary need not be proven legally, while a rape must be in order to be considered an official statistic. Does that mean burglary is inherently more believable than rape? Or, does this reflect differing definitions of the two crimes according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting System, with which all statistics had to comply? "If that's the case, then those definitions definitely should have been included in the pamphlet," Marks said. "I mean, the way it looks, what are we supposed to think?"

Most students are specifically concerned with what a student who had been raped this past year on campus might have thought when she saw the number. If you were raped and you see a statistic like zero, it would make you feel like what happened to you wasn't rape, said Sheffield. "Or you might think you were the only one, or that it wasn't important enough to be damaging to you." Marks feels that the number is invalidating to women who have been assaulted. "It's a complete denial of her abuse. It de-legitimizes it for her. She also felt that saying no rapes had

occurred was dangerous for first-year students. "A first-year student may think she's safe from date-rape on this campus because there aren't any reported. She may be less cautious. I think it's just promoting ignorance." Anne Stolt (BC '93) described feeling extremely disheartened when she saw the pamphlet. "It was really sad. It was one of those moments when you find yourself sighing without noticing it," she said. "And it was frustrating because it is my belief that the reason rape and sexual assault don't get reported on this campus is because the campus is not accessible to hearing about it."

That is another widespread feeling expressed by students: that the administration would rather not know. "This environment doesn't encourage people to come forward," said Larcena Yee (BC '95). "We don't even have a Rape Crisis Center anymore." [This statistic] says, 'don't tell us you've been raped' and that should be changed at a women's college. Students claim that the complicated procedures for reporting a rape and pressing charges is not conducive to women feeling comfortable coming forward. "It's overwhelming," said Stolt. "What do you do when you get raped? Who do you go to? You just don't know where to start. If someone does go to report a rape to Georgie Gatch, she's going to sit down and say, 'this is what you have to go through to get something done about it and a lot of women just say, 'forget it!'—and understandably so."

What Rodgers learned from this—and what she found disturbing (since she is aware that rapes occur) is that people don't seem to feel comfortable coming to security. "I realized that we're really not getting reports. We've got to figure out ways to get people to report." According to Sheffield, it

means that people don't trust security." Rodgers said she has already begun meeting with members of the Student Life staff to discuss possible solutions. She praised the Rape Crisis Center as a resource in that the counseling offered there may, among other positive things, help the victim decide to prosecute.

Unfortunately, as some students pointed out, the statistics printed in this year's pamphlet may have already set back the cause. "This discourages anyone from ever working within the administration on this type of issue," said Guyer. "The last thing you should do [if you want to encourage students] is to write zero."

As Rodgers asserted, this is the first year that this kind of pamphlet has been written and "it's a situation that's in flux." She said that next year's pamphlet has been expanded to include more statistics on varying types of sexual assault, rather than just one rape statistic. But unless students are made to feel more comfortable with security and the administrative procedures in general, adding more statistics will not do much to change the situation. Clearly, there needs to be a great deal more communication on both sides in order for that change to occur. And given that the Right to Know act was designed to help make students feel more secure in their environment and more aware of their surroundings, something has certainly gone lost in the translation. As Carrie Kim (BC '96) put it: "Somehow, I don't feel any safer now that they gave me this statistic."

Special thanks to my Associate Editor Elbam Cobanum for all of her help. Cheryl Prince is a Barnard College Senior and a Bulletin Features Editor.

Professor Offers New Perspective on Women's Studies

Barnard College welcomes a new face in the Women's Studies Department. Professor of Women's Studies Afsaneh Najmabadi is currently teaching *Feminist Texts I and II*, a course on gendered controversies, as well as a course on gendered communications in the spring.

This is a radical change for the Iranian Professor who studied Physics at Harvard in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Professor Najmabadi said the change from Physics to Women's Studies was a product of the times. She got her B.A. in 1968 and her Masters in 1970. While at Harvard, she was involved in anti-war groups, student activist groups, and women's groups. She was also very affected by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and by the campus' reaction to his assassination. "Campuses weren't just for classes anymore," she said.

It was then that Professor Najmabadi decided that she wanted her interests in student activism to be "more connected in academia." She saw women as "social



Professor Najmabadi photo by Keri Kotler

scientists" and was interested in "women's conscious-raising." She was also interested in the Middle East peace initiative and Middle Eastern solidarity, since she is originally from Iran and lived there for some time. "Physics was a predominantly male field," she said, and she "couldn't envision [herself] at that level of Physics."

Professor Najmabadi hopes to bring her background and experience as a Middle Eastern woman into her teaching of women's studies. Her "ambition and hope" is to achieve a "cross-cultural enriching of feminist ideas." She has studied Iranian women and been involved in women's groups. She hopes to make this cross-culture "more sensitive and richer." Najmabadi also feels that women's studies has transformed every discipline. Every area of study is "informed with issues [that] women's studies has brought forth."

Najmabadi brings a global aspect to all of her courses. She incorporates into her studies of global gender issues aspects of gender in the Middle East. She wants the "achievements of feminist studies in other disciplines" incorporated into Middle Eastern women's studies.

Theresa Tebbelt is a Barnard College first-year student.

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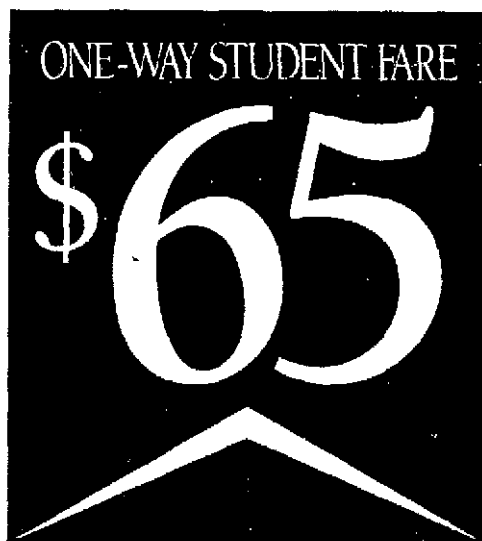
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Why Aren't Survivors Believed?

Bennett Talks About Survivor's Representation of Rape

On Wednesday, October 14, Dr. Jane Bennett, former adjunct associate professor of Women's Studies at Barnard, gave a lecture entitled "None So Deaf: Survivors' Representation of Rape in New York" at the Institute For Research on Gender at Columbia University.

Bennett recently completed her Doctorate in linguistics at Teacher's College and focused much of her dissertation on what she calls the "noetics of sexual assault." Noetics is a term used to describe the gathering of knowledge in regard to sexual assault. Bennett conducted several case studies to see how language affects how listeners perceive a women's rape testimony and whether or not they indeed believe it. To illustrate, but not generalize, about the language that accompanies talking about a rape experience, Bennett shared a disturbing case study of a woman, "Barbara", who had been raped and repeatedly sexually assaulted.

The language Barbara used was extremely flowing. She used words such as "like", "um", and "you know" to keep communication going. Along with revealing the pure narrative of her story, Barbara brought in her own thoughts and how these have changed over time, as well as certain revelations about her life that she had during the assault. Bennett continued by saying that the way Barbara narrated is the meaning of listening to a rape story. According to Bennett, the richness of this language is how people talk, yet aren't permitted to. This sort of language lacks the cohesiveness that those listening to a rape story wish to hear in order to erase the bulk of their doubts. Scattered thoughts indicate that there is some confusion as to the actual events of the rape, hence making the entire story seem false.

Telling a story rich in details can create grave doubts within the mind of an already suspicious listener. Most survivors remember the horror in detail, yet they live in a society that often says that they should not remember the details. Bennett quickly summed this up by saying "the vividness [of a story] evokes questions of culpability."

The amount of cohesion and details in the narrative determines the amount of doubt that resides within a listener's mind. Striking this precarious balance of doubts within the listener's mind is the often impossible "catch 22" situation of telling a rape story. If there is too much doubt expressed by the survivor, the listener will discount the story.

if there is too little doubt expressed by the survivor and she is too coherent, then the listener will take this apparent lack of emotion as an indication that the rape did not take place. This leads to two elements that influence the way that listeners think: credibility and plausibility. A woman's credibility is based on her effectively making conditions comfortable for the listener.

The plausibility is related to current stereotypes of "the good rape victim." For example, if a scantily clad woman were to walk into a court room, the jurors would likely subscribe to the stereotype that the woman had asked to be raped.

The method of telling a rape story influences the way it is perceived. The way the majority of people would feel most comfortable hearing a rape story is contrary to the way a survivor would probably tell her story. Bennett concluded that jurors need to be educated as to how to listen to rape stories. As it stands now, in Bennett's words, "stating the case simply isn't enough to be believed."

Deanna Welch is a Barnard College first year student.



Jane Bennett
photo by Deanna Welch

Ilsa Glazer Talks about the Need to Abandon Cultural Relativism for the Protection of Human Rights for All Women

The latest in The Center for Research On Women's noontime lecture series "Speaking of Women" featured Ilsa Glazer who presented a paper entitled "Israeli-Arab Women and Male Defined Notions of Human Rights." Ms. Glazer has written about a variety of topics concerned with "Black, Arab and Jewish women in their homelands and diasporas" but the focus of her talk on Wednesday October 14 was a family honor killing that took place in a small Arab village during the 1970s. Ms. Glazer used the specifics of the murder case to theorize about the responsibility of feminist anthropologists and of state institutions to abandon cultural relativism in the name of protecting the human rights of women of all cultures and traditions.

In the course of teaching the first ever course in Israel on women and social change, Ms. Glazer met Waheba Abourash, an Arab Israeli woman, the first from her village to graduate from high school. Ms. Glazer's relationship with Ms. Abourash was the prime impetus for the study which was presented on Wednesday. Ms. Abourash then went on to help found of a women's group for Israeli Arab students at Haifa University who, under the name Al-Fanar (The Lighthouse) have been protesting traditions which still lead to the deaths and disappearances of 20-40 women each year.

The specifics of the case study involve a young woman who was killed by her four brothers fifteen days after her marriage. The murder was carried out in the name of family honor as the wife's virginity at the time of her wedding had been called into question.

The murder took place in an Arab village of about 2,200 people situated within the pre-1967 borders of Israel (The realities of Arab Israelis are very different from those of Palestinians living on the West Bank and Gaza. Discrimination is rampant but the inhabitant *are* citizens with all the full rights of citizenship.)

Ms. Glazer set out to study the "gossip networks" of the women of the village in which the murder took place in her belief that these women were partially responsible for the killing. She also suggested that a coincidence of common interests of Israeli Arab and Israeli Jewish men perpetuates the murders of Israeli Arab women. According to Glazer, the Israeli government's respect of "cultural relativism" which lead police to opt out of any in-depth investigation of this murder actually played into the hands of the brothers guilty of the murder. The lack of an in-depth investigation allowed three of the four brothers to escape jail sentences, but, more



Ilsa Glazer photo by Keri Kotler

importantly in Glazer's view, it reinforced Israeli Arab men's sense of their superiority of Israeli Jewish men which in turn served to reinforce their sense of the position of the women of their community as superior to the relative freedom experienced by Israeli Jewish women.

This analysis, according to Glazer, suggests that it is the responsibility of state institutions and of feminist anthropologists like herself to reject cultural relativism and insist on the basic human rights that would have protected the woman in question, at least by granting her a trial and a chance to prove herself innocent.

As a Jewish woman critiquing Israeli Arab society Ms. Glazer certainly has a personal as well as ideological reason for upholding this view. But Glazer herself was quick to problematize this relation. "Feminist anthropologists can't take the role of speaking for indigenous women," she said. Though at times it seemed that this was exactly what Ms. Glazer was doing, her talk also made clear the extent to which Israeli Arab women have been doing feminist activism on their own terms.

Tamara Cohen is a Barnard College senior and an Arts editor.

Ragged Flowers

Hi! We're back for the second week in a row. And, like it or not we have an opinion.

F.Y.I.: *The Mosh Pit: Pros and Cons*

After suffering through a sweaty college-oriented show this weekend we were reminded of the idiocy that comes with the ignorance of a true mosh pit. Nobody that goes to see shows wants to get kicked when they're down or told to "take a walk"

by some drunk sweaty frat boy. At first glance moshing looks violent, but it is not about how many people you can punch before you get punched back.

Moshing can and should be about individuals venting their anger and frustration at the world, not at each other. Moshing is the purest form of communal anarchy where no one rules, but if some one goes down there are always people helping her/him back up.

Next time you go to a show, keep in mind how exhilarating it is to feel your peers coming together whether it be in anger or ecstasy.

This Week's Good Stuff:

R.E.M.—*Automatic For The People* (Warner Bros.):

R.E.M.'s newest release is one of those albums that grows on you. It begs you to listen to it over and over again until finally it reaches you. The somewhat uncatchy, but soulful melodies begin to invade you

With this album R.E.M. moves farther away from its pop-oriented "Shiny Happy People" sound and more towards its pensive sometimes melancholy sound previously found in

songs like "Country Feedback" and "Low."

Their new songs explore such issues as disillusioned youths, suicide, death, the American political scene and on a more positive note, sex. "Star Me Kitten" was originally titled "Fuck Me Kitten," but the title was changed to avoid a Parental Advisory Sticker. The lyrics however stayed the same, with Michael Stipe mumbling "Fuck Me Kitten" during

the chorus. You could say this is a small victory for censorship...or maybe for R.E.M. who continues to say (or mumble) whatever they want without being slapped on the wrist by Tipper Gore.

Automatic For The People might just renew the faith of some of their old listeners who were turned off by the top-40 R.E.M., it might lose some of those fans won over by "Stand" and "Losing My Religion"; but it will definitely keep those fans who enjoy the changes that R.E.M. has gone through over the years.

Daisy Chainsaw—

Eleventeen (A & M Records): This is what the Sex Pistols would have sounded like if they had been fronted by Kate Bush

This is insanity grunge for the intelligent music lover. This is confusion and contradiction at its most exhilarating.

Daisy Chainsaw is the first band in a long line of feeble attempts to come from London reeking of the unabashed energy that made the punk movement

continued on page 19



Daisy Chainsaw

calling all students with diabetes

Are you interested in being a part of a support group and/or network for students with diabetes in the Barnard/Columbia community? Graduating senior with diabetes wants to coordinate self-help group for exchange of ideas/concerns/strategies/frustrations/successes--and more. What are **your** interests? For more information, call Susan Quinby in Disability Services at 4/4634 or stop by 7 Millbank.

The World of Magritte

In the irrational world of Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte, now on view until November 22 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, we are confronted with images that should not be, and the essential question that threads through all of Magritte's work. What is a pipe? What is a piece of cake? What is real?

Magritte doesn't provide many answers; there aren't any to be found. Instead, through repetition of images, an obsessive, pedantic attention to detail, and flat, lifeless colors, he invents a landscape where the banal becomes the stuff of dreams, with less verve but more brain than his famed contemporary Salvador Dali.

The key to Magritte's work is its stillness. Never do we feel as if these objects are alive; they are plastique, moldable, a sly menagerie of artificial shapeshifters that can subside into the "rational" world the moment you look away from the canvas. Magritte's art is the shadow you see out of the corner of your eye, the one that isn't really there, the moaning of ghosts that you know to be creaking boiler pipes. This is what makes

Magritte's work so much more disturbing than the flamboyance of Dali or the mechanized cleverness of Marcel Duchamp. This sense of disquiet, which threads through from the boring, almost stupid image of "this is not a pipe" down to the creepy anonymity of "Rape," is menacing, a real threat of violence that waits patiently beneath the affected banality of Magritte's painting style.

Magritte, who died in 1967, led a bourgeois and nondescript life, never becoming the clichéd, drama-laden martyr that society likes to believe its artists are. That he led a proper career as a commercial graphics artist and wore a bowler hat somehow fits. His life's work is not about the rejection of normalcy; it is instead an inversion of it. That this

comprehensive survey of his work is now being shown at that most surreal potluck warehouse of art, the Metropolitan, somehow fits too. See it now.

Marlena Sonn is a Barnard College junior.



The Lovers 1928

continued from page 18

so glorious. Although this energy has the confusion and anger of the late 70s its musicality is modern and refreshing, preventing that retro or rehashed sound so many bands have drowned in. *Eleventeen*, the self-produced debut released this month, is a must for any growing music collection. Daisy Chainsaw can be witnessed in a live performance on Oct. 30 at Tilt Rocks.

Right Next Door: Due to technical difficulties we are postponing our review of the **Too Skinnee J's** live show to next week. Meanwhile check them out for yourself at Wetlands on Oct. 22. They will also be playing at Realityfest on Nov. 14. By the way ANY OTHER LOCAL BANDS interested in free press coverage please contact us through MAC Box 1468. If not, the Too Skinnee J's will become honorary local band of the year...by default.

Ponderage (Things To Ponder): Does this interest anyone but ourselves...?

Stay tuned for next week when we'll review a real-life honest-to-God Too Skinnee J's show, and the Bob Dylan tribute concert

Johanna Ingalls is a Barnard College senior and Jessica Hodges is a Barnard College junior

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If you have any other questions, or would like to request an application, call us at (212) 998-6060.

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The First Debate: Charisma and Incompetence

On October 11, 1992, about thirty students piled into the Plimpton Lounge to watch the first presidential debate. The crowd was primarily composed of Democrats, and if any Bush supporters were present, they didn't dare to identify themselves. I had been eagerly awaiting the debates for some time. I had (naively?) hoped and even expected to attain a more informed perspective on the candidates and their platforms.

During the debate itself, the Lounge was a lively place. We applauded Ross Perot's support of Governor Clinton on the "character issue," snickered at Clinton's too-corny wedding anniversary greeting to Hillary, and screamed with laughter and delight when Bush proclaimed a marked decline in cocaine use and proceeded to rub his nose quite vigorously. After the closing statements had been made, however, everyone admitted that the debate had made little or no impact on their decision of which candidate they would cast their vote for on November third. Interestingly enough, no one felt that anyone had emerged victorious.

I contend that what transpired on October 11 was anything but a debate. The format was not conducive to any form of discussion, there were no follow-up questions, and the candidates were allotted no time for rebuttal. The one to two minute answers forced the candidates to strive for memorable sound bites, rather than clear and detailed descriptions of their policies.

I found the means through which the panel of questioners was decided on to be rather questionable in itself. The candidate's veto power over who would sit on the panel precluded the possibility of an independent group. Consequently, the panelists, themselves, seemed less than rigorous in their questioning of the three men. The scope of one question, referring to the riots that followed the Rodney King decision as "this thing in Los Angeles," was so broad that the candidates had trouble condensing their responses down to the one minute limit. Perot used the question as the basis for an eloquent, if trite, condemnation of racism, and the noble statement that "If you hate people, [he doesn't] want your vote." A powerful quote, but coming from a man who claimed that a homosexual in a cabinet position would distract from the real issues, it just does not ring true.

Regardless that what we had watched had been more of a press-conference than a debate, everyone left the Lounge with huge grins on their faces, and for about half an hour, Plimpton's lobby resembled a small pep rally. "Did you hear Perot?" said one enthusiastic student. "Wasn't he great! I couldn't believe the way he stood up to Bush. Clinton was kissing his ass! He was so cute with that joke about his ears!" After a while, however, we began to realize that we were actually praising Ross Perot, the lobby became quiet, and people began to drift towards the elevator.

What did Perot say to trigger such enthusiasm? Other than the unrealistic fifty cent gas tax, he didn't seem to articulate any sort of platform of policy. He really didn't present any concrete plans, but then again, neither did Bush or Clinton. What happened, Bill? You were supposed to seem presidential, not plastic. He did, however, attack negative campaigning on the part of the Republicans, allude to the hate that was voiced during the Houston convention, and directly address the country's four trillion dollar deficit. He also earned brownie points for his vehement condemnation of the Thomas-Hill hearings.

Despite the positive aspects of Perot's comments, the debate confirmed his illegitimacy as a real contender. This was most clearly exemplified by the way in which he was treated by the two other

candidates. Neither Bush nor Clinton had much criticism for the Texas billionaire. In fact, they seemed overly friendly and somewhat patronizing. Reinforcing Perot's image as a political amateur, who would be unable to deal with the pressures of presidential policy and decision-making, they made it quite obvious that they did not feel threatened by his candidacy. Following Perot's assertion that he could indeed rise to the challenge of the office, Clinton bluntly dismissed him, saying, "Ross, that's a great speech, but it's not quite that simple." Perot's undeniable charisma did, however, turn a non-debate on the issues into quality prime time entertainment. He made us laugh, but is 1992 a time for humor?

Clinton contends that it is a time for change. Unfortunately the "debate" did little to change the slick image that he often projects. His answers seemed to lack the spontaneity and emotion that characterized Perot's appeal. He behaved like an over-rehearsed android, his frequent smiles seeming smug rather than appealing. I am a committed Clinton supporter, but I must admit that I was quite disappointed by the demeanor of the Democratic nominee. Clinton's goals in the debate were to avoid any major gaffes. He commanded a secure lead over President Bush, and it was unlikely that his performance could have a negative effect on his campaign. He had to be on the alert in the event that Bush be consumed with a sudden flash of brilliance, but come on, what are the chances of that ever happening? I was hoping that Clinton would use the debate as a forum for his ideas, and a means of reintroducing himself to the public. Instead, he let Ross Perot defend him, and remained monotonous and uninspiring. Maybe he appeared presidential in a George Bush kind of way, but compared to his idol John F. Kennedy, he left quite a bit to be desired.

I was not surprised by George Bush's debate skills, or lack thereof (although I still refuse to concede that what transpired in St. Louis bore any resemblance to a true debate). Our president (I shudder at the mere association of George Herbert Walker Bush with this title), a graduate of one of our country's most prestigious academic institutions, is incapable of constructing a clear sentence. His presence is, at best, unassertive. His, frankly, odd mannerisms so well-captured by Dana Carvey on Saturday Night Live give him the appearance of being stiff and awkward.

Among the jumble of abstract non-sequiturs, however, Bush somehow managed to articulate one single idea. "We're doing a little better, said our sage leader. We're making some progress. We're still in the fight." Mr. President, although I rejoice at your ability to say something that I can actually understand, I question whether you realize that your statements directly contradict the reports from your own Secretary of Labor, Lynn Martin. More importantly, can't you see that for millions of Americans, things are not getting any better at all?

Despite my dissatisfaction in the content, quality and format of the debate, I'm still glad that I got the chance to watch it. Some people were not as lucky. On the West Coast, it was broadcast at four in the afternoon, a time during when most people were still at work. Since none of the candidates said anything new or substantive, however, my Californian friends can rest easy knowing that they didn't miss anything.

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Playpen Politics

I have been amazed at the amount of squabbling in recent politics. The frightening thing is how effective this is in making us get absolutely nothing done.

Perhaps the greatest shock came from the front of Russian politics, which I naively expected to conduct itself with dignity in accordance with the noble cause of freedom it recently served. I was thus rudely awakened when I read of the recent childish disputes among its senior officials. It all began when Gorbachev decided to play the temper some child and refuse to show up in court the day he was summoned. This posed a dilemma, because his presence was essential to the matter at hand. First Yeltsin didn't know what to do, such defiance was unprecedented, so he only fined Gorbachev thirty cents. This went on for two days without effect. Then he took away Gorbachev's armored limousines, which he used to carouse about Moscow, and replaced them with sedans. Finally he barred Gorbachev from his office with police. First of all, it is amazing that Gorbachev's temper tantrum occurred at all. What is this, a nursery? Is Gorbachev a politician or a preschooler? However, it is just as surprising to see Yeltsin's response. He does not attempt to determine the source of Gorbachev's ire, or to press formal charges. Rather he joins Gorbachev in the playpen, and retaliating with the same stubborn silliness. It is no wonder Gorbachev was not appeased. (Is this what we pay them to do?) The alarming thing is that these petty tantrums leave crucial issues unaddressed.

Take for example the recently closed 102nd Congress. Its achievements are appallingly minimal for a two year reign. It bickered a lot, but never got things done. "It worried about the healthcare crisis but never brought an important bill to vote" (New York Times). This Congress has been described as one of "mutual inaction" (New York Times).

Why was this? Primarily this was because nobody cared enough. In fact, John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, said at the beginning of their term, "There's not a single piece of legislation that needs to be passed in two years for this President. In fact, if the Congress wants to come together, adjourn, and leave, it's all right with us. We don't need them. This attitude reveals that the President had already abandoned any goal of working with the congress to effect a change this early in his presidency. And though on one issue in particular, real progress was almost made (after the L.A. riots the congress and President agreed to raise city taxes to better prevent this from happening again). Bush soon changed his mind as the elections came forward. Republicans oppose higher taxes, and his popularity mattered more than his purpose.

Yet if the issues did not matter to this Congress, what did? Ironically, most events that made the headlines stemmed from scandal. For example, when we learned that Congress has a bank where checks never bounce.

The race for presidency is another political arena where infantile scandal dominates and social issues are soon buried. Voters are smothered with the dirt from the candidates' lives and not the views of the candidates. Perot is seen as a quitter, Clinton as a politician who changes his views to please his audience, and Bush is attacked from within his own party. We believe Bush lied to us about taxes, and Perot lied about his candidacy. Clinton hasn't been honest about his draft. Says a librarian from Richmond Heights, Montana, "I'm voting for Clinton, but I want to like him more than I like him." (New York Times.)

Americans are equally insulted by the bickering tone of this election and how it has diverted candidates from the real issues. As one American puts it, "I was in World War II. Who cares? That was 45 years ago. Who cares what Clinton did 20 years ago as a young man? Let's talk about the homelessness and unemployment, Mr. President. What are you going to do about those?" Says another voter, "Who wasn't demonstrating 20 years ago?" (New York Times)

Yet perhaps our nation's indifference stems from the people's ignorance. Our own standards for leaders must be raised considerably before we will see a change. Judging from the questions we have been asking our candidates, our expectations remain low. The following is a list of questions posed to candidates by America on national talk shows.

- Did Mr. Clinton have a Mr. Potato head as a child?
- Does he favor space exploitation, or space exploration?
- How important is California to him?
- Does President Bush wear boxer shorts or briefs?
- What kind of car was he driving in 1950?
- Is it hard being a President and a grandfather at the same time?
- Would you agree that there is a place for four wheel drive trails in this great country of ours?

We need to get smart. Politicians are not required to respect us until we deserve their respect. They will meet higher expectations when we demand it. Which brings me to an interesting point on Perot. He is probably the only aspect of the campaign that is present because the people demanded it. In the first debate he served as the voice of public cynicism. His statements were invigorating, his opinions refreshing, yet they were only the simple truth: the bottom line, a reminder of the no nonsense aspirations we once held for our country and our leaders. Let's remember their buried goals and leave playpen politics behind.

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