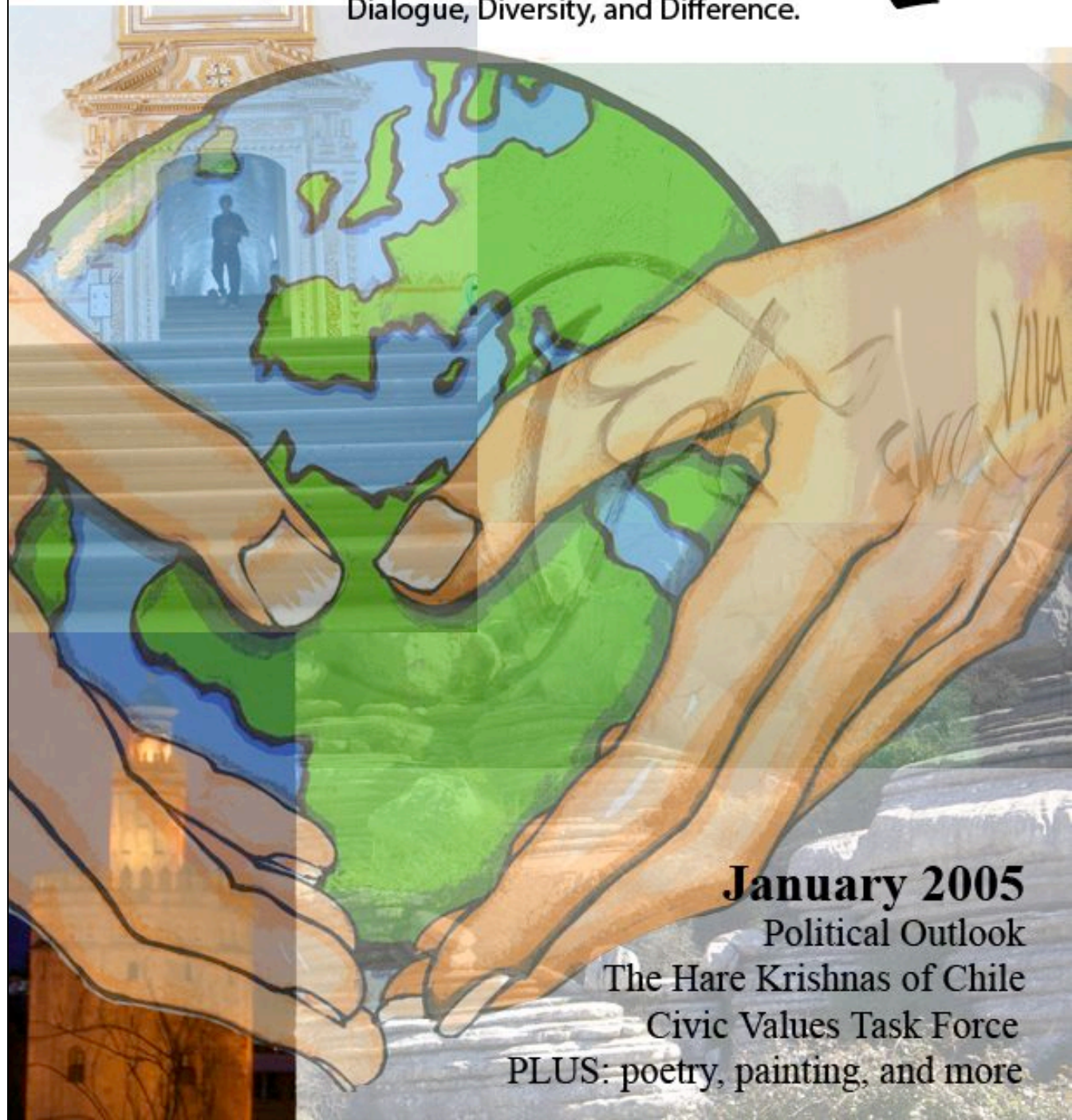


# The Prism

Princeton University's Journal of  
Dialogue, Diversity, and Difference.



**January 2005**

Political Outlook

The Hare Krishnas of Chile

Civic Values Task Force

PLUS: poetry, painting, and more

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## Letter From the Editors

Dear *Prism* readers:

So you dragged yourself out of bed November 2<sup>nd</sup> because you wanted to make a difference and when election results rolled in at about 8am November 3<sup>rd</sup> you wished that you had instead slept in another 5 minutes November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Or perhaps you're part of the camp that nearly catapulted themselves off the Blair arch stairs November 3<sup>rd</sup> because you were so happy Bush had won and that morals would indeed lead America to prosperity. Or then again, maybe November 3<sup>rd</sup> meant nothing to you. Perhaps it solidified the already deepening lack of faith you have in democracy.

Regardless of how traumatic, wonderful, or predictable this year's election was, I challenge you to continue to be apart of the democratic system our nation holds so dear. It's always easy after such events to walk away from the democratic system truly convinced that your opinion will never count, but in all honesty that's a cop out. By refusing to take a stand for those issues that you care about the most, you have already thrown up the white flag. If you voted, it's great that you voted, but voting once will not lead our nation to become the place you will love. Leaders make decisions based on the constituencies that make the broadest appeal. Whether you are pleased or dissatisfied with the outcomes from this year's election, your job as a person whose future is invested in the democratic state of America is to continue to voice your opinion when you feel strongly enough about an issue.

This year's first semester edition of *The Prism* features a wide range of literary forms of expression: from poetry to pieces questioning the very way we look at diversity at Princeton. Whether through creative writing, serious articles, comedy, or public speaking, we as the editors challenge you to continue addressing those issues that matter to you the most. November 2<sup>nd</sup> did not mark the end of the next four years, it instead marked the beginning.

Best wishes,

Annora Bell

# the PRISM

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Cover drawing by Yvon Wang '08, photos by Betsey Biggs 'GS and Elizabeth Landau '06, design by Elizabeth Landau '06

# ALL THIS TALK OF DIVERSITY—ARE WE NOT ALL HUMAN?

(SKETCHES FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF A MULTIRACIAL STUDENT)

by Aitalohi Amaize '07

In Lisa Jones' 1994 book, entitled *Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair*, there is an interesting quote that opens the section entitled "Is biracial enough? (or, what's this about a multiracial category on the census?: a conversation)":

Who are you, what are you, where are you from, no, where are you really from, where are your parents from, are your grandparents American? Are you from here, what's your background, what's your nationality, where do you live? Are you black, are you white, do you speak Spanish? Are you really white, are you really black? Are you Puerto Rican, are you half and half, are you biracial, multiracial, interracial, transracial, racially unknown, race neutral, colorless, colorblind, down with the rat race or the human race? Who are you? Where are you coming from? Who are your people? (p. 53)

On first glance, the questions (an endless bombardment, would you not agree?) seem more like a systematic interrogation than a friendly gesture preceding a handshake. This "systematic interrogation" is precisely what I had to go through, in not one, not two, but multiple waves a little over a year ago on this campus, as I arrived from my distant home in Taiwan, not knowing a single soul in the Jersey area. Having a multi-syllabic name where the number of vowels outnumbered the consonants certainly did not make life any easier.

First there was International Pre-Orientation. "Like-minded people," I thought to myself. Surely, that was the whole intention of a separate orientation for International students, for not only did these students have to get oriented to the campus, but there was all of New Jersey, and all of American life as well.

"I am from Romania."  
"Bulgaria."  
"Germany."  
"France."

"Hong Kong."  
"India."  
"Senegal."  
"Uganda."  
"Zimbabwe."

There was always a country to put to the face. A face that made sense. In an answer to the question, "where are you from?" there is a sense of belonging, of association, of representation. Surely, I thought, I would say "Taiwan" since I lived there—Taiwan was where I felt at home. So my turn came.

"Taiwan?"  
"Really?"  
"No way."

For the first time, I was forced to think on the spot about my home. I thought I had said it correctly, clearly, in the right language and all. But the looks. The faces. The questioning. The disbelief.

That was only the beginning. Who would have guessed that explaining my appearance would be one of the most difficult hurdles to overcome at a place like Princeton? I decided that in order to survive the first few weeks in this new place, I had to prepare an answer to the question, "where are you from?" One that satisfied their curiosity, one that wasn't too much of a mouthful, and most importantly, one that allowed me to be true to myself. This is what I came up with: "My mom is Taiwanese and my dad is Nigerian, and I've lived in Taiwan most of my life." Occasionally, I'd add that my father is a quarter Portuguese. But that still didn't describe me.

You can imagine the number of times I had to repeat this, when "South Africa" in an accent sufficed for the freshman at Pre-Or, and "New York" said it all when the American returned from his/her respective OA and CA trips. "Forbes Nunnery" came in handy later when we were all settled in. Wouldn't a question like "where is home for you?" be less overwhelming? "They are just trying to be friendly," I'd tell myself. Besides, what else would one say? It was simple etiquette when confronted with someone new.

Not so, where I am used to.

A name, a face, and a place provide one with a reference point. Coming to America has made me even more aware of the face that people are constantly trying to establish a connection with other people, whether consciously or subconsciously, and that it is in commonality that people find comfort. In this place called the United States of America, however, this commonality is built upon one's phenotype first, and then upon one's place of origin, whether that be the hood of New York or the suburbs of New Jersey. For a person like me, who has been said to look Egyptian, Malaysian, Philippina, Jamaican, Mexican, Latina, Hawaiian, and even Indian, it is difficult to find commonality that subsequently establishes a connection. On the basis of phenotype, a person like me is already isolated. I then turn to my place of origin, and realize that here, too, I am a curiosity because I do not match up phenotypically with the general perception of a person who claim's Taiwan as his/her place of origin. Where, then is my place?

Back home in Taiwan, the people can generally be classified into three groups. There is the majority group, which is the phenotypically fair skinned and straight-haired. These are the descendants of the Chinese people who came and "discovered" the island in 1911, much as Christopher Columbus did in the West. The native Taiwanese people, a disadvantaged minority, are the people of the tribes who now live in the island's mountains. These are the Native Americans of Taiwan. Phenotypically darker skinned, some of them can even resemble the peoples of Latin America. The third class of people, are the foreign laborers from Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia, who have come to the island in search of better wages. These laborers are almost all female and work as maids in the homes of the dominant majority class of Taiwanese people. Prior to Princeton, my contact with race had only been in this context. I was often mistaken to

be a Philippina maid, or simply given curious looks because I was different (the skin, the complexion, and the hair said it all). My having lived there most of my life, my fluency in the language and my friendships with the people, however, quickly allowed me to find my place, in my mind, at least. There I found a sense of belonging, a sense of connection with the people. Of course, the union between my mother and father never found its place, but that is the subject of another discussion.

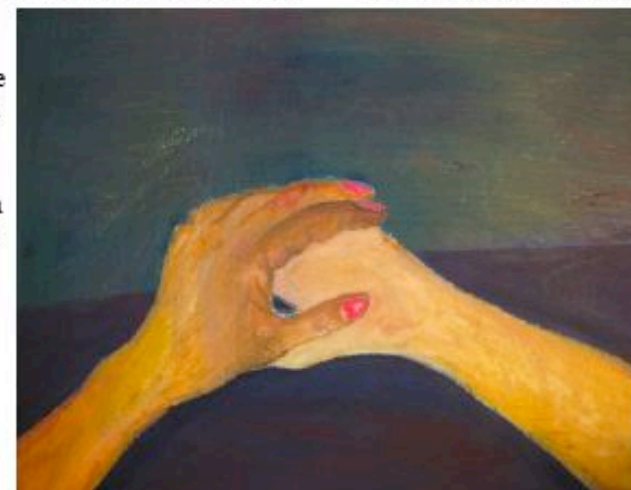
Belonging and connecting is as much about the individual feeling accepted as it is about the respective community accepting the individual. On the national level, this belonging is established through citizenship and accordingly, nationality. In my case, though I was born and raised in Taiwan and my mother is a citizen, I am still an "alien resident" to the government. Barred from legally working and voting, among other things,

I am a foreigner to the country, regardless of whether I feel a connection with the people and culture of Taiwan.

In America, the distinction is far more subtle. The remnants of the nation's history have left a land excessively preoccupied with race. The effect was quite shocking for me, as a multi-racial individual coming to terms with the concept race, not difference, for the first

time in America, or should I say, in Princeton, one of the highest-ranking universities in the country. I am a U.S. citizen by naturalization, but the question of race has forced me to rethink this identity altogether.

Why does race matter? What is the big deal? And what's all this talk of diversity? What of being a minority in a previously all white, all-male campus? In the ideal world in my mind, race shouldn't matter, but the reality is that it does. For the first time, I was called a "sister" (well, more accurately, a "sista") when I knew my only sibling was a sixteen-year-old brother back in Taiwan still trying to figure out his high school algebra problems. For the first time, I saw tables at Frist with only girls with braids and big



Sam Hoochagel '05

earrings and guys with shirts and shorts three sizes too large. I would be greeted with slight nods of acknowledgement by people I didn't even know. I was confronted with the connection that must exist between "people of color," as they are called here. Interestingly, these "people of color" seemed to only refer to the color "black." At first, I did not think much of these Frist tables until I began putting the pieces of the puzzle together—from the diversity lecture during Freshman Week, to the first meetings of Sustained Dialogue, to my introduction to the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding (what a mouthful!), to discussions at the Black Student Union meetings. Terms like "minority," "self-segregation," "one-drop rule," and "blackness" were a complete eye-opener for a person like me who felt more Taiwanese than anything. Attention to difference, I thought, was a purely human phenomenon. Race, though, was something else. It would have been fine to look on in amusement had I looked Taiwanese.

Then again, problem runs much deeper than simply being an amusing phenomenon. Here is a nation that, before the Loving Supreme Court case of 1967, still deemed interracial marriages illegal. Here is a nation whose majority still, to this day, reaps the benefits of an inhumane institution built upon the subjugation of another people. Here is a nation where Asian-Americans are still considered perpetually foreign. Here is a nation where blacks are blaming their own problems on whites, when, in the view of actor Bill Cosby, they themselves are not completely faultless. Here is a nation where the term "minority" refers almost exclusively to those of African descent. Here is a nation where, in view of interracial marriage, groups become possessive of their own women and view their own people as sellouts. Here is a nation where checking the box "black" or "African-American" on a standardized test form is perceived to give an advantage. Here is a nation that has a black channel that portrays blacks as none more than dancing, singing, rapping objects with little human depth or substance. Here is a nation that is a hyphenated America and, before anything else, sees a person's color, and makes a pre-judgment before the person even opens his/her mouth.

When translated to a campus like Princeton, there are students who will change the way they dress or the way to talk in order to fit in. What is

"in," really? There are students who, as a result, feel intimidated or excluded because they look a certain way but do not share the same taste in clothing or music style. There is only a problem when black tables "self-segregate" but few people notice the other tables. At the precept table, the sole minority in the group is expected to speak on behalf of all minorities. The colored individual who conducts him/her-self apart from the stereotypic mold is said to be "untrue to his/her roots". There are students who will not associate with, or go so far as to make eye contact with a person of a different race. Then of course, there are the ones who will only associate with those of a similar skin color.

Of course, I am speaking in generalities here, but none will deny that America as a nation, is unreasonably pre-occupied with race—a scientifically proven social construct. As one who can neither find identity within a stereotypical racial mold nor find a community of reasonable number with similar experiences, I am forced to, whether I like it or not, mold an all-new identity for myself. I have tried to find acceptance within the Asian community, but I have come to realize that for them, getting past the phenotype is much more difficult than I had previously imagined. In the Black and African communities I have come to realize that as much as I might resemble them in look, I do not understand their culture and the struggles they go through. I have thus turned to find solace on a most basic human level, but am saddened by the fact that the majority of people still cannot do so. It used to bother me quite a bit when I felt that no one shared my experiences. Many times, they didn't even bother to try to make a connection. Other times, they just avoided me altogether because I was unfamiliar to any of the categories they knew well. In general, my responses to the simple questions catch them so much off guard that they'd rather not sweat the trouble of finding a connection:

"Where are you from?"

"Jersey."

"Oh, where in Jersey? I'm from Jersey too."

(\*connection made)

And the rest is history. Or it's the alternative where, because I am unable to claim a "people" or country to belong to, I am rendered uni-faceted—so different that the only subject of conversation of relevance to me is race and diversity. Anything like

history, current politics or economics are off limits because I couldn't possibly relate.

Quite the contrary.

In reality, I could tell you all about the ghost month in Chinese folklore and carry on an engaging discourse about current Taiwanese politics or American foreign policy in regard to China-Taiwan relations.

I have come to realize more and more that it is precisely because I do not claim belonging to a certain man-made category that I am able to relate to people on a fundamental level—via interest, via personality, via ideology, and everything in between. Because I am not boxed in, I am able to mingle across boundaries and keep an open mind about race, one of America's chief preoccupations, whether I like it or not. Not having grown up in America also allows me to see things, not through the lens of race, but as they really are—multifaceted, and deeply human.

It is, after all, only human to be curious. It is only human to find those in common and thrive in similarity. The challenge, though, and I would even argue, the mindset that will begin to alleviate some of this nation's preoccupation with race, is to see things on a human level first. To break stereotypes, to step out of comfort zones. This does not mean forgetting culture, or heritage or history. It simply means broadening one's horizons. Attend a SASA show if all your life you have never been outside your suburban bubble. Try an Orchestra concert if the only forms of music you know are the beats at the Street. Take a class about a people you only hear in the news, wholly a departure from what you are used to.

I have been forced to take on this challenge, but now living it, I cannot say that I would wish it were otherwise. Connecting with someone on a purely human level is so incredibly freeing and fulfilling an experience. My brother once told me that he would never get married because he wouldn't ever want his children to go through identity problems. As a person who has and is still living this challenge day in and day out, I am happy to say that it is no identity crisis, but rather an identity creation, and one that engages all individuals. In the end, are we not all, regardless of socially constructed factors of race, creed, and color, just human beings?

## ONE STONE

by Elizabeth Landau '06

I throw the stone in one short thrust,  
The water jumps and splashes brown  
As my reflection turns to dust.

The action is indeed a must,  
No longer can I stand my frown.  
I throw the stone in one short thrust.

I've barely even trimmed the crust;  
My facial features still sag down  
As my reflection turns to dust

The powers of nature I do not trust,  
My image will refuse to drown!  
I throw the stone with one short thrust.

Identity I cannot bust,  
And "self" remains the cruelest noun  
As my reflection turns to dust.

A fresh new life and being I lust,  
But as before I must return to town.  
I throw the stone in one short thrust;  
Reflections emerge from watery dust.



Yoon Wang '06

# HARE KRISHNA, EL BARRIO ECOLÓGICO DE SANTIAGO, THE DENVER AIRPORT AND ME:

(A JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD)

by Krista Brune '06

"Hare... Hare Krishna... Hare... Hare... Hare Krishna." One Sunday afternoon last June as I was sitting in a Hare Krishna temple located in el Barrio Ecológico of Santiago, Chile and listening to this chant, I wondered to myself, "What the heck am I doing? Where am I and who are these people?" As the afternoon progressed, these answers emerged, but a clear understanding of these followers of Hare Krishna, their religion and the mantra remained elusive.

This quest to understand the Hare Krishna religion did not start out as a religious journey – it was merely a way my friends and I could get a free vegetarian meal on a Sunday afternoon in a country lacking diverse vegetarian options. Jamie, a red-haired Canadian who clearly stood out in Chile, had already visited the neighborhood and the Hare Krishna temple at the end of road. They told him to come back some Sunday for the meal and the service in order to learn more about the philosophy. Jamie thus acted as our guide, finding the right micro (a Chilean public bus) to get to the Barrio and then leading Juliette and me up the long road to reach the Hare Krishna temple.

The trip to el Barrio Ecológico itself was an interesting experience. The neighborhood was a former MIR (Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria)<sup>1</sup> compound in Peñalóen alto, high above the rest of Santiago. As our micro climbed into the foothills of the Andes to the end of the route and we continued our journey on foot, the smog cloud that hangs over Santiago during the winter became striking. The scenery of this barrio alto was beautiful – filled with lush vegetation, views of the city and mountains, and unique architecture. Reminders of the hippie movement could be felt in the style of the stores and restaurants at the entrance to the neighborhood, selling organic jam, beeswax candles and other works of art. The residents of the community appeared to lead a simple life, high above the problems of the rest of this congested city of 6 million people.

This feeling of simplicity continued as we

reached the Hare Krishna sanctuary. Many of the monks and practitioners of the Hare Krishna religion lived in this or other temples throughout the world. In Santiago, there are three different sanctuaries for Hare Krishnas to live and work, with the one in the Barrio Ecológico being the most significant. They live here, practice the religion, and make organic whole-grain bread and cookies. They sell these products, as well as their vegetarian cookbooks, throughout downtown Santiago to raise money to support themselves and their religion. As we arrived, visitors and followers were gathered outside enjoying their meal while others were sitting inside eating and learning about the tenets of the Hare Krishna religion. The monks that lived in the temple welcomed us, gave us food and began to discuss their beliefs with us.

At this point, I was wondering what exactly the Hare Krishna religion is – a cult, a devout religion with a developed philosophy, or just a bunch of crazy vegetarians with cookbooks? As the monks explained to me, Hare Krishna is a religion that broke off from Hinduism in the 1960s but still shares many of its principle beliefs. The monks informed us that they believe in four simple ways of life. The most important of these elements is vegetarianism; they do not eat meat, fish or eggs. The second tenet of their simple, pure life is to avoid gambling. They do not use intoxicants (including drugs, alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine), the third aspect of their way of life. Finally as the fourth element of their lifestyle, they do not practice illicit sex, as sex is reserved for marriage with the purpose of producing children. After explaining these practices of a pure life, the monk mentioned, almost as an afterthought, that Hare Krishna followers believe in reincarnation. Depending on how a person treats others during this life, he may come back as a cow, a plant or another human. They will experience this reincarnation until they reach a higher plain: the pure soul on the same level as the Krishna.

As I listened to this attempt to convert us to their beliefs, some elements struck me as strange.

When we first entered the room, they asked us if we were vegetarian, an inconsequential question in our minds but a loaded query in their belief system. Based on their mentality, their question was like asking someone if they believed in God. While the monk tried to convert us, I thought it odd that he only mentioned reincarnation after describing the other tenets of the religion. According to my understanding of the religion, reincarnation should be the most important element of their philosophy – a belief that shapes the rest of their actions, including their vision and practice of a pure way of life.

Following the meal and the conversation, we watched part of the service. It consisted of singing, chanting, dancing and praying. The chant of "Hare Krishna... Hare Hare Krishna..." was the mantra repeated throughout the ceremony. According to the Hare Krishna beliefs as explained on their website,<sup>2</sup> "Krishna" is a name of the Supreme. Krishna means "all-attractive," and anything that might attract you has its source in the Supreme. "Hare" is a call to Krishna's divine energy. The Supreme reveals Himself through His multitude of energies. Since everything belongs to the Supreme, everything consists of his energy. People often try to exploit that energy which leads to greater complexity in life. Followers of the religion instead try to place themselves in harmony with Krishna and Krishna's energy, thus returning to their natural, pure state of consciousness, the "Krishna consciousness." To reach this natural, pure state of mind, practitioners chant Hare Krishna, which is a mantra or a vibration of sound that cleanses the mind, freeing it from anxiety and illusion. While listening and watching this ceremony, I kept wondering why the monks did not explain this part of the belief and only focused on the vegetarianism and other elements of a pure life.

After a very long hour of chants, mantras and dances, my friends and I snuck out of the ceremony, purchased some bread and cookies, and started our long journey back to the center of the city. We were



Krista Brune '06

struck by the surreal nature of the experience... to be at a Hare Krishna temple in Santiago was a strange mix of Eastern religion and life in the "Third World" of the Southern Hemisphere.<sup>3</sup> Unlike in other large cities around the globe, Hare Krishna followers do not advertise their free Sunday lunches or their philosophies throughout Santiago- it is a cult experience that requires a great effort of effort to find. We spent close to an hour on the micro traveling through some of the poorest areas of Santiago and another half hour walking uphill through the barrio to arrive finally at the Hare Krishna sanctuary. Surprisingly, I kept encountering the religion in different ways during the next couple of months after this visit to the Hare Krishna temple.

When I visited health food stores in the downtown Santiago, I saw bread made by the Hare Krishna monks. On a micro trip to one of my classes, a Hare Krishna follower jumped on the bus, passed out their cookbooks in an attempt to sell them to the micro passengers, and gave a speech about his vegetarianism and religious beliefs. I thought my encounters with this religion would end in Santiago, but one of my first experiences upon returning to the United States involved Hare Krishna. After a long flight from Santiago to Atlanta and then Atlanta to Denver, I had finally arrived in my home state. As I searched for my mom in the Denver airport, eager to return to our house, an ordinary man holding cookbooks preaching the benefits of vegetarianism walked up to me. He asked for a donation to help his cause, which happened to be – surprise, surprise – the Hare Krishna religion. I was shocked, tired and convinced that the Hare Krishnas were conspiring to convert me to their beliefs eventually. Since that day in late July, I have had no further encounters with this religion. Maybe this odd collection of experiences has some deeper meaning. Perhaps Krishna wanted me to understand his being, spirit and this religion, which I had always wrongly conceived as a cult. If this was his intention, he was successful.

[Footnotes]

<sup>1</sup> The MIR was a leftist revolutionary movement in Chile during the 1960s. This radical group supported the socialist government of Salvador Allende (la Unidad Popular 1970-1973). It remained a relatively popular group until the coup of 1973 and the start of 17 year military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

<sup>2</sup> "What is Hare Krishna?" from: www.harekrishna.com

<sup>3</sup> Although Chile is more developed than most other Latin American countries, political scientists still technically refer to it as the "Third World." It is a developing country still striving to reach the economic levels of Western European nations and the United States.

## Green-Haired Politics: Liberals, Conservatives, and Political Debate

by Elizabeth Landau '06

"Political parties created democracy and... modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties." -- E.E. Schattschneider

One crisp October night I was strolling down McCosh Walk when my eye caught something I've been waiting to see since I arrived at Princeton: a student with green hair. Somewhere in between sea-green and fluorescent blue, this sleek mane screamed with vibrancy, a walking artistic statement.

Many readers will recognize this as an allusion to President Tilghman's somewhat controversial statement that Princeton needs more students with green hair, a remark oft-quoted since 2001 with good reason. More than an aesthetically-pleasing contrast to the norm, green hair is a metaphor for the independent thinker, the creative intellectual unafraid to express controversial opinions and ideas.

This is not to say that everyone should run to Walmart and throw bleach-and-dye parties, of course, or to say that *anyone* should. If the entire student body has green hair, the color green loses its individualism and becomes a symbol of homogeneity and, worse yet, conformity. That is the great paradox of the "call for green-haired people," and reminds us that we should take this plea *figuratively*, as a call for a greater diversity of opinion, independence of thought, and willingness to express deeply-held beliefs even when those beliefs go against the norm.

For those familiar with America's most Kerry-supportive cities like New York or Providence, asking

about the green-haired student's political orientation seems rhetorical. But if we are talking about encouraging a diversity of opinions and stimulating intellectual conversations about controversial beliefs, then the model green-haired student could be liberal or conservative, or maybe something completely different. If we are going to encourage political debate on campus and around the country, we should not exclude any voice from the conversation.

But the terms 'liberal' and 'conservative' have changed so much over time that it is worth pausing to reflect on them. According to Princeton Politics professor Robert George, "to be a conservative you must be an old-fashioned liberal, and to be an old-fashioned liberal makes you, by today's definition, a conservative." Given that Professor George's book *The Clash of Orthodoxies* is supposed to "shock liberals out of an unwarranted complacency and provide powerful ammunition for embattled defenders of traditional morality" according to the C.S. Lewis Society, it is worth pausing to tease out these political terms.

On economic issues, we clearly see how Classical Liberalism has transformed into modern-day conservative perspectives on capitalism. In the 1700s the Scotsman Adam Smith advocated the idea of *laissez-faire*, meaning "let it act." *Laissez-faire* economics lets the capitalist economy function with minimal government intervention. Today's economic liberals, on the other hand, believe certain conditions must exist for successful markets. Two examples of liberal goals are that monopolies should be regulated to stimulate competition and we should use taxes to fund welfare.

But on most social issues, liberals may trace their roots in Classical Liberalism, which purports that people ought to freely pursue their own ends. Modern social conservatism comes from two camps: True Believer and Communitarian. The first, the True Believer philosophy, contends that people should be required to act in accordance with God's commandments. The Communitarian view, on the other hand, purports that some sort of conformity should exist in society, and people should be required to conform to some set of morals.

In this light we can better understand further applications of both ideologies. New York Times columnist and professor Paul Krugman, who has been called "America's last liberal," told me that in his view

the archetypal liberal "wants some expansion of social insurance programs, especially health insurance. Is willing to see modest increase in taxes, especially on high incomes," and the conservative "wants to shrink but not eliminate social insurance programs, hold down taxes on high incomes," for example.

Now it's time to face facts: President Bush won four more years in the White House, won against someone he portrayed as a "pro-abortion, tax-raising, weak-on-defense liberal who is out of step with increasingly conservative values in middle America," according to the Associated Press. What are these "increasingly conservative values," we wonder? Let's take a look at the Bush-Cheney '04 Conservative Values Team website and find out where he believes America's values should lie on social issues such as abortion, gay marriage, judge appointments, religious freedom, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

According to the Bush-Cheney team, their conservative values foster a "culture of life"-- President Bush is, after all, "the most pro-life president in history" according to his own campaign website. Conservative values furthermore dictate that marriage is the union between one man and one woman. Judges who are conservatives furthermore "follow the letter of the law" and do not legislate, which is Bush's ideal for judges. President Bush also has a conservative investment in securing religious freedom, re-affirming "In God We Trust" as the national motto. He strongly supports Israel, as evidenced by a tight bond with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. On the whole, we see in conservatives' arguments the effort to preserve pre-established norms and traditions in all facets of public life.

Many Liberals, of course, will chuckle at above synopsis of controversial efforts. If we take the liberal view that people should be free to pursue their own ends, then women should be free to have abortions and gays should be free to marry. Yet other arguments labeled "liberal" take a more pro-active, less *laissez-faire* approach. Pro-choice means that women have the active choice in deciding whether or not to have an abortion, and pro-life efforts force women who are raped or whose contraception fails to go through arduous unwanted pregnancies. Allowing gay marriage gives people of the same sex who love each other the same opportunity that heterosexuals have for legally recognized marriages, and banning it takes that right away. We can look at both of these

views from the "harm principle" perspective and say that as long as an action doesn't harm anyone else it should be legal, but somehow "liberal" arguments do not seem as passive as basic philosophical tenants portray them.

The Conservative Moral Values Team faces challenges on other matters besides abortion and gay marriage, though individual values and upbringing will determine how any particular liberal views certain issues. For example, some say that judges who "follow the letter of the law" will obviously uphold ambiguous or outdated laws such as New Jersey's prohibition of men knitting during fishing season (see [www.Dumblaws.com](http://www.Dumblaws.com)). Some would argue that the rampant use of the phrases "Under God" and "In God we trust" excludes atheists from common American institutions like the Pledge of Allegiance. Finally, in supporting Israel some people feel strongly about simultaneously supporting Palestine and ensuring that Israelis and Palestinians each have peaceful territories to call their own. All of these sentiments we call "liberal" because they oppose the conservative beliefs, but they are really just a cross-section of the liberal population, and represent a broad effort against the status quo.

Obviously on Nov. 2 John Kerry, whom Michael Moore called "the No. 1 liberal in the Senate, and a substantial contingent of Congressmen lost vital spots in the White House, but does that mean that liberals' morals are inferior to those of conservatives? President Bush claims to support "strong moral values," but "strong" and "conservative" don't necessarily mean "universal." What about the virtue of helping people? If America is founded on "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," why shouldn't people choose their own pathways to happiness? These are just a few of the liberal oppositions that will persist despite a sense of a conservative majority in the White House.

The point is not that we should all agree. Liberals think their ideology is correct and conservatives think their ideology is correct, and being steadfast in one's beliefs is a good thing. Rather, despite the results of the 2004 Presidential Election we should continue to have the amazing conversations generated around the Frist televisions when election fever was rampant. In a country divided on party lines, it is vital that we maintain a high level of dialogue, not only for ourselves but for the sake of democracy.

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## OCEANS

by Theri' Pickens '05

I am a hybrid person who has learned two languages to capture the poetry in the eyes of their people only becoming part of the spirit that can never be contained in words

So I am the person three linguistic experiences has molded: American, *Hispano-parlante*,<sup>1</sup> *'Arabiya*,<sup>2</sup> relating the shared yearning of oppression and *felicidad*<sup>3</sup> of expression

And I am here representing all that I have seen with these American eyes, self-professed griot of the times

and my eyes whisper through almost-tears what I cannot say  
lips moving to comfort  
with selfish words  
sentences standing on point at commas, wanting to hang  
but letting go  
period

they are all eyes and lashes  
dark pools of calm  
olive skin like glass  
smiling crescent moons  
speaking musical language  
long songs of sorrow for countries  
chopped julienne by greed

and its so personal now

my tears and their faces  
invisible tears on their faces  
and their faces in my tears

I cannot cry enough these days  
for my popular ignorance  
since solitude exists in thought

I try to understand ask questions  
... *¿me puedes decir...?*<sup>14</sup>  
*"min fadlak, la afhem..?"*<sup>15</sup>  
but speaking is deceiving  
and observing is exilic  
but how much of an outsider does one feel when

his picture is peace  
and it is quiet  
*salaam*<sup>6</sup>  
dim lights overhead and folded chairs in front  
focused eyes wondering about this man

brown hues around him  
*wahid*<sup>7</sup>  
and there is a guitar to his right slowly buzzing softly  
beckoning  
a drummer fingers in rhythm flutter the tambourine in  
his hand hiss begin  
his eyes close  
*musseqa*<sup>8</sup>  
eyelashes flutter and he opens his mouth so his soul  
can escape with the notes passed from ear to ear we  
don't understand  
him in red  
*ahmar*<sup>9</sup>  
how he plays his voice with nimble fingers  
slowly pulling the air to him  
feeling  
*hanaan*<sup>10</sup>  
and I *bil istirahat*<sup>11</sup> see the *masha'ureen*<sup>12</sup> in his eyes  
*hazeen*<sup>13</sup>  
man in american clothes singing songs *sharqee*<sup>14</sup>  
*man ya 'rif? Man yafhem?*<sup>15</sup>

when *toda la gente*<sup>16</sup> think they know what it means to  
be her  
since they think saw her carbon copy in a movie  
or on a television show  
or on a commercial  
*creen que la han visto en una telenovela.*<sup>17</sup>  
her body the reflection in someone's eyes  
as she simply walks down the street  
feet scurrying to wherever  
*de prisa*<sup>18</sup>  
trying to escape the mimicked accents that push their  
way out of driveby salutes to her existence  
*hola mami*<sup>19</sup>  
really only gunning her down  
in a bloody cesspool of ignorance  
*me duelen y me repugnan*<sup>20</sup>  
she says in her walk  
ignoring them  
after all she knows it wasn't her they saw in the ricky  
martin video  
she knows that is not who she is  
and I watch as every step becomes a step of *coraje*<sup>21</sup>  
and *poder*<sup>22</sup>  
but *quien sabe? Quien entiende?*<sup>23</sup>

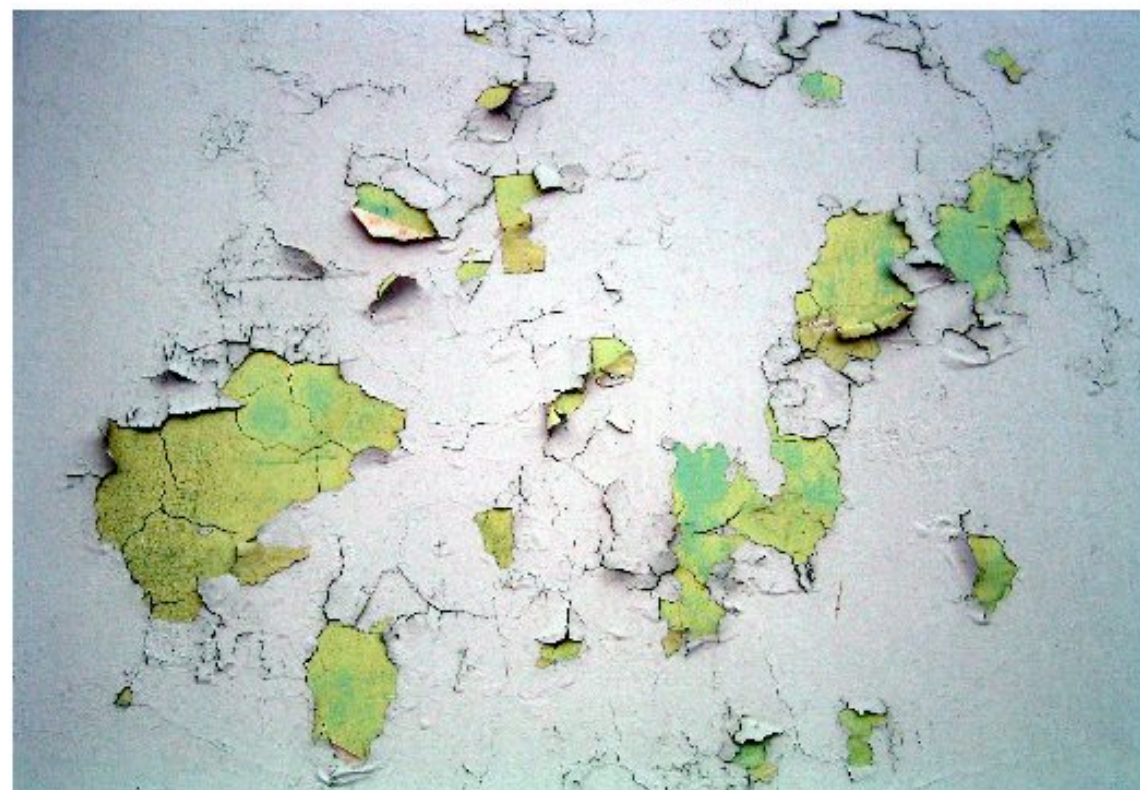
I do *ana afhem.*<sup>24</sup> *a mi me importa.*<sup>25</sup>  
Because I see the sorrow and the anguish  
and I know the joy  
and I know the happiness that comes because of the  
pain

And not in spite of it

But don't confuse poetry with romanticism  
I do not talk to brag  
I do not talk to hear my own voice  
I talk so that you hear their voices  
And mine is silenced  
In the chorus of people who have found a common  
song  
Playing in the tonal qualities that resound with both  
lyre and maracas  
I speak so I can sing with them  
since if the negro speaks of rivers then collectively we  
can croon about the ocean  
extending beyond *el lenguaje*<sup>26</sup> and *l'ughha*<sup>27</sup>  
where we first named *al-bahr*<sup>28</sup> *al-Neel*<sup>29</sup>  
knew Panama and Egypt before they were *los*  
*canales*<sup>30</sup>  
and yes we've known *el mar*<sup>31</sup>  
it is both shallow and a *'meeq*<sup>32</sup>  
our souls are both shallow and *profundas*<sup>33</sup>  
shallow and deep  
but the shallow and the deep make this vast ocean  
and I will not hesitate to wade, walk, swim or drown  
in it.

[Footnotes]

- <sup>1</sup> Spanish-speaking (Spanish)
- <sup>2</sup> a female Arab (Arabic)
- <sup>3</sup> Happiness (Spanish)
- <sup>4</sup> Can you tell me...? (Spanish)
- <sup>5</sup> Please, I don't understand...? (Arabic)
- <sup>6</sup> peace (Arabic)
- <sup>7</sup> alone (Arabic)
- <sup>8</sup> music (Arabic)
- <sup>9</sup> red (Arabic)
- <sup>10</sup> tenderness (Arabic)
- <sup>11</sup> at rest (Arabic)
- <sup>12</sup> feelings (Arabic)
- <sup>13</sup> sorrow (Arabic)
- <sup>14</sup> eastern (Arabic)
- <sup>15</sup> Who knows? Who understands? (Arabic)
- <sup>16</sup> Everyone (Spanish)
- <sup>17</sup> They think they saw her in a soap opera. (Spanish)
- <sup>18</sup> In a rush (Spanish)
- <sup>19</sup> Hey baby! (Spanish)
- <sup>20</sup> They hurt and disgust me. (Spanish)
- <sup>21</sup> Courage (Spanish)
- <sup>22</sup> power (Spanish)
- <sup>23</sup> Who knows? Who understands? (Spanish)
- <sup>24</sup> I understand (Arabic)
- <sup>25</sup> It's important to me. (Spanish)
- <sup>26</sup> The language (Spanish)
- <sup>27</sup> The language (Arabic)
- <sup>28</sup> the sea (Arabic)
- <sup>29</sup> the Nile (Arabic)
- <sup>30</sup> the canals (Spanish)
- <sup>31</sup> the sea (Spanish)
- <sup>32</sup> deep (Arabic)
- <sup>33</sup> deep (Spanish)



Dekey Riggs '05

## BORDER-CROSSINGS

by Shampa Sinha 'GS

Each time we cross the border  
the Jewish woman  
next to me on the coach  
breaks off from our conversation  
about sight-seeing and souvenirs  
to shiver slightly  
just for a moment  
Over the eleven days  
spent touring Europe  
I have admired photographs  
of her grandchildren  
exchanged recipes, shared bonbons  
An easy friendship  
but for the dark history  
periodically rising  
mountain-high between us  
She remembers  
and shivers  
each European border  
a reminder to me too  
of the borders within her  
I can never cross



Shampa Sinha '05

## ABHIMAAN

by Shampa Sinha 'GS

Untranslatable many-shaded anger  
how can I explain  
I am not "mad" at you  
not trying "to pick a fight"  
anger is so  
easily compartmentalized  
in your language  
so black and white  
one either smashes plates  
against the wall  
or settles things  
over a quiet mature coffee  
but this that I feel  
has a sweetness to it  
like the soft-pouting  
of a monsoon sky  
cloud-heavy  
with my love for you

## NON-RESIDENT INDIAN WRITES HOME

by Shampa Sinha 'GS

Glad to know you are  
drinking adulterated milk  
(It contains much less fat  
than the full-cream variety)  
In the West now  
Cholesterol is the number one public enemy  
I have seriously taken up Hinduism  
Levitation, I hear, burns up a lot of calories.

## LANGUAGE TABLES

by Rohan Kapadia '06

It's Thursday evening at six o'clock, and several students are gathered at a table in the Forbes College dining hall eating their salad, rice and "pan-Asian orange chicken" as usual. But, unlike the rest of the room, they are all speaking French. Nearby, in the Forbes Café, another group speaks in Arabic.

These are some of the scenes often overlooked but almost always present somewhere around campus at the language tables. Students taking a University language class who want to practice their skills beyond a classroom setting can attend one of the many language tables that take place weekly. They are mostly held in the various dining halls of the residential colleges, as well as in a few eating clubs. The languages that currently have tables or have had them in the past include Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, and Turkish. Anyone who wishes to participate in any one of these can find out the times and places from the residential colleges.

The tables are a setting where students can practice the language and meet new people with whom to share their experiences. Usually, the various levels of proficiency allow participants to help and learn from each other. Rather than learning grammar or formal language, which take up a lot of time in the classrooms, here people can practice daily conversational language and experiment in a relaxing atmosphere. Intisar Rabb of the Forbes College Arabic table adds, "It does provide the opportunity for graduate students, professors, and undergraduates to interact in a way that they ordinarily would not, and in the Arabic language."

These tables often offer more than just a place for people who want to continue what they were learning in their classes, however. According to Zhu Xiping, organizer of the Chinese table at Wilson College last year, "the atmosphere is quite relaxed. In the beginning of the semester, people greet each other or learn how to greet each other in a casual setting. Eventually the conversations move to food, language, etiquette and everything you can talk about in a regular meal setting, including gossip". Most

other language tables also revolve around informal conversation, just like a normal dining hall table.

Suggestions for topics of conversation are also welcomed at language tables. Anything from politics and election results to good Japanese restaurants can be the conversation topic in the new Japanese table that started this year at Quadrangle Club, according to its creator Scott Schiffres '06. Though tables are more common in the university dining halls, the Japanese table is an example of one being held at an eating club because of Schiffres, who explains that having it there is "more convenient for everyone."

Beyond language learning, these tables are some of the few places where undergraduates and graduate students meet and talk to each other. Table participants are usually a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students, either studying the languages or native speakers of it, and sometimes professors. Brian Jacobs of the French Department decided to run a French table because he thought "it was a great way for the graduate students to interact with the undergraduates," and without the table he would have "little or no interaction with the undergraduate students."

Chinese table organizer Zhu Xiping adds that coming from China, she was curious about American college life, and the undergraduates who came to Wilson College's Chinese table were curious about the daily lives of graduate students. In fact, she became a table organizer after meeting and being convinced to do so by some undergraduates learning Chinese who thought she would be "the perfect source for tidbits of Chinese culture."

Monica Michaud, French Table organizer at Butler adds, "I decided to volunteer to help with a French table because I am a first-year graduate student and was looking for a fun way to get involved in a departmental activity, but more importantly because I want to promote French language and culture at Princeton. I enjoy meeting undergraduates, hearing about their interests and experiences at Princeton, and I hope to encourage them to continue their studies in French!"

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## DEVELOPMENT

by Anh-Thu Ngo '06

Somewhere up the alley the bells sing in the dawn. Uncle Ho's City still seems steeped in sleep. At seven the swelter steers the gaunt, dark men into the local café with three rows of lawn chairs lined facing the street. Drawing lazily on cigarettes, they wait for the drip pot coffee to coalesce in a smooth black pool on glass bottoms. The men stare in detachment at motorbikers weaving through throngs of pedestrians while next to them street urchins tug at sleeves, pressing their bundles of lottery tickets and newspapers on the potential customers. Time for children of the war is immaterial. Day to day the same routes pass underfoot. They are content to scrape a living off their meager resources as long as the cycle is cushioned in serenity.

It is the younger generation, assaulted daily with sickle and hammer propaganda billboards urging collective labor efforts, that struggles to confront stars-and-stripes imperialist influence under nationalist control. From a second-story café window overlooking a traffic circle, a young Vietnamese woman speaks in heavy-accented English to an Estonian man of American exports. She, like others of her demographic, has long left the war behind (the remnants are gathered in a museum that tourists can visit) and has moved on to reckon with that vicious force called globalization.

Along the major boulevards plaza centers with chandelier-lit window displays spring up like cardboard cutouts plopped against the kitsch that is Saigonese cityscape. Peach, lavender, and teal terraced façades, in place of weather-beaten French colonial structures, ooze with the same saccharine aesthetic taste that drives the masses to tune in religiously to the music videos blaring Vietnamese bubble pop. On the other side of the railroad tracks a family of seven squeezes on two cots in the backroom so that the entrance to their narrow quarters can double as storefront and storage for a few dozen boxes of biscuits and imported goodies. Their revenue is just enough so that the babies don't cry of empty stomachs at night. Such is the victory of peace.

## SARI-STORY

by Shampa Sinha 'GS

The rustle of you  
is my earliest memory  
with hint of bangle-jangle  
and anklet-clink  
rainbow membrane of smells  
jasmine, incense, fried onions  
mapping the daily trajectory  
of the soft pupa of the woman  
you cocoon within  
as a child I clung to you in my sleep  
as if to my umbilical cord  
only to discover upon waking  
the limp folds of a discarded shell  
the butterfly had long softly fled  
having stroked my face  
with a hand made of wing.



Shampa Sinha 'GS

## THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY PROGRAM: LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

by Gladys Um 'GS

Suppose that a private university as renowned



Complements of PUPP

for its academic competitiveness as for its tradition of social-economic privilege were to open its doors to a group of smart young people from low-income families during the summer and offer them free enrichment classes, college counseling, and tours of prestigious universities with a view toward removing some of the barriers standing in the way of their admission to the best colleges.

John Webb, director of the Program in Teacher Preparation, and Miguel Centeno, a professor in the Sociology Department, transformed this idea into reality when they launched the Princeton University Preparatory Program (PUPP) in 2001. Their objective was to redress the under-representation of students from working-class backgrounds at universities such as Princeton. Coincidentally, 2001 was the year that the University admitted its first undergraduate class under the new no-loan policy that encouraged students from a wider array of economic backgrounds to apply and enroll.

"I noticed that the kinds of kids who would

be transformed by Princeton were not visible," said Centeno, who came from a work-class background. "I went to Yale, and my life was completely transformed by the experience. The university system is a fantastic opportunity for social mobility." He remarked that many talented students from socio-economically disadvantaged families never even think about applying to Ivy League universities, or apply and find that they cannot compete with their peers who have had the advantages of superior high schools, college-educated parents, intellectually enriching summer activities, and exposure to worlds of knowledge and culture beyond the classroom. While neither PUPP nor any other outreach initiative can hope to fully equalize the opportunities available to the children of all different family backgrounds and levels of parental education and income, it makes an effort to level the playing field.

Each year, about twenty ninth-grade students from Trenton Central, Ewing, and Princeton High Schools are selected to participate in PUPP. In order



Complements of PUPP

to be admitted, students must demonstrate high levels

of both academic aptitude and ambition. Funded by Princeton University, alumni, and other private donors, the program is committed to recruiting those students who are most likely to achieve the results that the sponsors would like to see: admission to the top universities.

To be eligible to apply to PUPP, a student's annual household income cannot exceed \$51K, which is the median household income in New Jersey according to Centeno. Household size is not taken into account, and so a household of two living on \$51K is treated the same as a household of six living on that amount. Further, the application process does not take parental education into consideration. Centeno admitted that household income by itself is not a perfect measure of a student's socio-economic disadvantage. "The perfect measure is nonexistent," he said. "This isn't about how much money you make. We wanted a measure that *might* tell us something about a family's access to capital, education, and other resources."

Once selected, PUPP participants immediately begin attending tutorials, workshops, and discussions at their high school. These meetings take place over all three years of the program. The summer before their sophomore, junior, and senior year in high school, students attend a six-week-long enrichment program held at Princeton University's campus, where they take courses in literature, writing, math, physics, and art, as well as yoga. They also take a workshop in "psycho-social development" led by counselors at University Health Services. The workload for the academic classes is intense, and there are Princeton undergraduates on site who serve as tutors, mentors, and social companions to the PUPP students. Each

student is awarded a stipend of \$750 upon completion of a summer program to ease some of the hardship that might be incurred by foregoing income from a summer job.



Completers of PUPP

Trips to Harvard, Yale, MIT, and other universities are also part of the summer program. During their senior year, PUPP participants receive counseling throughout their college application process. In the fall of 2004, the first group of students to

graduate from the program entered various colleges, including Princeton University. However, PUPP does not end with high school. The program's aim is not just to get participants admitted to good universities, but to help them thrive once they get there. Toward this end, each PUPP graduate continues to receive mentoring from a Princeton graduate who resides near the college that he or she is attending.

The enthusiasm and energy that the PUPP staff give to the program is reflected in participants' reviews. Justino Cortez, a junior at Trenton Central High School who wants to be an engineer, remarked the superiority of his teachers at PUPP as compared to the teachers at his high school. "They are more in touch with you," he said. "More involved with you. You talk more with the teachers. They give you more attention. Classes are way smaller here than at my high school."

Statistically speaking, the twenty or so students from below-median-income families whom PUPP prepares for and sends to competitive universities each year do not make a dent in the demographics of these institutions. However, there is evidence of potential for a galvanizing effect. In 2004, Harvard University inaugurated the Crimson

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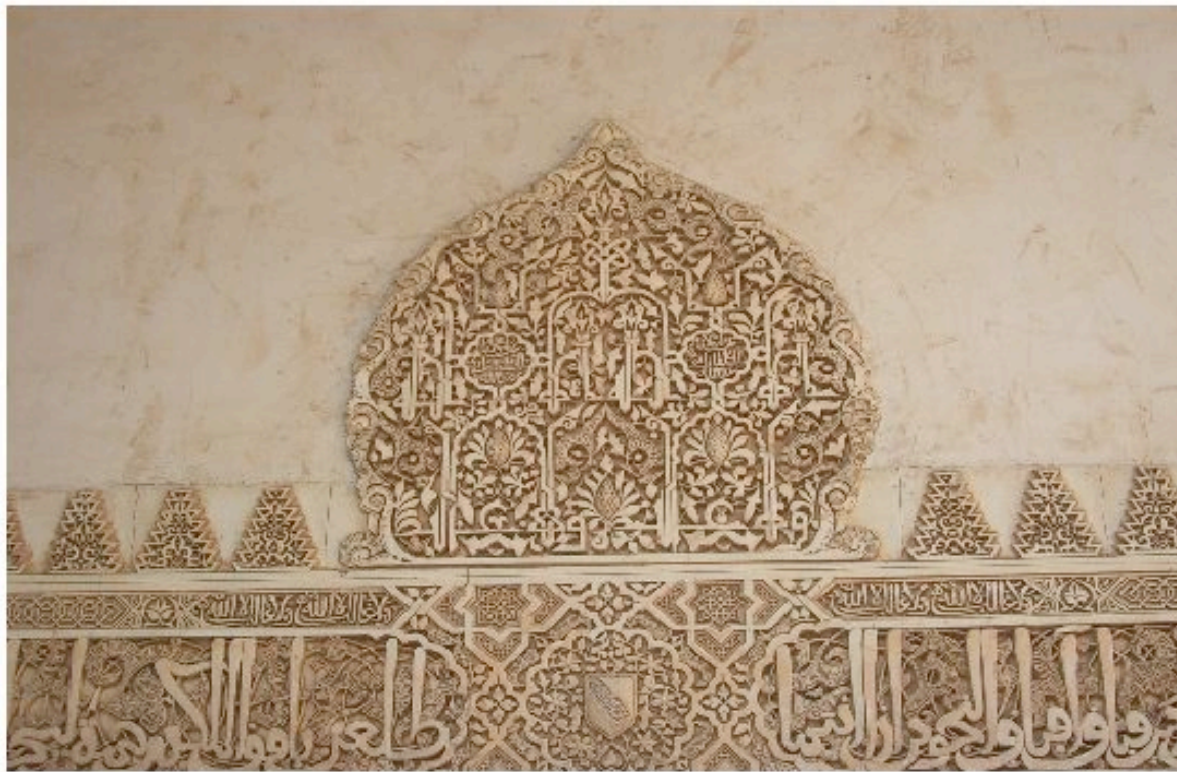
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Roban Knapka '06

**SYMMETRY**  
by Matt Knauff '08

her head turned  
screaming elsewhere

a tear drops  
silent splashes

the impact alive  
his eyes intently absent

we, apart

hands in pockets  
walking gravel roads

whistling twin tunes

**HAIKUS IN HAI PHONG**  
by Anh-Thu Ngo '06

We stop for a night  
fearing the whistles of men  
too eager for some.

Their own people say  
there is reason to lock doors  
before dark descends.

The streets are lined with  
vendors like any other,  
but these carry knives.

Or is it a myth  
to keep the rogues suspicious  
of their own shadows?



Elizabeth Linder '06



Anh-Thu Ngo '06

## COMMITTED CITIZENS:

THE PRINCETON CIVIC VALUES TASK FORCE

by Jireh Li '08

Princeton University's motto "In the nation's service, in the service of all nations." sets standards that seem impossible to achieve, but a student task force is now leading the way towards fulfilling that promise of service and civic engagement. The Civic Values Task Force, formed in September 2003 and believed to be the first student-led effort of its kind, examines how the University can prepare its students for active citizenship.

But what is active citizenship? For the Task Force, these ambiguous keywords constitute the "norms and practices that contribute to a healthy community: dedication to public service and justice; informed participation in political discourse and the democratic process; awareness of the history and resources of the community; and application of academic, technical, and intellectual skills to solve problems at the local, national, and global levels," according to the report.

Composed of seven members of the Classes of 2005, 2006, and 2007, the Task Force gave a presentation on November 9 outlining its 57-page report of recommendations that would strengthen Princeton's commitment to civic values. According to their report, which was based both on the group's analysis of Princeton and fact-finding tours of several other colleges and universities, integration of civic values "will enrich the undergraduate experience in ways that will remain with students long after graduation, regardless of their career paths."

The recommendations in the report were designed to provide a road map to focus the progress toward "preparing students for community, national, and global leadership, while identifying community resources and needs and matching them with University resources and needs." Task Force members also made recommendations aiming to attract "successive generations of students who are passionate about civic engagement and establish Princeton as the leading example of the engaged University," the

report said.

Judging by conversations with faculty across the curriculum, Task Force members are confident that an infusion of civic values into academic life at Princeton will ultimately result in increased intellectual rigour.

"The responsibility for meeting these objectives must be shared by students, faculty, and Administration, where students must form the primary drive to build bridges with organisations," said Task Force member Jordan Amadio '05. "This is about engaging the community, not just about community service."



Anh-Thu Ngo '06

## FRAGMENTS OF INSOMNIA

by Anh-Thu Ngo '06

The heat veil descends the third week of July and the market vendors feel its suffocation. Next to the stall of spices, a woman holds a cleaver, perched just an arm's length from the spiked jackfruit shell. She brings it down with the force of one hacking through bones. Squatting on sidewalk corners, the gossipmongers grind betel chew against tea-yellowed teeth and stained gums the color of blood. They squawk at passersby to look at their merchandise. Under the red flames of the *phuong* blossoms, on a road where cyclos and Mercedes share the same lane, the metalsmiths wrap their coils of worry in tight strips around veined hands. The dark years roll down passages of musk-air and the way the fish tremble on hills of salt reminds me of a blue-green expanse. I want to ride it and tame it as my carrier back to that old country.

What do you believe is most important and why? How does my religious upbringing factor into what I believe? How does what you believe affect how you live your life? How have your religious beliefs evolved, or continue to evolve? How can my academics inform my beliefs? What thinkers have influenced your life and what were their religious beliefs? Is one religious tradition inherently better than another? Is Spirituality possible without religious tradition? Is God a Democrat? Republican? Green? Apolitical? How can I respect my neighbor's beliefs if I believe something different? How should society and religion relate to one another? What am I meant to do with my life???

# The Office of Religious Life At Princeton University

We like questions.

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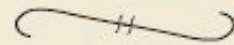
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