

# Research Vs. Concise

By Tanaya Mathis

Junior Staff Writer

Students and faculty members had mixed reactions to a New York Times opinion article by Andy Selsberg, an English professor at John Jay College, where he argues for students to be taught clear, concise writing, in lieu of putting all the focus on long writing assignments.

On March 10, "Teaching to the Text Message," introduced the idea that perhaps clear and concise writing is more important for students to learn. Almost immediately



COURTESY OF ANDREW SELSBERG

Selsberg's article become an international conversation piece, and one of the New York Times most e-mailed articles.

"I'm not suggesting that colleges eliminate long writing projects from English courses, but maybe we should save them for the second semester," states Selsberg in the article. "Rewarding concision first will encourage students to be economical and innovative with language."

The motivation behind Selsberg, who usually teaches English courses to freshman, came from his blog. His blog is based on concision, and venues such as Twitter, dating profiles, comments, and status updates, said Selsberg via e-mail. "Writing skills should adapt to fit the way we communicate."

Selsberg's article has created a lot of buzz within the John Jay campus. There are those who support Selsberg, while others are not too sure about his ideas. "It really depends on your major if

its important, but at the same time we need to know how to read the research and evaluate what is being said for ourselves," said Christian Maile, Forensic Psychology Graduate Student, and John Jay Experimental Psychology teacher (a course based on teaching the research paper). "So we need research paper writing for analytical skills."

This is an analysis by Maile on why we need research papers, but Selsberg does not concentrate on completely getting rid of this type of writing from the classroom. "...these forms invite font-size manipulation, plagiarism and clichés," says Selsberg in his article regarding long writing assignments. "We need to set our sights not lower, but shorter."

"I agree (with Selsberg) 100%. I think the focus should be more on the process of writing, and communicating your ideas," said Interdisciplinary Studies Program tutor and Adjunct Lecturer of English 101, Elizabeth Balla. "You can have a paper that is grammatically correct but has no substance. That is just considered polished garbage."

There is obviously a gap between those who teach in different fields, and their agreements or disagreements with Selsberg's idea.

"His class sounds like fun," said Delroy Pinnock, a junior at John Jay. "Perhaps professors are tired of reading ten pages of grammatically incorrect, and dry research papers just as much as we are tired of writing them."

Many students seem interested in Selsberg concise writing idea, while others are concerned with one thing, tuition. "Okay, concise writing, short sentences, great!" said Valentine Yele, a senior at John Jay. "We'll be paying \$600.00 for an entire semester of learning how to write short text messages sentences. That's a large price to pay, especially when you pay out of pocket like me."

On the other hand, Selsberg said he has received many congratulatory responses for his opinion article from the John Jay English department and the administration, as well as other teachers around the country. When it comes to the idea of a class being taught to properly and precisely compose a text message, Selsberg does not believe it will happen anytime soon.

"I doubt it! Creating any new course, let alone, a prerequisite, is a big deal," Selsberg said. "My hope is just that more exercises and assignments that focus on short writings are taught along with larger assignments."

Piven asserted, "My side of the fight is the side that represents ordinary people."

Piven calmly stated, "I have always been concerned with equality and poverty" and insists her goal is to "lead democrats into Washington to seek ways to modernize the system and guarantee people minimum income".

Apparently, Beck is not the only one going against Piven. Stanley Kurtz, once featured on Beck's show, also condemns Piven for inspiring a host of radical leftist community organizers since the creation of the Cloward-Piven strategy. In his article, Frances Fox Piven's Violent Agenda on the National Review, he accuses her of advocating violence even though The Nation defended her by saying she called for "civil disobedience" and "street protest,"

# Kaczynski Returns

By Eric Jankiewicz

Editor-In-Chief

This article is the second installment of a three part series concerning Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber. In this installment, Kaczynski answers questions about crime and what would happen to society if technology was destroyed. If you have any responses, such as questions or replies, write a letter to the editor.

**Q: On page 104, paragraph 210, you write, "there is no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding society" if it were destroyed. Then why did humans build technology to begin with?**

**A:** In paragraph 210 of ISAIF, I said that if the technoindustrial system were thoroughly broken down and remained broken down for a generation or so, "there is no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding industrial society." You ask: "Then why did humans build technology in the first place?"

At least until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, humans did not build technology as a result of any interest in creating an industrial society; technological progress was until then an unconscious and unintentional process. For example, it's safe to say that the man who invented the horse collar (an important technical innovation of the Middle Ages) didn't do so because he wanted to build a technologically advanced society. He did so only in order to solve some problem in his own personal life. Maybe he just got tired of the slow speed at which his ox pulled a wagon. He knew that a horse could go much faster than an ox, but the yoke used with oxen wasn't suitable for horses, so he devised a horse collar that would enable his horse to pull a wagon.

Not until approximately the 17<sup>th</sup> century did people begin to think of progress as a goal, and even then probably only a small

minority consisting of intellectuals thought in terms of progress. I doubt that there was any widespread enthusiasm for progress before the Industrial Revolution got going during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After that, a belief in progress probably did contribute to technological development. But even then the main driving force behind progress was no an aspiration to build a technologically advanced society but competition for money and power, plus the need for surrogate activities.

If the technoindustrial system were overthrown today the world would be brought down to a technological level lower than that of the Middle Ages, because many of the techniques if the medieval times have been lost. No doubt the slow and unintentional process of accumulating technology bit by bit would occur again, just as it did the first time around. When I wrote that there was no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding industrial society, my point was that people wouldn't be saying, "Hey, let's figure out how to make the light bulbs and generators so we can have electric light," or "Let's reinvent internal combustion engines and oil refineries so we can have cars." Peasants or warriors would be concerned only to cultivate their land with simple implements or to fight with lance and sword; they wouldn't be pursuing impractical dreams of tractors and machineguns.

Any concerted effort to rebuild an industrial economy would yield significant practical returns only after a vast expenditure of time, effort, and resources—a far greater expenditure than any submedieval society could afford. So, if an industrial society could be rebuilt at all, it could be rebuilt only through the same slow process, spanning many centuries, that was required the first time around. See ISAIF, paragraphs 210-12, and Technological Slavery, pages 333-34.

***Look for our May Issue to see the third installment of an interview with Kaczynski. We will also have an explanation in the next issue of how we got an exclusive interview with him. He is currently in the federal max prison of Colorado and so a correspondence through letters was the only possible form of communication.***

# Beck

Continued from front page

achieve, he can't keep me quiet." She continued to say, "he is taking advantage of the confusion and anxiety in society." Since Beck's attack on Piven, she has received numerous death threats via emails, ranging from "Die you cunt" to "May cancer find you soon." Beck, a conservative, has also targeted Barack Obama, stating Obama's "fundamental transformation of our country" is actually the "destruction of our monetary system."

Recently, the Center for Constitutional Rights wrote a letter to the FOX news chairman, Roger Ailes, asking them to force Beck to tone down the false accusations in an attempt to defuse the death threats; however, the chairman denied.

nonviolence as opposed to violence.

losing their homes and their

In her 2010 article in The Nation, Mobilizing the Jobless she wrote: "So where are the angry crowds, the demonstrations, sit-ins and unruly mobs? After all, the injustice is apparent. Working people are

**"Die you cunt."**

**-Anonymous email to Piven**

pensions while robber-baron CEOs report renewed profits and windfall bonuses... There is no science that predicts eruption of protest movements. Who expected the angry street mobs in Athens or the protests by British students? Who indeed predicted the strike movement that began in the United States in 1934, or the civil rights demonstrations that spread across the South in the early 1960s? We should

hope for another American social movement from the bottom—and then join it."

This attitude is what is fueling the rage against Piven, accusing her of wanting to encourage massive riots. Many claim she could possibly be responsible for any impulsive rampage resulting in severe damage or even death. However, some argue this is not the case. Ana Roman, alumni of John Jay argued, "It's more about empowering people," she sarcastically stated. "We don't have to sit down and just deal with all the abuse, that's crazy." She continued, "I wish people weren't so afraid to speak up because of people like Glenn Beck."

So, according to Piven why is she being targeted? With no sure answer, she explained, "I think all of us human animals have a desire to change the institutions that changes people's lives, sometimes it just