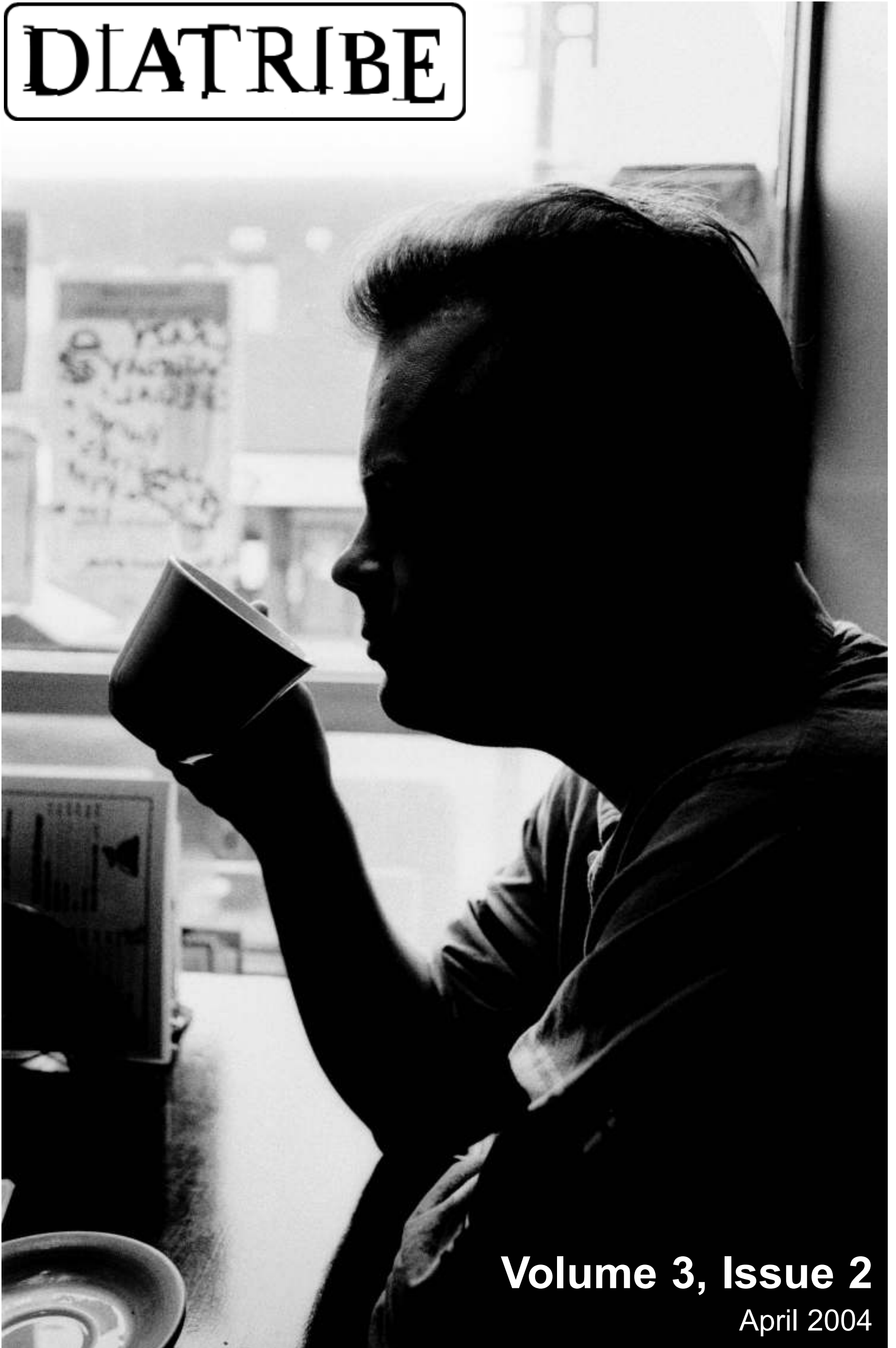


DIATRIBE



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DIATRIBE

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Marmoream relinquo, quam latericium accepi

AUGUSTUS

A Few Words to
Our Readers

What are words to us really but polite abstraction? The modern, educated, reader should feel somewhat disenchanted with Merriam-Webster's description of a word: "a speech sound or series of speech sounds that symbolizes and communicates a meaning without being divisible into smaller units capable of independent use." Do we honestly require the use of words to communicate the most essential events in our lives, he or she asks? We do, in fact, seem to get by quite well as infants gurgling and babbling while our parents drool and drivel. Teachers communicate their value-judgements by giving us gold stars and blue ribbons, and later in life, integers between zero and one-hundred. As students, we respond respectively by working hard, flattering obsequiously, and finally, defecating in buckets from the Principal's office in protest. We lovers exchange groans and passive-aggressive glares far more often than -- say -- love sonnets, and as friends, exchange petty hand gestures of irritation between ululations of "wazzup" and "muthafucka," (neither speech sound of which occurs in the Merriam-Webster or Oxford English dictionaries.) The working world witnesses the same nonverbal phenomenon; workers wail and brandish placards before their grimacing, grunting bosses, while Joe and Jane Standard and their 1.5 children express collective enjoyment of utility by a jaded law of diminishing returns. By mid-life, man communicates his frustration with goatee and Corvette, while his wife takes up a new and empowering hobby, and all continues this way in driveling, defecating, drones until the eventual, carefree, flatulence of senility forebodes a silent ending to human life.

Even students of literature, who look at words often and who should arguably value them more than the rest of us, cower to admit they believe in dated theories of semiotics or structuralism or that "there's, like, totally something behind the text." Yet, for all of this, many of us continue to use words on a daily basis; some of us even waste time in the non-lucrative business of words, running newspapers or writing editorials, for instance. We continue to use words despite their apparent impotence and ambiguity, as if to foil our troglodyte heritage with the refinement of some wise words by George Bernard Shaw:

"Let those who complain it was all on paper remember that only on paper has humanity yet achieved glory, beauty, truth, knowledge, virtue, and abiding love."

So, in the words of glory, beauty, truth, knowledge, virtue, and abiding love, let us elevate ourselves from the Corvette-and-goatee existence of Joe Standard, whose educational highlight included defecating in a bucket from the Principal's office, to the eloquence of a less distant past, and escape the banality of non-verbal life. So, er, please read Diatribe Magazine.



J.M. Van Order
Editor-in-Chief, Diatribe Magazine

OPINIONS

A RESPONSE TO HUNTINGTON

■ ■ ■ Confronting "The Hispanic Challenge" with S.C.U. Lao on duty

"Civilization's going to pieces," broke out Tom violently. "I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read 'The Rise of the Colored Empires' by this man Goddard?"

"Why, no," I answered, rather surprised by his tone.

"Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be — will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."

- The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

We must be free or die, who speak the tongue

That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold

Which Milton held —

- England, 1802 by William Wordsworth

Sometimes, in haste and fear, we fail to recognize when we become the fools in the mirror our ancestors so often told us about. In our generation, it is looked upon to be an unqualified good if we are generous in our esteem of others, especially those we perceive to be different and abide by an alternative standard. So, in earnestness to accept others in ourselves, we run with wide arms, receiving all who are under the sun. But sometimes, like all things of flesh, we fail, and despairing in our failure, we seek to find fault not in ourselves. After all, had we not the purest of mind pursuing in this world the good? The fault, therefore, must be the others who had turned aside our outreaching hand. In our rage, we transmute our former passions for the outward world into an inwardness of spirit for purity. Individual suffer from it as much as society. None suffer as much, I think, as those we rely to be the voice of our civilization.

Samuel P. Huntington, the Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor and Chairman of the Harvard Academy of International and Area Studies at Harvard University, recently published an article entitled "The Hispanic Challenge" in the prestigious international relations magazine, *Foreign Policy*, a magazine he co-founded and edited for many years. Professor Huntington's main contention is that American society, institutions, and culture are built by those "who were overwhelmingly white, British, and Protestant." Their contribution created "the American creed" we all recognize today as fundamental to American

national identity: "the English language; Christianity; religious commitment; English concepts of the rule of law, including the responsibility of rulers and the rights of individuals; and dissenting Protestant values of individualism, the work ethic, and the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth, a 'city on a hill.'" The mass migrations of non-British, non-Protestants, have diluted the ethnic makeup of America and after the 1950's civil-rights movement allowed the participations of traditionally enslave blacks into American society. These groups' acceptance into the mainstream was followed by a general assimilation of the same groups of the American Creed. Numerical inferiority, coupled with isolation from their native homeland and dispersion of these newcomers made it almost impossible to establish a completely separate cultural identity.

The current wave of immigrants poses a new challenge for American national identity. For the first time ever, one ethnic group -- the Hispanics -- immigrate in large numbers to one relatively concentrated area of the United States -- the Southwest -- and outnumber the native-born white, Anglo-Saxon English-speaker there. They are also "without precedent" in that, they are resistant to assimilation into the American Creed and instead subscribe to, and take pride in, a fundamentally different belief of: "the unpredictability of events, concepts of time epitomized in the mañana syndrome, the ability to achieve results quickly," an obsession of history, and, "where mistrust of people outside the family; lack of initiative, self-reliance, and ambition; little use for education; and acceptance of poverty as a virtue necessary for entrance into heaven." Combined with the closeness of their place of origin and the fact that much of the land they immigrate to was originally Mexican, the Hispanic Challenge is, therefore, really the "reconquista (re-conquest) of the Southwest United States."

The reception of the article is, as expected, hostile. There are, here and there, a few aplombs for Huntington, especially in the area of illegal immigrants, but mostly, the reader response forum in *Foreign Policy* is filled with comments like, "Where does Huntington's idea come from?" or "Good job, Huntington. You just created a wonderfully intellectual style of communication for hatemongers to lash out at people like me." Others in the academic community, like Rodolfo O. de la Garza of Columbia University, simply say that Huntington's analysis "has just gone nuts."



SAMUEL HUNTINGTON and the NEW CONQUISTADOR

The theme of Anglo-Saxon superiority over the Hispanic is consistently implied throughout the essay. The White, British, Protestants built America. The Hispanic, who lost their territory a century ago, are now trying to re-take what they lost by mass, illegal immigration and, once here, mass breeding. Huntington almost gives the contrasting image of two conquests. One is the "Marines in the 'halls of Montezuma'" annexing half of Mexico. The other is of the poor, illiterate Hispanic mother, tailed by her seven children, on their way to a rent subsidized housing, busily lecturing them in Spanish on the Godless Anglos and their evil ways, how they should always marry other Hispanics so they bring their children could brought up Catholic and Spanish.

This being said, the alarmist and "white nativist" message of Huntington, along with his fetishism for the English language, should not distract from the fact that most of the statistics used in the essay are not exactly wrong. Most of them actually comes from the same people that are critical of his essay. Then again, perhaps we should consider what Huntington himself said once, "Partial truths or half-truths are often more insidious than total falsehoods. Total falsehoods can be easily exposed for what they are by citing exceptions to their claims. Hence, they are less likely to be accepted as the total truth. A partial truth, on the other hand, is plausible, because there is evidence to support it. And hence, it is easy to assume that it is the total truth." And insidious indeed, is Huntington's message. He wrote that, *[if] one imagines what would happen if Mexican immigration abruptly stopped.... Illegal entries would diminish dramatically. The wages of low-income U.S. citizens would improve. Debates over the use of Spanish and whether English should be made the official language of state and national governments would subside ... as would controversies over welfare and other benefits for immigrants.... The average education and skills of the immigrants continuing to arrive would reach their highest levels in*



U.S. history. The inflow of immigrants would again become highly diverse, creating increased incentives for all immigrants to learn English and absorb U.S. culture. And most important of all, the possibility of a de facto split between a predominantly Spanish-speaking United States and an English speaking United States would disappear, and with it, a major potential threat to the country's cultural and political integrity.

So while not all problems, a very long list of them would be solved if we were to rid of the Mexican. He follows this later on with a call to action, for, presumably "white nativists":

The transformation of the United States into a country like these would not necessarily be the end of the world; it would, however, be the end of the America we have known for more than three centuries. Americans should not let that change happen unless they are convinced that this new nation would be a better one.

For those Latin-Americans that are here and meant to stay, he offers a few chastising words,

There is no Americano dream. There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English.

The problem is that Huntington is eighty years too late. The WASPy American Dream -- already weakened by Henry James -- Fitzgerald had put out of its misery with *The Great Gatsby*. The Beatniks were riding the dead corpse all the way to fame. Whatever it is that Huntington is trotting out, is nothing more than a museum piece, just like the communists have the spirit of revolutionary behind three layers of bulletproof plexiglass in a mausoleum. The Harvard University professor, while always with good intention, looks less like Paul Revere on a horse and more like a certain Spanish gentleman mistaking windmills for giants.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER?

■■■ Opined by **C.T. Shea**

The votes have been long cast, the ballot box sealed, and in a few months we will find out if Queen's has joined the ranks of numerous other Canadian universities by having our teaching assistants (TA) unionized. Whether unionization takes place or not is entirely out my control, but Queen's and its TAs should learn a few lessons in this unionization drive.

For starters, unionization is not an end – it's a means. The thrill of the chase has gotten all the attention, but certification is just the beginning of an uphill battle. It's like getting married just for the white dress and party, but ignoring the fact that you're entering into a 'life-long' commitment. That being said, unionizers, if certification happens, the hard work hasn't even begun!

Financially, unions aren't everything that they're cracked up to be. Sure, they get wage increases, but they also

bring union dues and strikes, both of which eat up those precious wage increases. In fact, the wage increases in the first place aren't all that great – the average union's wage increases in the last 30 years haven't even kept up with inflation.

Unions are also plagued by perceptions of corruption and greed, which may or may not be true, but none the less would provide some excellent reading material in the Journal. My personal experience in student-run organizations has led me to believe that many student leaders still do not have the capacity and maturity to hold such positions of power. The union and its leaders will be under constant scrutiny and one slip could be detrimental to the union.

As university students, TAs do not normally make a career out of being a TA. This presents a problem in the growth and sustainability of the union. Union

leaders are vital to a union's success, and are typically senior members and those who have a lot of time to devote to union members. With TAs being a very fluid and short-term workforce, and many working to complete their own personal studies, who will lead the union in the future? In 2014 when no one remembers the struggle made in 2004, who will care enough to take on such a demanding role?

Establishing the union, generating commitment and participation, and keeping perceptions positive is the uphill struggle. The battle will come in the event of a decertification drive. Just as passionately as some students fought to get the union certified, some students will fight to rid the TAs of the union. As students who are in-tune with political and business trends and feel strongly about their opinions, a decertification drive will be an on-going threat.

The "us against them" mentality of unions is ironic in the case of TAs and the university. The university administration is not comparable to the boss in a suit checking out the blue-collar production line. The nature of our rela-

tionship is one of mentorship, not hostility. Unions divide the lines of communication and hinder efficient problem solving techniques.

That being said, Queen's is considered a ground-breaking institution - imagine if we could break-ground on a new level and run our TAs union-free? Queen's is the home of future leaders, innovators, and academics. We are well-educated, articulate, and know a thing or two about government funding and budgets. Do we really need a third party such as CUPE representing our needs and taking a cut of the funds in the meantime? What would be the bigger accomplishment in our case – becoming unionized or developing better problem solving techniques? Imagine the accomplishment of doing it ourselves.

Regardless of the outcome, the key point to remember is that unionization is not an end – it's a means, and that certification does not always mean union. But if the union is established, watch out economics TAs – I'll be demanding my assignments returned at lightning speed and responses to ALL of my emails!

ROGER BACON

■■■ Reported by **S.C.U. Lao**

If you didn't accidentally stumble in on the AMS Annual General Meeting in the Lower Ceilidh, you were probably not informed of the huge increase in mandatory student fees our elected student representatives voted for on March 23. In fact, they probably don't even know themselves either. It is only in the strange world of the AMS that people would pledge money that they will not pay for, on something they won't see, for a price they can't be certain of, on the behalf of people they claim to represent but don't want to listen to.

If you are in the loop at the AMS, yes, I am talking about "motion seven at the AMS Annual General Meeting and the attached appendix Roger Bacon," (the seriousness of the title of the appendix shows one the frivolity the AMS has when throwing your money around). Or, the agreement in principle for financial support for the construction of the new Queen's Centre by students.

And in principle, it is a good idea. The new Queen's Centre, which will be built in 8-10 years will replace the current, inadequate student facilities at Queen's. The PEC and the JDUC will be amalgamated and expanded all the way north to Earl Street. This new Centre will benefit all students, and "will help bring Queen's to the next century." The AMS, therefore, should naturally support the construction of any facility that would benefit student life on campus. Now why would the

debate for such a non-starter position take more than one and one half-hour?

On Tuesday night, the AGM approved the motion, put forth by Chrissie Knitter and seconded by Tyler Turnbull, to support the idea of establishing a mandatory student fee in support of the construction of the new Queen's Centre. Many in the AMS executive feels that this motion is necessary to show the Administration the good-faith of students' support for the Queen's Centre. Some of the supporters of the motion insinuated that construction might not happen if this motion were to fail.

This is fatuous. At a projected cost of \$125-150 million, even if every student were levied \$200 (by comparison the current highest mandatory fee, athletics, is only \$12) each year for the next ten years, then the students under the purview of the AMS will only contribute less than 1/4 of the cost. At best, we will contribute 10% of the capital cost. The Queen's Centre will happen regardless of financial aid from the AMS.

The second problem is the oversight group of this proposed fund, the "Queen's Centre Student Working Group," isn't fully formed yet. The AGM was supposed to appoint two students-at-large to the working group, but the motion to do so was tabled indefinitely.

The third problem is that there was inad-

equated information about the issue at the AGM. The Assembly took place on Tuesday, March 23 while the newly chosen architects for the Queen's Centre were not formally introduced to the public until March 24, the next day. Without a deeper consultative process, there is no sense within the wider student community of what the architects have in mind for the new centre. Students at the assembly didn't even know what the centre will look like before they are being asked to fund its construction.

The fourth problem is that the motion was passed without a general referendum. After one supporter of the motion declared that, "referendums may look more democratic, but they aren't, because voters are not required to educate themselves on the issues. They will only look at it as an increase in fees." The attitude seems to be that the average Queen's student does not possess the ability to decide the 'best' way to spend their money. Therefore, they have determined that the total student contribution will be decided by another AGM in 2005 on the recommendation from the Queen's Centre Student Working Group.

This is a recipe for disaster. The AGM, while a noble institution on paper, has always been a place where unpopular fee increases are pushed-through without passing the referendum process under the guise that it is a forum where all students may participate and every student has a vote.

In reality, insiders always have an advantage over the average Queen's student. The AGM's always takes place around in March when most students are busy with essays and exams. The bulk of the atten-

dees are the friends of people in the AMS brought there for the purpose of making a quorum.

Most students have little understanding of the technical nature of the AGM. The meetings are formal. If a student doesn't know the difference between "a point of order" and "a point of information", or the procedures to make an amendment, they become a bystander. They might also not know about the rules governing the AGM, such as a quorum, where motions fail unless they have sufficient numbers of students to vote on it.

Insiders also have a greater understanding of the significance of each motion because they have part in crafting them or a previous knowledge of them. Most student participants may only read the AGM package a couple of days in advance --- some only during the meeting. Many issues cannot be fully deliberated since many ordinary students would be hard pressed to argue with a policy insider on an issue they haven't had time to study in depth.

The AGM with its biases should not lock the student body to fees that will be determined by another AGM. In effect, it can mandate large mandatory fees to all students at the whim of a small fraction. James Madison, just prior to the signing of the American Constitution, noted that factions always tend to accrue benefits to themselves at the benefit of the public good.

Endnote:
Atlee Clark wrote a fairly informative report of this event in the March 26 edition of the Journal.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE DILEMMA

■ ■ ■ Was the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection justified in shooting six golden eagles as a measure against the disappearance of the Vancouver Island marmot?

I AM GONNA FUCK YOU UP GOOD

by a Vancouver Island Marmot

I'm not just an endangered species—I am a *dangerous* species, you hear me? I got me a pair of teeth sharper than Rosco knives, and let me tell you something, brother: I am a badass.

It is an *ad populum* fallacy that protected birds should be immune to any kind of control. The common sea gull, that ubiquitous urban urchin, is still a protected bird, at the expense of many other endangered prey.

So when you think you can fly around, loopin' and swoopin' down on me and my brothers lookin' for dinner, you got another thought coming. Them eagles like to talk big, like they king of the coop or something. They think they pretty fly, just 'cause they got feathers an' all. They got all used to that hit-and-run marmot-eating funk, but they didn't figure on our having tall friends in high places, no. So now when that eagle comes too close to my heinie, he's looking down the Man's boomstick, dawg! That's the Law, brother! That's the Law coming to fuck you up good.

I am the marmot, brother. I am the spring-groundhog king! I live in tunnels so dark, the devil hisself can't see his way 'round. I warn you, I eat tree roots and shit two-by-fours. And if you so much as I lay a feather on me the wrong way, I declare: I am going dig you a new bunghole, birdman. This time, I bite back.

Only 21 native marmots are left in the wild. As such, it seems a necessary evil to defend them and their ecological niche, even against the natural instincts of such a rare and beautiful bird.

They tell me, "Brother, but the eagle, he's so rare." An' I says to them, eagle is like medium-rare, dawg! Brother, I am rare! They's no more than 21 of me left! You know how much 21 is? That's like, the whole world's your freakin' cousin, an' half o' them are your brothers an' sisters at the same time. An' a "paper-bagger" don't make no sense no more when you're with the butt-ugly hog next



Photos from *The Globe and Mail*

door, 'cause they all look just like you anyhow! Now that's rare, man! I am the rarest!

The golden eagle has a farther-reaching territory and is protected by international treaties. The Vancouver Island Marmot, however, is disappearing from its only home. This will be a tragic loss.

They say the bird's got the right to prey. Man, I don't deny it. He'd better be prayin', 'cause me an' my boys from the hood [Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection] are gonna find him and bleed him deep. Then we'll see who's high, brother. Then we'll see who's high.

SHOCKING MANIFESTATION OF PUBLIC INDISCRETION

by a Golden Eagle

It was ridiculous before, but this? This is priceless. First they grovel in their rancid burrows because they don't have the sense to build decent nests, then they gnaw basely on tree roots rather than on a proper, freshly-killed rodent. Ghastly habits, but ones we were able to accept. This latest trick of the marmots, however, far surpasses the limit of manners and morals.



The Ministry's eagle cull is only a temporary solution, one that does not address the broader systemic issues surrounding the Vancouver Island marmots' habitat and breeding capabilities.

Imagine! Any creature brought up to practice proper manners in the presence of company ought to know one doesn't draw undue attention to one's ... conjugal ... difficulties. The marmots, particularly the gentlemen, certainly have my profound sympathy in this regard; however, their perpetual discussion of their dwindling numbers is an affront to common decency—it seems as though, in their base and desperate condition, they relish their very public listing in the endangered species registry. In good society, these things simply aren't mentioned—they're considered personal matters to be kept discreetly between husband and wife.

Among the marmots, we shudder to think, such marital categories are not observed. Nonetheless, despite their impropriety, we've been able to rely on our own good breeding and to exercise restraint in our dealings with them.

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection has been funneling vast resources into eliminating marmot predators, at the expense of ensuring the captive-bred marmots have the qualities required to survive in the wild.

Now, however, they have simply gone too far. We cannot allow civilized members of our society to be deceived and ravaged, and our community's values corrupted, by the vicious tendencies of a pack of vermin unable to act with independence and dignity in solving their own problems. We've been able to abide the antics of the marmots themselves, but when they stoop so low as to drum up hired goons for crimes with little pertinence to the delicate subject at hand, we must make our opinions known.

With few marmots remaining in the wild, it is difficult to see the loss of the remaining 21 having a significant impact on the ecology of the region as a whole.

We call upon the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to cease being deceived by an unwholesome species when it asks for help to sustain a lineage it ought to be able to independently maintain. The mere existence of such bumbling creatures has been unduly disruptive, and the losses occasioned by their extinction would be far too small to warrant the attention they have received. Meanwhile, when upstanding members of society are sacrificed for the preservation of a small number of rodent rabble, good people must speak up. This has got to stop.

WHAT DID THE ATHENIANS THINK

■ ■ ■ Commented by S.C. Urquhart-Lewis

With the federal around the corner (or maybe a few more corners if the Liberals don't get their act together) I am reminded of an article by Matt Trevisan in *The Journal* earlier this year (to be precise, SEPTEMBER 26, 2003.) In it, he compared the lack of interest, at that time, of the "Make Some Noise Campaign" to attract student interest in electoral politics. Furthermore, he believed that if we are to be judged by those worthy ancestors of Western Culture, the Athenians, they would deem us to be "useless" because "we failed to partake in its orders."

I wonder if he will feel that way again when the Federal election coming along. It seems, near every election, some keen academic out there would dig up the old graves of the long dead, dress them in ill-fitting political cloth of

the day, and condemn all those who say the man is dragging around a corpse. The Athenian "democracy" these people like to talk about have very little to do with what is practised today. For one, we believe anybody over a certain age has the right to vote, nor do we exclude citizens based on gender, nor ethnicity.

I am not sure what the curriculum is like for Classics 100 right now, but I am appalled if Matt Trevisan got a passing grade and then, became emboldened to write an Opinion piece concerning Greek thought. Imagine! If you didn't vote during the last provincial election and you don't think you will vote in the upcoming one, "you have unconsciously accepted an aristocratic rule." Well, Matt Trevisan sure told us! Where do I sign up for one of those august Elections Canada cards?

On reflection though, I should take back what I said. Sarcasm is mean.

I have great confidence in the pedagogy of our Classics department.

Mr. Trevisan, though, should have greater care than to wag the Athenians around like a big stick. Athenians did not see participation as "...[a] dash to the Internet to digest the benefits of each party's election platform..." or "...checking a doo-hickey and placing it in a cardboard box." They had a direct participatory system where all citizens (and there aren't that many of them) convene together in one assembly to debate issues so all may agree to the laws that applies too all.

We, because our large size geographically, have a representative (republican) system. That is, a system that places the power of state decision-making into a governing body that is seen best fit to rule. Or as Mr. Trevisan calls it, "an aristocratic rule." Maybe he

should check that politics textbook of his.

In a representative government, when you vote for a candidate, you give consent for that person to rule for you. To carry out promises of the party platform and protect your interest. It seems imperative that you must trust at least one of the candidates to perform the two tasks before you can vote. Otherwise, you have just pass your tounge to some jackass to rule willy-nilly with "the mandate of the people." Furthermore, when you vote, you place yourself in the moral position to accept the candidate that wins by a plurality, whether you voted for the winning politician or not.

To vote, just for the sake of Pete, unless he is one big ancient Athenian with an attitude, seems far more cynical.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

JERSEY GIRL

■ ■ ■ Reviews reviewed
by **S.C. Urquhart-Lewis**

“Jersey Girl” seems to be the Kevin Smith movie designed to infuriate people who like Kevin Smith movies. A yuppie ex-publicist, alcoholic sanitization workers, and a seven-year old girl? The only character who resembles a character in Kevin Smith’s usual slacker-farce is Mara, the videostore clerk. And even she is a little too ambitious (she is in



grad student after all.) Jay and Silent Bob didn’t rhapsodize about how shit the modern suburban lifestyle is or smoke a few, let alone show up at all. In fact, *Jersey Girl*, Kevin Smith’s first film after his five-part *New Jersey Trilogy*, is an ode to the pastoral goodness of suburban New Jersey dwellers over their Manhattanite cousins in parkview condominiums. To top it off, a PG-13 rating? This is a Kevin Smith movie?

The newsprint arbiters are certainly tearing this movie apart. Steven Holden at New York Times writes that it is the “...textbook example of what not to do if you’re an independent filmmaker flirting with the Hollywood mainstream.” Peter Howell over at the Star isn’t any more sympathetic, commenting: “Watching *Jersey Girl* is akin to being smothered by a basket of warm puppies.” Eleanor Ringel Gillespie of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution writes, “Who knew Kevin Smith had a movie this terrible in him?” Margaret A. McGurk of The Cincinnati Enquirer titled her review “Improbable *Jersey Girl* shouldn’t have happened” that concludes with: “A bad movie can be boring, or annoying, or amusing. But this one, sheesh, this just hurts.”

I personally wonder if any of these critics actually saw Kevin Smith’s previous movies or if they just read the blurbs at Blockbusters. Do they understand, in the slightest, what the filmmaker was trying to do with the movie? What his intent was? How this movie traces back to his earlier work? Nope. Not interested. These film-school dropouts are just scratching their balls and silently wondering why Kevin didn’t stick to shooting in black and white. After all, that’s so *Dogma* ’95.

The lone contrarian voice in this collective critical rage seems to be Roger Ebert. He writes “Smith is a gifted writer and ... he knew exactly what he was doing

by assembling these old reliables.”

The main body of criticism consists of comments that the movie was too sappy or that it had too many conventions. Steve Holden, at least, should have read the interview his own paper did with

Kevin Smith where he talks about this movie (New York Times, March 21). In it, Kevin Smith states his intention to make a sappy, PG-13 movie based on his

own life as a father. By missing out on the artist’s intentions, these film critics can only rely their own life-choices: mostly yuppie, litterati, glamour-seekers who turned their backs against their dull, suburban upbringing just cannot stand a movie where the main character ultimately repudiates his lifestyle.

The second charge of conventionality is equally as asinine. Many writers point to Smith’s previous works like *Clerks* and then say, “Look! that movie was original because it was above genre-typing, and therefore, good. *Jersey Girl* must be bad because it isn’t.” And they miss the whole point about the use of conventions, or what Ebert called “old reliables.”

Umberto Eco explains, in an essay about *Casablanca*, “*Casablanca* is a cult movie precisely because all the archetypes are there ... *Casablanca* has succeeded in becoming a cult movie because it is not one movie. It is ‘the movies.’” The writer doesn’t work from fresh blank sheets but carefully builds up pieces of existing works, conventions, and ideas. Sometimes it is done well and the mix is harmonious. This in turn provides more material for the canon from which future writers may draw on.

Why exactly is this a good movie (or at least not a bad one)? It sets out on what it declares to do unapologetically. If you’re a Kevin Smith fan, then I suggest you give it the same close viewing as the *New Jersey Trilogy*. Maybe you will catch the same elements that had run through his previous works: Catholicism in *Dogma*, the absurd in *Jay and Silent Bob*, deflated discourses about sex in *Chasing Amy*, shocked suburban audiences in *Mallrats*, and the blunt social commentary in *Clerks*. And if you’re still not convinced of the virtues of this movie, let me ask you this: who would you prefer to have as your local video store clerk, Jeff Anderson (Randal) or Liv Tyler?

SARAH HARMER

■ ■ ■ *All of Our Names* (Universal, 2004)
reviewed by **S. Henderson**

You Were Here, Harmer’s first solo release (not including her pleasant standards record of 1999) may be the best break-up record ever recorded. But, before you barf, I

ty in her evocation of an awkward meeting with a former lover in the hypnotic “Greeting Card Aisle”, but she has expanded her view to take in more of the scenery. “Silver Road” is a road song



should be clear that this break-up record wasn’t all melodrama and bullshit. It was a nuanced, brutally frank expression of the complexity of loss; it was a record about the emotional (and psychological) turmoil which can engulf you after that very complexity dawns on you. Harmer wasn’t after any simple you-broke-my-heart-and-now-I’m-sad theme, nor was she interested in obvious narrative constructions of the girl-meets-boy-girl-loses-boy variety. Instead she offered up stunning evocations of a parched landscape suddenly drowned by a desperate rain, and tying this to her bruised but hopeful ego: (“But I don’t care, it was so dry/ The grass is happy and I think: so am I/ ‘Cause I’m through thinking about you). But she isn’t through, and she knows it, and we know it. It is merely a momentary relief, but it’s a lucid, engaging moment. Who hasn’t been there?

To my delight, Harmer’s new record maintains the high standard set by *You Were Here*. Her songwriting remains deeply honest, strikingly accessible and always tuneful. But the stability she has found (in her love life, in her profession) has shifted her subject matter somewhat. She is still capable of writing of heart-break, and she manages a searing intensi-

about distance and separation; “Things to Forget” is a curious lyric about work and play, determination and escape from responsibility; and the album’s centerpiece (the epic, gorgeous “Dandelions in Bullet Holes”) seems to be a meditation on community, on the universality of thought, of experience, of feeling.

Recorded largely at her home with her friends and lover helping out with both technical and musical contributions, *All of Our Names* (like *You Were Here*) constructs the warmest of atmospheres around its songs. Removed from the often suffocating production of the major studios, and distanced from the contemporary pop ‘sound’ which would most likely have crept into the performances had she recorded in Toronto or LA, the album succeeds in treading the line between homespun simplicity and tight professionalism. And it is perhaps here where lies, above all else, the best reason for following Harmer’s career: for hers is an honest, beautiful music which has escaped the expected confines of the pop machine while still retaining an accessible, deeply affecting approach. By what mark will you measure your success?

THE GALLERY CAFE

■■■ Appreciated by S.C.U. Lao

If you've spent too much time on campus and are looking for something a little more in town, if you're looking for some place with a more relaxed environment, then consider taking trip down to The Gallery Cafe at 189 Sydenham Street. Just a little off the main downtown strip, and about a block north of Second Cup on Princess, it is probably one of the more interesting places in town. The building which houses the cafe also houses workshops for art classes and office space for the Kingston Arts Council. The cafe itself, located on the ground level, resembles a gallery with tables and a coffee bar. It's well-lit by many ample windows and gallery lights that showcase artworks. Throw in a baby grand piano and a mixed bag performance of adult contemporary, spoken word poetry, and speed-dating, and you'll grasp the creative chaos of this place.

The owner, Gerald Schwinghamer, a tall, lanky man and local electrician, opened the cafe about six months ago. The service there is warm and generous; they seemed to have sandwiches, soup, lasagna, and vegetarian chilli (I went in the early afternoon and missed lunch time, so didn't get a very good glimpse at the offering.) The vegetable soup I saw at the table next to me seemed fresh and rich. The deserts, while not overtly fancy, were tempting. I can, however, attest to the espresso. In a town where one expects regular joe in a tiny cup, the staff was willing to pack on the caffeine punch, and while still more watered-down than what I like, the espresso was better than many others I've had.

From its schedule for next month, so far as I can tell, most of the musical artists

are a combination of jazz musicians, string pluckers, and the adult-contemporary crowd. While I was there, a man referred to only as "Shekar" performed beautifully on the baby grand with a mixture of classical and new age pieces. I'm no artist, but do believe that often one sense influences another. The current showing of "Three Generations with a Paint Brush," the works of Dorothy Black, Diane Black & Lacinda Martin -- a daughter, mother, and grandmother team -- definitely made the coffee taste better. One caveat, though: while soaking in the relaxing atmosphere at my table, I leaned back and halted inches away from what looked to me like a wooden nutcracker. It was one of the display pieces on sale for \$600.

The most interesting portion of the place must be the workshops down below. Promising at its inception not just art, but also classes on "[y]oga, songwriting, money management, wellness clinics, writing and getting your book published, spirituality," This month, besides the usual drop-in art classes for children and adults, they also offer a massage seminar, a nutrition workshop, and an event entitled, "A Day with Your Drum," for which I deciphered no reasonable explanation.

Art. Music. Classes. Coffee. Lunch. This place has it all. The only thing I wish is that they had: better hours. Owing to their location, the Gallery Cafe closes daily at six, Sundays at five, and Saturdays at ten. But nonetheless, here's to Gerald Schwinghamer for opening a very fun place.

189 Sydenham Street (downtown Kingston between Princess and Queen Streets) 531-7717 www.gallerycafe.ca

SHOW ETIQUETTE by Sayyida Jaffer

I saw The Bedouin Soundclash last Thursday at The Elixir. While the band played an incredible show, the crowd was the most odd I have ever encountered at a show.

So here are some friendly suggestions on how to avoid common awkward situations at shows:

1. Don't get on stage with the band. Unless they are asking the audience to come up, don't do it. Maybe you are having a great time but you are clearly ignoring how annoying it is for the band and the rest of the audience. And if you are getting pulled down by other people, don't try to get back up there! Take a hint.
2. Tall people (i.e., guys) please don't hog the entire front row. Yes you are blessed with the height, so take some pity on the shorter members of the audience. P.S. -- guy in the brown cord jacket: thanks for giving me my space back after I asked. Beard/sweater guy: NO thanks for:
 - a) calling my friends and me the lamest people you have ever met at a show at Queen's,
 - b) and then calling me a bitch for trying to subtly move you out of my line of sight. Just remember who was the bitch first!
3. Don't grind the person next to you unless they seem to be enjoying it. I would find this obvious. I mean, can't people take a hint? If someone gives you a dirty look, lay off. Don't make them have to tell you to tone it down.
4. Speaking of dancing, try to be conscious of space. If you want a space of one metre by one metre, consider going to the sides or the back of the room. I was elbowed in the breast more times than I can recall. I really appreciated those who did move to those areas where they had the room they needed to move unobtrusively.
5. Don't deliberately spill your drink. Not only is it wasteful, but you're a jerk too! No one wants to go home covered in beer that was intentionally spilled. Mistakes happen but this shouldn't. And let's bear in mind that you did pay for it -- wouldn't you rather be drinking it then?

Don't get me wrong -- I laughed at most of this - especially when I was called lame! However there are people who do get annoyed and rightfully so. Everyone is out for a good time, just make sure yours doesn't infringe on someone else's.

Best TV and Cinema Ads of the Year - The Cannes Reel

■■■ Observed by S. Henderson

There's something plainly counter-intuitive about spending five bucks to go and watch two hours worth of advertisements. Why would I spend money to sit there and be asked to *spend money*? Why would I, who claim to detest (or at least to be deeply wary of) materialism and the corporate machine, willingly subject myself to such an onslaught of hidden persuasion, of coded messages, of stereotypes and tired tropes?

Frankly, I haven't got a satisfactory answer. And yet, I wasn't alone. In fact, much of the audience last night at the Etherington Auditorium was comprised of likeminded students, each one a walking advert for 'alternative' lifestyles: folks with shaggy, unkempt hair, North Face apparel, facial piercings, indoor toques and backpacks with all these unnecessary straps hanging down, swinging behind them as they walk. In other words, it wasn't like this orgy of materialist propaganda attracted a bunch of commerce students ready to bask in the glory of capitalist porno. Rather, it drew a wide swath of the leftist politico kids, the (at least nominally) socially aware; just exactly the kind of folks one would expect to be outside with faces painted if this were a Globalisation conference.

So what's going on here? Is this just another manifestation of the old *Know Thine Enemy* maxim? Perhaps so. Certainly it pays to be able to maintain some perspective on advertising and the pervasive effect it has on our society. And, conceivably, by sitting down to witness the most effective commercials of the year helps us to stay focused, aware of new approaches, on top of the trends. But, then again, maybe we are drawn to this collection of the cream of the crop not as wary lefties but as an eager audience, attuned to the language of material culture, enticed by the prospect of two hours of engaging, clever, frequently hilarious art.

Because that is what we know them to be: advertisements, for all of their spooky efficiency at nudging us toward one product over another, have been developed into a sophisticated and often brilliant breed of entertainment. And, taken like this, out of their expected context (as obnoxious filler during your favourite program, a frustrating stall prior to the Feature Presentation), one may experience them in a new light. No longer are they the sideshow: tonight, they are the main attraction.

The Cannes Reel is a collection of the top advertisements of the year (worldwide) as chosen by a panel at the Cannes Film

Festival. As such, although heavily skewed toward American and British advertising firms (the richest, and most prolific firms at that), the Reel provides a fascinating peek into materialist culture around the world. (There is something to be said for the window into another society provided by a largely incomprehensible, vaguely offensive, sixty second Japanese Deodorant spot.)

As far as we have learned, the British tend toward humour to sell their products, and rely heavily on the sportscaster's play-by-play over non-sport related practices as a comedic device; the French also enjoy the sports commentator, but invoke the trope of the vampy woman pushing around the eager boyfriend in at least one of the winning adverts; the Argentines prefer deeply sentimental nationalism bordering on outright shlock to sell airline tickets; Canadians respond to comedic violence and deeply sexist stereotypes; Americans rely on a combination of racialised audience targeting, biological essentialism, and an even more violent brand of slapstick. The best of the rest of the ads (and by this I mean the ones which garnered the most overt audience responses) tended to reflect these themes - even to relish them.

And yet, from the hilarious condom campaign (Belgium) which demonstrates the disastrous fallout from pregnancy (an annoying, bratty child, misbehaving in a supermarket to the dismay of his exasperated father) to the clever "transparent promotion" McDonalds ran in Spain (in which the voiceover simply tells the truth, that this campaign is going to make McDonalds a lot of money, and here's how...) the Continent did produce some very daring, edgy material.

Likely the weirdest advert of the lot was born in France: a man, decked out in Nike jogging shoes, is running (improbably, inexplicably) from a chicken. Complete with a sportscaster's deadpan delivery ("Ah, yes, it appears he has... Yes! He has evaded the chicken... no no, spoke too soon... what a display from this tenacious avian pursuer..." and so on), this spot mixed wild athleticism with a Monty Python-esque surrealism and a cutting satire of our obsession with sport. Not bad for a 60-second suggestion to buy some shoes.

Ultimately, as my friends and I walked into the restless night, our stomachs aching from two-hours worth of belly laughs and guffaws, I found myself left with an unsettling, but altogether inescapable feeling: my enemy might be smarter than me.



This is a psychological story. Not to say there won't be action and adventure, only they are the mental sort for the most part, rather than of a physical persuasion. My life unlike prime-time network TV, has a severe lack of death-defying stunts.

Well, we were in a car, at least to start. Nowadays with all the psychos on the road, that's death-defying enough for me, especially when your driver is one of those psychos, an eccentric magician-electrical engineer named Charles ('Coombs' to most, 'Chuck' to me) with paranoid tendencies and a communist hat. We survived though, so it was good start.

Toronto. "Toe-rah-toe". The center of vice and depravity for all of Canada, which meant that people got drunk on Sundays and you could litter if you feel particularly brave. We weren't in the mood for drinking or littering, and it was a Tuesday anyhow. The GO train, ineptly named as it is, finally showed up, and we issued aboard it, a company of lost souls boarding the train of damnation for a tour of Hell.

Time blurs forward, skipping the dull ride, the faceless hordes inside the sweat-box on wheels, and other little things that stick in one's memory but usually get trimmed out by the tidy-minded editor because they draw attention away from the fact that Jamie died two pages before he could let Linda in on Arthur's terrible secret. Outside the sun beats down, hammering the walls of the train and smashing through windows like a drunk to scatter itself all over the place and lay about. My pupils, thinking they would have an easy time after four straight indoors days, scream in pain. But I shut my eyes and concentrate on a much more urgent matter: keeping my stomach from ejecting its contents. The sour stink of humanity around me. Oxygen stops flowing to my brain, and in a way, I'm glad for it. This way, I can't smell anything.

In Toronto we step out of the train. My nostrils wrinkle even further upwards, and if in a perfect world would cover my eyes from the gaping sore in front of them. I have a thing about crowds. They irk me. It's a quirk, I admit, but one that makes this part of the trip all the more unpleasant. Some people, valuable and loveable only in their own minds, sweep past me in waves, threatening to drown me, though I struggle against them, being jostled and shoved in the process.

I dislike being jostled. Remember how I said crowds irk me? This is one of the reasons. I glower at them, and they ignore me. I glower more, and jostle back, heading for open air, such as it exists downtown. Out under the roof, out from these god-forsaken tunnels burrowed by some many-segmented fleshy, pink worm with neon-pink hair and a tank top, out into some semblance of the outdoors! As I go, I'm reminded of a story where humanity lives in cells deep underground, never traveling anywhere, merely nesting deeper into their individual pits. This place reminds me of that. I walk faster: in the end of that story, everyone dies as the tunnel collapse in on them.

Joy of joys! Outside the sun slams down again. It's too hot out, especially after the sterile dead-air in the tunnels, air-conditioned, reconditioned, hepa-filtered and recombined to make them into mausoleums. This is even worse than those hellpits. Chuck points to a car as we walk down the street. It's brown, British, and even smaller than a Beetle, but it's caught his fancy because its dashboard is covered in gauges, controls and buttons of a uniquely European sort. It is a Dr. Who car. I note all this in the four seconds I have before the tidal wave of humanity picks me up like Neptune himself and casts me forth into the street. The green light not controlling the cars but instead the river of life in which I am a helpless leaf.

Across the street, I duck into the shadow of a skyscraper, a demon avoiding the burning, wrathful, holy, light of God. Chuck staggers after me, drunk on the sheer humanity of the place --- damn extrovert that he is. I roll my eyes, partially out of mock disgust for his relaxed air, partially as a plea to God to get me out of this post-modern recreation of Dante's Inferno. Luckily, there's a door three steps away, and in we go.

I like buildings, let me say that to begin. They combine all the good elements of those hive-like train stations with the good elements of the outdoors. Light through glass into the space I occupy, offering freedom and escape, but without the harsh blinding fury of nature unrestrained. This building has done nothing to offend me so far, so I forgive it the sin of being far, too far, from the subway station, and slink along beside Chuck as he swaggers into a store.

We are holy terrors to salespeople, I admit. This time is no different. Chuck makes eccentric demands --- honest demands, which is the funny part. You sell canes? I want a silver headed cobra on a black body with a silver tip. Can you get me one? My job is to translate Chuck-speak. I put on an apologetic look, spread my hands helplessly, and shrug. Well, sir, I don't know. He just wants one. It's something he's looking for. Do you have one? The salesman wrings his hands, and shakes his head. We check over some of his other goods; pens, canes, trinkets for executives and whatnot, then leave. We repeat the same pattern, our demands growing more or less strange

depending upon where we are. Do you have a knife with a blade at least five inches long? Bulletproof metal suitcases? Kevlar vests? Books on quantum mechanics? Backpacks? Radio transceivers with trunk-tracking capabilities pre-programmed to the local emergency channels?

Time blurs as we do this for a few hours. It's an elaborate play we both have rehearsed, me as Guinness, Chuck as Gielgud, performing our parts with equal parts relish and gusto, but never malice. We leave a trail of people who are briefly enlightened for the few moments we meet with them, then darken once more as we pass. I lose track of where we are, what we originally came for, and what we're doing. There are minor amusing encounters, of course, individual conversations no doubt worth repeating, people and individual characters who stick in my memory, but they all blur and merge together into one great long glorious endless catharsis, a rant about life not merely vocalised, but acted on.

It's late now, shortly before sun down, though neither one of us wears a watch, when the spell wears off. That's neither good nor bad, I must say, it's simply a shift in how we work now. Before, we were performing for the benefit of the people who we were confusing, and ourselves secondarily. Now that we've worn that out, and there are no more stores, having walked down Yonge street to Nathan Philips Square, we begin acting with some semblance of normal human beings, chatting, though of course about the various esoteric matters running through our brains, synapses hopped up on adrenaline.

My mind runs at a mile a minute at rest. It has speeded up considerably by this time, and is burning off its energy at a rate to put a track-runner to shame. I babble semi-coherently, one thought ambushing and displacing another thought as nested program loops in my synapses fire off at lighting speed, my mouth keeping up only because of neural tethers on my brain dragging it along as I go. Chuck is used to this. He's the calm one. He nods, and listens, and uses as much of his skills at lateral thinking to piece together the fragments of the memes I fire at him. The Greek word for "environment" translates as "To be hit from all sides". My brain is an environment now. The energy bleeds out of my brain into the world around me. Colours are sharper, even as the light fades. Smells, now pleasantly dissimilar to the train station, are more pungent and aromatic. My feet hurt twice as much as they did a moment ago, but it's a good kind of pain, because it means my skin is now alive.

I spend an hour in that state. One glorious hour as an Avatar, a god-form, divinity in flesh as the Gnostics claim. I can shoot fireballs from my fingers and fly through the air and cause plants to bloom or wither with a touch. At this point, Nietzsche makes perfect sense to me. I am the ubermensch personified. When I come down, I feel drowsy, and Chuck suggests we drop into a Chapters nearby to relax, and make sarcastic comments about people on the street, as Bohemian an activity as either of us feels like right now.

Two hours pass in there. Time doesn't blur so much as it sags. My brain, once a tool to allow me command of the universe, now chooses to turn Judas and shut down my verbal skills. Chuck uses this as his opportunity to speak, having waited patiently, and explains some of his various theories on life the universe and everything. I mostly nod listlessly, like a heroin junkie between fixes or some tired old man.

It's nighttime now. Darkness sweeps over the streets suddenly, a cloak dropping down over us all. Nighttime is good because the people grow more human. They stop being "Worker 968CC", and become humans. I'm not sure if that's good, but it's a change, and hopefully one for the better. We stagger out of the Chapters; recuperating from the emotional catharsis that drained me earlier, and head back towards Nathan Philips Square. Now, I'm freaked out by a giant moose-shark standing in the pool there that I missed before. A woman wades out, and I imagine the monster turning to snap at her. I almost yell something, but it turns into a snide comment about the quality of the water to Charles as I realise the disconnection between reality and imagination here and slam my mouth into place, dragging my brain back down into the hell of reality..

It's jarring, that moment, to see the concreteness of the whole thing, no pun intended. I'm so used to thinking in the abstract, the platonic ideal, the perfect essence of being, that to slam back into reality like that jolts my system again. It's a sudden shock, but I don't know if it's a good or bad thing. The stone beneath me, the woman's clothes, the paint on the moose-shark, the play of lights over the eddies of the water, they all slam themselves as one big engram into my sub-conscious like a hammer slamming into the back of my skull to remain there for perusal, later.

At this point, I get up, off the bench I'm on, nod to Chuck to follow me, and go home. Life has no concluding paragraph.

-- John Bell