

The GRIOT

JOE GOINGS, EDITOR
DANIELLE MCCONNELL, EDITOR

In the records of West African history, "Griot" (pronounced gree-oh) was the honored name bestowed on wise and knowledgeable story tellers entrusted with the task of documenting tribal histories and genealogies.

Co-creator of Def Comedy Jam visits CSU

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First published February 10, 2010.

Colorado State University

By Joe E. Goings
The Rocky Mountain Collegian

The lights in the Cherokee Park Ballroom shut off at 7 p.m., the only one left on being from a projection screen in the center of the room. A hush fell over the crowd and the only voice heard was that of Bruce George, co-creator of Def Poetry Jam.

"Poems have been and always will be the strength of the people," said George, the lights now returning to a dim glow.

"American critics try to stifle poetry," George said, "revolutionary poetry."

Initially influenced by Muslim ideology he became familiar with in his 20s, George put himself on a "focused path," choosing politics as his focal point. George says poems are revolutionary in nature because poems are "the voice of the people," a voice you are either for or against.

Extending his views to black history, George provided examples of what he defined as "institutional racism" in fields other than poetry. He said prominent male actors such as Jamie Foxx and Tyler Perry have "degraded" themselves by dressing up as women, and no one seems to care.

George spoke of the "demeaning" roles in which black actors have won Academy Awards: Denzel Washington playing a crooked cop in "Training Day," "Hattie McDaniel" being a

maid and Forest Whitaker portraying a dictator in "The Last King of Scotland".

He referenced the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness," a film in which Will Smith played the role of a man that went from being poor to a success on Wall Street and the hip-hop group Three 6 Mafia winning an Academy Award for a song titled "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp."

"They won Oscars for portraying stereotypes and not for the more positive roles," George said. "There's something wrong with that picture."

The room went silent.

"He made me think of everything that goes on in the world," said freshman journalism major Emily Dutton. "His point is to get people to see into everything with a much deeper meaning. I had not thought about the things he said until now."

When George finally spoke again, his voice became louder over his microphone. His voice continued to rise and his hands moved demonstratively with each word he spoke as he gestured toward the audience, tying his presentation back to politics and changing the cultural norms.

"My poetry is socially and politically based," George said. "It's rooted in fostering change. I feel that it starts with America becoming more politically astute."

George's message was simple: You don't have to follow the status quo. You don't have to accept what the "dominant society tells you is right and wrong."

"Agitate, agitate, agitate," George said, quoting the Rastafarian figure Marcus Garvey. Agitation, he said, inspires change.

After his impassioned hour and a half long speech, he asked the crowd whether they expected his words to be mislabeled as "conspiracy theory."

"I liked how direct he was," said Jaleesa McIntosh, president of Black Definition, the group responsible for bringing George to campus. "He held nothing back and was hard-hitting in the information he presented."

After the comments, George went back to the podium to deliver the final words of his speech, words he urged this generation of writers to heed in order to create the change he feels is necessary in America.

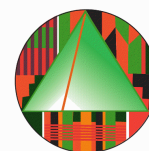
"At all costs, do not maintain neutrality. Challenge authority. I want people to see the truth."



Bruce George,
Photo courtesy of:
greatblackspeakers.com

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**Black/
African
American
Cultural
Center**

STORIES UNTOLD

The Stories...

In honor of Black History Month's theme of 'Stories Untold,' here are famous black poets and some of their most famous work.

Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou



Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

The Paradox

By Paul Laurence Dunbar



***Paul Laurence
Dunbar***

I am the mother of sorrows,
I am the ender of grief;
I am the bud and the blossom,
I am the late-falling leaf.

I am thy priest and thy poet,
I am thy serf and thy king;
I cure the tears of the heartsick,
When I come near they shall sing.

White are my hands as the snowdrop;
Swart are my fingers as clay;
Dark is my frown as the midnight,
Fair is my brow as the day.

Battle and war are my minions,
Doing my will as divine;
I am the calmer of passions,
Peace is a nursling of mine.

Speak to me gently or curse me,
Seek me or fly from my sight;
I am thy fool in the morning,
Thou art my slave in the night.

Down to the grave I will take thee,
Out from the noise of the strife,
Then shalt thou see me and know me--
Death, then, no longer, but life.

Then shalt thou sing at my coming,
Kiss me with passionate breath,
Clasp me and smile to have thought me
Aught save the foeman of death.

Come to me, brother, when weary,
Come when thy lonely heart swells;
I'll guide thy footsteps and lead thee
Down where the Dream Woman dwells.

Po' Boy Blues

By Langston Hughes

When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
Since I come up North de
Whole damn world's turned cold.

I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong.
Yes, I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong,
But this world is weary
An' de road is hard an' long.

I fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
Fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
She made me lose ma money
An' almost lose ma mind.

Weary, weary,
Weary early in de morn.
Weary, weary,
Early, early in de morn.
I's so weary
I wish I'd never been born.

The Good Man

By Gwendolyn Brooks

The good man.
He is still enhancer, renouncer.
In the time of detachment,
in the time of the vivid heather and affectionate evil,
in the time of oral
grave grave legalities of hate - all real
walks our prime registered reproach and seal.
Our successful moral.
The good man.

Watches our bogus roses, our rank wreath, our
love's unreliable cement, the gray
jubilees of our demondom.
Coherent
Counsel! Good man.
Require of us our terribly excluded blue.
Constrain, repair a ripped, revolted land.
Put hand in hand land over.
Reprove
the abler droughts and manias of the day
and a felicity entreat.
Love.
Complete
your pledges, reinforce your aides, renew
stance, testament.



Gwendolyn Brooks

I, Too, Sing America

By Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.

Since I can't go
where I need
to go . . . then I must . . . go
where the signs point
through always understanding
parallel movement
isn't lateral

When I can't express
what I really feel
I practice feeling
what I can express
and none of it is equal
I know
but that's why mankind
alone among the animals
learns to cry



Langston Hughes

Choices

By Nikki Giovanni

If I can't do
what I want to do
then my job is to not
do what I don't want
to do

It's not the same thing
but it's the best I can
do

If I can't have
what I want . . . then
my job is to want
what I've got
and be satisfied
that at least there
is something more to want



Nikki Giovanni

President Obama's 1-year Anniversary

Danielle McConnell

After a year in office Obama has been making moves in many different directions. From fixing the United States economy to health care reform, his ideas for starting anew are never ending.

In the short time that the president has been in office, there are people that either agree with the moves he is making, or they feel strongly that his promises are not being fulfilled.

When talking with several students on campus it has come to my realization that the opinions on the president are split right down the middle.

Those that stand by the president's side say that he has only been in office for a year and that the world can't expect change overnight.

He is making great progress toward the things he has promised, said various students when asked about their stance.

The economy is doing better than it has in a while; for change to even be evident at this point is an amazing triumph for the president.

Many believe that those who see no improvement fail to realize where the president had to start off. There were many issues with the United States when Barack Obama took his place in the White House, and slowly but surely he is making change.



President Barack Obama
Photo courtesy of:
www.ustream.tv

One individual I spoke with was very passionate about her stance with the president. She brought to consideration the fact that two things the president promised were better healthcare and jobs.

Although he has not made extreme strides in completing either of those two tasks, it has only been a year.

Just because the world's economy, healthcare, and overall well-being was

demolished in a short time doesn't mean that it can be built back up just as quickly.

When the president first got sworn into the office he said that it was going to be a process that could take four to eight years.

American society wants to see change right away and because that is not happening people have begun to question what Barack Obama is really doing in the White House.

The slow progress has left a large portion of society jaded about Barack Obama's presidency. On top of that, there are many that believe that he is only out to ruin our country.

With all of these speculations it is hard for people to realize that change is being made.

Although there are not many jobs, there are still jobs being created that did not exist before.

People are continuously pushing this fact to the side and dwelling on the fact that our country isn't fixed right now.

Individuals must realize not only the huge hole the president is getting us out of but also the fact that he is doing it with his bare hands, in the dark.

There is no shovel, no flashlight, and all he has to work with is his instinct and the hope that he will be successful.

Black History Month 2010

Joe Goings

The theme of Black History Month 2010 was 'Stories Untold.' The month began with an opening ceremony Feb. 3, kicking off nearly four weeks of events.

The month's activities included a multitude of activities, a number of which were critically acclaimed films.

The first of this series of films was the romance film "Love Jones." The movies were weekly events and the popularity of these movies was reflected in them being well attended.

Another film starred comedian Chris Rock and was titled "Good Hair." It's part documentary and part comedy about what society views as "good hair" and why that is.

The movie produced a great deal of

controversy amongst those who watched it. People either thought it was accurate or grossly inaccurate.

This was the lead in to panel discussion the following day, in which people talked about the movie and discussed what they felt was "right" and "wrong" about it.

Viewers of the film felt some things were over emphasized and some were underemphasized.

Several other movie views also took place during this time, including "Rosewood" and the Spike Lee film "4 Little Girls."

Other events during the month included guest speakers such as Bruce George, co-creator of Def Poetry Jam. His message was

one of initiating change and idling by while things happened around you.

He encouraged his audience to challenge authority in order to get the change that they deserve.

Several other events rounded out the month: a mixer held in the Black/African American Cultural Center, speaker Regina Mason, and a presentation of black history over time.

The month culminated in a day of fun by the Little Shop of Physics, ending a month full of memories and stories no longer untold.



CREATIVE CORNER

Resistance to Change

Tiyana Hardney

Is it impossible to try and understand?
 And walk in someone else's footsteps?
 To understand the world more...not only from
 your two eyes, but consider looking up past the
 skies.
 If it is unheard of to change
 Then why is change constantly happening?
 Yet society has not reached the change we really
 need
 Deconstructing the power and greed
 Those on top who unofficially write the rules
 Those who are educated, but continue to play a
 fool
 Not thinking beyond the footsteps they've
 planted on the ground
 Not hearing other voices, they hear their own
 sounds
 Resistance to change of equality
 Resistance to the very monopolies
 The monopolies that have created this world

The monopolies that continue to underscore
 The rights of all people
 The challenge to accept all
 The resistance to staying in your own personal
 ball
 Maybe in a world not today
 All people will be able to say...please open your
 eyes to see
 That one day that change will be happening
 Where ignorance is not bliss
 And to learn about culture, you won't just dis-
 miss
 Dismiss the notion of your new found knowl-
 edge
 But enhance one's understanding and allow
 knowledge to flow
 Then that's when society can grow
 Grow into a nation that looks past the skies
 Who opens their eyes to realize...the change.

Reflecting

Danielle McConnell

The more that I sit and listen in this class, the more responsive I become to the problems that exist around me.

I was unable to make it to class for the movie. However, after hearing the dialogue after the movie, I can only imagine what was shown.

The women in the class spoke of what it was like to talk to their roommates and close friends about the ideas behind the pornography industry.

To their surprise they were not only not put at ease but also judged for their participation in the discussion.

I wondered what kind of conversation I would get from friends of mine regarding the topic.

One friend was quite the opposite of what some of the others experienced. She had several opinions surrounding what the industry is

like, her feelings, and the misconceptions surrounding the business.

It is so often believed the industry is geared toward males, and can only be enjoyed by males. The friend I spoke with believes something different.

She talked about how it can be something that both males and females can enjoy watching.

She can see how one would find them entertaining and informational. After talking to her, I thought about what attracts people to the industry.

It's difficult to see its need. Actions seem to be one-sided, more in favor of the male.

In today's society, the ideas of pain being inflicted on females can be, and often is, seen as sensual, seductive, or arousing.

I believe this is a state of mind that

creates a further belief in the ideas of rape culture.

If men think that women enjoy being grabbed, restrained, hurt, why they would think that sexually assaulting, or raping a woman is wrong, minus the legal issues of it.

It's interesting to see just how much of our society adopts these beliefs and holds them as true.

I wonder how the world got this way, and what made it acceptable. It is disgraceful and tragic that we have come to such low standards.

As a country we need to change these ideals that some people have and change the way society views them. We need to move forward and leave this ugliness behind us.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Journey

Joe Goings

Next fall I am entering what is, in all likelihood, my final year at CSU. It's been a good great three years up to this point.

I've met a lot of people and have experienced many things, changing me for the better in my opinion.

When I first came to CSU, I was a shy kid living on his own for the first time, not to mention being more than 1,000 miles from home.

Fort Collins and CSU were new territories for me and my transition was difficult. I have family here but even they can only do such much.

However, I was given one great piece of advice from family: "College is what you make of it."

My attitude at the time was nonchalant toward that comment. I shrugged it off and continued to be shy, quiet and not enjoy my time here.

There came a time when I just knew that CSU was not the place for me.

After much debate and discussion with friends and family, I decided to stick it out.

Then I remembered the quote I was told and began to think: if college is what you make of it, then what have I made of it? The answer was simple: nothing.

No activities, aside from a position at Black Student Services (former name of the B/AACC office), minimal connections to fellow freshman in my hall and on campus, and

unwilling to break out of my shell. I decided that had to change, immediately.

To break out, I decided to apply to be a Resident Assistant in my sophomore year.

I felt that this position would force me to become more outspoken and talk to people. It would make me not be as shy and as quiet as I had been my entire life.

Not only did that work, but I became much more involved on campus as a result.

The position has connected me to many different campus organizations and allowed me to meet new people.

This helped me develop my conversational skills and not be as quiet but I was in a position that required me to speak.

My sophomore year was a giant leap forward for me, but my junior year has far surpassed it. Looking back on my first two years at this university, I was not very mature.

What I mean is that I didn't want to do anything (to be brutally honest, I was lazy) and I wanted opportunities to come to me. Well life doesn't work like that and I soon found out.

I learned to go get what I wanted. This was part of my maturation. I applied for different positions, something I would have never done in my first two years because I didn't want to put in the extra time, but time is something that I learned to manage.

This, again, was part of my maturation. For example, last semester I took

14 credits and managed to hold down working two jobs, which became three at the end of the semester.

This semester I've increased my workload to 18 credits and 4 jobs, one being a writer for the Collegian which is giving me reporting experience.

This all has taught me the value of time. It's not something to waste. It's the one thing that you can never get back. Managing it is the key to doing what you want.

As for my senior year, I have new challenges that I look forward to.

I could potentially be involved in some great activities starting next fall. I'll definitely be an RA, Collegian writer and member of the Mortar Board honors society just to name some things.

But I also could be a peer mentor, a position I am waiting to hear back on, and in the President's Leadership Program, something I am currently applying for.

All of these are invaluable experiences that can only help me grow as a person, and lead me down the path I want to travel to achieve what I want to accomplish.

THE FINAL ISSUE OF THE 2009-2010
GRIOT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN
MAY 2010.

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TO THE GRIOT SEND ARTICLES,
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Colorado State University
 Black/African American Cultural Center
 204 Lory Student Center
 Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-8016
 www.baacc.colostate.edu
 Phone: 970-491-5781
 Fax: 970-491-0492
 E-mail: bss@lamar.colostate.edu

April 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 500 years of Chicano history	2 Mixed Race Week Dinner, 6:30 pm	3 African Night, LSC @ 6 pm
4	5 Honors, Grad registration	6 Senior registration	7	8	9 Junior registration	10 G.P.S Kick-off Rm. 230, LSC 10-1 pm
11 Concert in Moby, 7:30 pm	12	13	14	15	16 Sophomore registration, Day w/o Hate	17 Awards Banquet, LSC 3 pm
18	19	20	21	22	23 Freshman registration	24
25	26	27	28 Aishah Simmons-Rape Documentary	29 Take Back the Night, LSC @ 6 pm	30	1 Celebration of Graduates