CUNY GRADUATE CENTER
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What's Happening to America?

Is America in the midst of a moral and political crisis — one that goes deeper than George W. Bush? || The *Advocate* asks America's brightest minds what's going on — and what we can do about it

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FROM THE editor's desk

I Want to Believe

"The worst crimes were dared by a few, willed by more and tolerated by all."
— Tacitus (*on the Roman Empire*)

"Evidence is worthless if you're dead."
— Dana Scully, *The X-Files*

Late last month, in an attempt perhaps to investigate the possibility of impeachment and to examine and try to understand the unprecedented national failures of the last eight years, the House Judiciary Committee, headed by Congressman John Conyers, held hearings to investigate what it called "the constitutional limits of executive power." For more than six hours, witnesses, including Representatives Maurice Hinchey and Brad Miller, Bruce Fein, author Vincent Bugliosi, Frederick Schwarz, Libertarian presidential candidate Bob Barr, and former presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich testified to the abuses and misuses of executive power under the leadership of President Bush. These witnesses gave critical, often harsh, sometimes vitriolic testimony on a rap sheet of executive malfeasance that ranged from the control of information and the criminal manipulation of intelligence, to the continuing and disastrous mistakes being made in Iraq and Afghanistan, to our administration's inability to do anything about our crumbling infrastructure and our flailing economy.

Watching these hearings, after so many years of congressional cowardice, was like eating chocolate cake in the pouring rain: uncomfortable and kind of dirty, but oddly satisfying. Listening to Bruce Fein make the argument that President Bush "has taken the nation perilously close to executive despotism," it was tempting to believe that our congressional representatives were finally taking the steps needed to defend the balance of powers from the Bush administration's tyrannical assault upon constitutional limits. More recently, Representative Conyers — the man with, let's face it, the smoothest radio voice since Billy Dee Williams — has begun to make noises about the possibility of real impeachment hearings. In an August 14 appearance on *Democracy Now* Conyers vowed to open a congressional probe into Ron Suskind's recent accusations that the Bush administration coerced the CIA to forge documents that would show ties between Saddam Hussein, African uranium, and Al Qaeda. This new claim by Suskind has received a surprising amount of attention in the major media, and has stirred up, once again, a public outcry for impeachment.

Despite the initial excitement that these unlikely events might create for someone like myself, who would like nothing more than to see the president and his political cronies rotting in a Guantanamo cell, it's hard not to feel that all of this is far too little and far too late. More aggressive, more militant, even more violent responses have surely been in order, but the deeds have been done and the men and women who performed those deeds, like so many before them, have accomplished their tasks and moved on with little opposition. Like the archetypal agents Mulder and Scully, our nation seems to stumble upon the truth only after the aliens have departed or the labs have been scrubbed clean, the camera zooming out on the figure of a cigarette smoking man hidden in the foreground. This seeming ability to see the truth only after it has lost its power and influence, points to something fundamental to our current political culture; and that is that we do not, in fact, really "want to believe." Despite the abundance of facts, we still refuse to believe that there is something truly dangerous "out there," opting instead for the more comforting and seemingly logical arguments of administrative incompetence and stupidity. For most of us it's just more comfortable to rest safe in the Panglossian assurances that in the end, after the idiots have left office, all will be right with the world again, and that our institutions will somehow magically continue to support us and protect us from evil without the burden of our constant and vigilant participation. However, deep inside we still know, and the Bush administration has taught us well, that our democracy, what little is left of it, is more fragile than ever. But why? What have we done wrong? What did we do or what did we *fail* to do, that allowed this administration to drive its ungodly agenda right through our front doors?

In this issue of the *GC Advocate* we have asked some of the world's leading intellectuals the question: "what is the greatest open secret in America?" I would like to offer at least one answer to that question, and that is the sad fact that our democracy is broken and in danger of imminent disintegration. Like it or not the United States is already in the mature stages of a dictatorship of the few condoned by the many, and unless there is some radical program for change instituted soon — and I'm not talking about Obama — there's not going to be any democracy left by the turn of the quarter century. Sadly, it appears all too obvious that we have forgotten how to rule ourselves, not to mention think for ourselves. We have lost touch with the institutional and cultural habits needed for a real democracy, and safe in the comforts of our patriotism, our SUVs, or our intellectualized and fashionable cynicisms, we have forgotten just how important that self rule actually is. As Representative Miller made clear in his testimony before congress that day, there is more at stake here than just the legacies of our bumbling leaders.

> The Bush Administration's insistence on acting in secret is more dangerous and more sinister than just an extravagantly ambitious claim to executive branch powers. Control of information stifles dissent. It insulates the administration from challenge, either by congress or by critics. Control of information is incompatible with democracy. Informed criticism, as annoying as it frequently is to people with power, is the stuff of democracy. Democracy dies behind closed doors. It is congress's duty to throw the doors open and keep them open in future administrations democratic and republican alike.

Yes, we know the Bush administration has been a disaster; however, the crimes of the Bush crew are nothing more than a reflection and an extreme extension of the real political and economic forces that shape our culture, our economy, and our futures. It is not only the duty of Congress to make our government more transparent, but ours as well.

Our constitutional form of government has, for better and for worse, historically insured a fragile but sustainable compromise between the desire for direct, participatory democracy and the need for political stability, assuring that power remain in the hands of an elite, but largely accountable ruling class. However, none of our forefathers, when they were drafting that compromise, could have anticipated the devastating power of global capital, which has destroyed the very concept of national sovereignty and rapaciously taken over our government one senator at a time; nor could they have imagined the liberating technologies of information distribution that would make functionally possible a more direct and participatory form of democracy. Ironically we are now at a stage in our development where we are simultaneously least capable and best equipped to move toward a greater, more participatory, more radical form of democracy. But how do we make that happen? For one, we need to have a serious and unflinching public discussion about the very structure of our democratic processes, which have moved further and further away from direct forms of participation and active and *lively discussion toward more and more* centralized and limited forms of influence and discourse. This discussion must do more than just talk about campaign financing, but must be willing to tackle the difficult constitutional changes necessary to make our democratic processes more direct and our leaders more accountable. We must make room for real political disagreement and opposition through the cultivation and creation of multiple political parties; we must get rid of the electoral college and devise new methods of voting that insure that no one "wastes" their vote on the candidate that actually represents their needs or their values, and we must begin the long and difficult process of engaging our fellow citizens to actually participate in their democracy. Lastly, we must build into that new system a method for the cultivation of continual change and transformation that makes democracy itself possible.

At the heart of this process is what the philosopher John Dewey called "intelligent practice." For Dewey, thought and action were of the same cloth and thinking was a vital part of the world and not something separate from it. In order to make the world we want, it will be necessary for us to adopt this spirit and to recognize that democracy is not something given, but something created. Therefore we must learn again to cultivate new and responsive forms of intelligent practice and democratic habits as a method and a means of achieving our needs. Toward that goal, it is my sincerest hope that the discussions in the *GC Advocate* this year will offer not only a rich trove of ideas and suggestions, but a space for the creation and cultivation of that practice. Ⓐ

guest editorial

Class Struggle and the PSC

TOM SMITH

The contract recently negotiated by the PSC leadership gives part-time employees less than nothing and actually increases the inequality in the two-tier CUNY adjunct labor system. Certainly, we must vote this contract proposal down. Beyond that, however, there are broader political questions at stake. What should we do about the New Caucus? Many of us welcomed their victory against the old CUC and against the CUNY Alliance. None of us would, nor should, support these right-wing, anti-adjunct alternatives to the current leadership. But how do we deal with this betrayal?

I have seen two strategies offered on the CUNY adjuncts listserv, strategies which I consider deeply flawed. The first is to push the New Caucus leadership to the left by merely recruiting more adjunct members to the union: a reformist strategy which ignores the structural roots of this recent betrayal. The second is to divide up our workforce into a multitude of segments, either into separate unions via a decertification campaign, or into separate bargaining units. This strategy only weakens the PSC as a whole, and "contingent" employees in particular. What I propose instead is to create a functional unit representing part-time workers at CUNY, and at the same time, to form a class-struggle trade-union tendency with a coherent program to mobilize labor's power that can challenge the PSC leadership which has gotten us into this fix.

The basic problem at CUNY is a university administration that responds to budget cuts by repeatedly raising tuition for students and hiring a temporary teaching workforce. This austerity program, which they have pursued for decades, may help their bottom line. It will not, however, provide quality higher education for working people.

The New Caucus won the leadership of the union after kicking out the old-line business unionists who went along with this austerity program. The old CUC didn't give a damn for those of us who work for poverty wages, with no job security and in many cases without any health insurance. Once in office, however, the New Caucus has not defended the interests of those denied full-time employment. The New Caucus follows a liberal/social-democratic program of pressuring the state, via the Democratic Party, whose candidates it regularly endorses (including ex-governor Spitzer). It actually hopes to "unite" with the university administration in pushing for more funding for CUNY. What are the structural roots of this program? We need to understand that.

> A union becomes really powerful, on behalf of all its members, only if it can organize concerted job actions

Those who argue that the leadership will move to the Left if we bring more dissatisfied adjuncts into the union ignore even the possibility that this recent betrayal has structural roots. Naïvely, they feel that the New Caucus actually looks forward to such massive adjunct recruitment. For this will give them the backbone they both want, and need, to challenge CUNY management. This is akin to the "realignment" strategy of the Democratic (Party) Socialists of America, such as the late DSA leader Michael Harrington, and Frances Fox Piven. It is also pursued today by a wing of the old New Left, like ex-Students for a Democratic Society honcho Tom Hayden. If we can pull enough people into the Democratic Party — or so the argument goes — the Democrats will sit up and take notice, and give the people more of what they rather than what the fat cats want. As a result, more people will come into the Democratic Party, etc.: a virtuous circle of rewarding recruitment with good political deeds, and good deeds with greater recruitment.

What both of these strategies fail to recognize is the structural basis of each of these leaderships. The Democratic Party leadership is bound hand, foot, money, and blood to the monied elite. Thus they are not interested in supporting or encouraging movements that threaten the power and profits of that class. With its antiwar position, and (sometimes grudging) solidarity with teachers' struggles in Oaxaca and Puerto Rico, the New Caucus has sought to position itself as a progressive union leadership. It is still, however, only on the left margin of traditional business unionism. It emphasizes its ties to the Democratic Party, and its lobbying efforts, at the expense of our interests, particularly the interests of adjuncts, but also of full-time faculty (although this leadership does favor the latter as its most supportive stratum within the union).

Though it may not be explicit about this, its recent repressive actions (rushing through this contract proposal, manipulating the DA meeting, repressing dissenters' rights to address the membership), indicate ever more strongly that the "silent partner" in all this is this leadership's reliance upon what the old CUC leadership called its "organic" relationship with CUNY management. Thus, while the New Caucus would certainly not object to an upsurge in the recruitment of members, even adjuncts, loyal to itself, it fears an increase in intensity and number, of rank and file militants. Witness its lack of organizing efforts around the current contract, from the October 2007 meeting at Cooper Union up until ratification. Above all, it fears a strike, led by the adjuncts.

The PSC leadership is deathly afraid of a strike, which could mean the end of their tenure as union officials and the loss of their relative privileges, and send some to jail. So they refuse to utter the "s word," and instead they use management's intransigency as an excuse for ramming through a contract that was the product of their own capitulation.

We adjuncts are the actual majority in this union, working at poverty wages, insecure about our jobs, lacking benefits. There is a big gap between the level of potential militancy between part-time and full-time faculty: the latter may worry about their tenure, the former have none. This is true of any multi-tier workforce. The bottom rungs will tend to be (not all or always, of course) more militant. The higher rungs will tend to be less so (but with, of course, notable exceptions), and the union officials will, as we have seen this year, tend to pay only lip service to traditions of union militancy.

Certainly, we ought to, and we have been, recruiting our fellow adjuncts to join the union. Will this be an easy task, however, if we offer no alternative to the present capitulatory leadership? Will adjuncts dissatisfied by this slap-job contract the current leadership is offering us, feel excited about joining the union, if we argue that they should support these people — no matter how awful their right-wing opponents are?

More importantly, the idea that the New Caucus will respond to such massive recruitment — even if it were likely to occur under the present leadership — by moving to the Left, is deeply problematic. Again, we definitely ought to recruit as many people as we can to the union. But we must also, simultaneously, oppose the current leadership: For they will do their best to use our recruitment as a means of co-opting adjuncts into their legislative lobbying game.

Therefore, I argue, it is an error to support these people in the hopes that they will serve us if we merely recruit more of us.

Some grad students have taken the seemingly opposite tack. They not only give up on the current leadership of the union; they give up on the union, itself. They would have us carve up the workforce into ever smaller slices, by creating more and more specific bargaining units, to secure themselves representation during contract negotiations, and thus, supposedly, cut a better deal for themselves. Behind this argument, however, is the same flawed conception as in the previously discussed position: that there is some basic unity of interests between at least the majority of the rank-and-file members of the PSC, and the current New Caucus leadership. This is nothing but a recipe for rulers or ruling classes or individual managements, and/or bureaucratic union leaderships to play us off against each other: to divide and conquer. In fact, those who argue this position, have justified it by saying that it is in accordance with "what CUNY management wants (Yes, indeed! Of course it does!)"

This position is a threat to everyone in the union. We need to thoroughly reject it, and take to heart the opposite: "In unity there is strength." This is not just a hoary old labor slogan. This is the reality, especially when facing a determined opponent. We must all join together to reject such calls to rip up the union while simultaneously building unity and solidarity with the rest of the city's working classes.

What are our real, practical alternatives? First, we must ask what it is that we need. A union becomes really powerful, on behalf of all its members, only if it can organize concerted job actions. As I indicated earlier, adjuncts have less to lose, but a losing strike could mean the crushing of the union, which would be terrible for all of us. So in rejecting the insulting contract negotiated by the PSC leadership, we must begin laying the basis for a winning strike.

Certainly, a strike, prohibited for us as public employees by the Taylor Law, would be no cakewalk. We would need to carefully prepare for it. We need to build a Left wing opposition. Right-wing witch-hunters, such as the CUNY Alliance, see the NC as "far left," because they denounce the war. That's good: but it's not nearly enough. A genuine left-wing opposition would need to draw upon the potential for militancy and solidarity latent among all job strata at CUNY. It would seek to unite the membership of the PSC with staff and students, and with more powerful sectors of the New York City working class, in particular the transit workers, as well as with students and the black, Latino, Asian and immigrant working-class communities from which the large majority of them come, to challenge the bosses, their state and their repressive Taylor Law.

Therefore, we need to create a functional unit within the PSC for all part-timers, who now have no representative body that defends their interests. While membership would be open to New Caucus members, the not-so-new caucus is now the incumbent union bureaucracy, and thus an obstacle to the formation of such a body. Why? Because the PSC leaders seek a partnership with CUNY administration, which by their own account is intransigent in opposing every single demand for adjuncts' rights and interests. So time after time, the New Caucus caves in. In voting for the New Caucus, you vote for support by this union for a party of the bosses, the Democratic Party, as our main strategy to fight (but not really fight) the bosses. And you vote for a leadership that opposes and seeks to foil our own organizing efforts, as adjuncts.

Thus, we also need a genuine class-struggle tendency, drawing upon support from other, more powerful unions, organizing among public school teachers and transit workers, with the political program and determination to fight the bosses, their parties, their government, and their agents in the unions down the line.

These will be difficult tasks. But to rely upon the current leadership for change — let alone upon CUNY management itself — is naïve, to say the least. Ⓐ

opinion

Tech Fee: Let Students Decide

GREGORY DONOVAN AND ROB FAUNCE

On July 21 The Board of Trustees of The City University of New York approved an increase to the Student Technology Fee (STF). Full time students at the Graduate Center will now be billed $100 and part time students will be billed $50 per semester. The DSC has a number of concerns that we feel must be addressed in regards to this increase. These concerns primarily focus on the interrelated issues of the current state of technology within the Graduate Center, the proposed "broadening" of how STF monies can be used, and the role of students (or lack their of) in shaping how Central Office spends STF monies.

Under the leadership of Vice-President Steven Brier and Assistant Vice-President Robert Campbell, the state of technology at the Graduate Center has *clearly improved* over the past few years. These improvements, in part, can be attributed to a fostered atmosphere of collegiality where students are *actively consulted* in order to better accommodate how they actually use technology. In this environment, IT has a chance to learn about the unique technology needs of their students while students have a chance to learn about the limitations under which IT must operate. The result is a more informed student community that can better articulate realistic technology requests and an Office of IT that is less dependent on predicting or speculating about the ever-evolving technology needs of their students. The Student Tech Fee Committee and the IT Committee of The Graduate Council have served as the primary vehicles for such student participation, as each committee includes student representatives who have voting rights. However, although improvements are being made, technology services still fall short of fully addressing student needs, an indication that more should be done to involve students at the campus level and particularly at Central Office.

> Decisions are made that dictate how students ***should*** be using technology rather than accommodating how students ***actually*** use (or want to use) technology

Each month, at the DSC Plenary, students rightly voice concerns about broken printers, money spent on expensive licenses for often inferior proprietary software, and, of course, the dismal state of our email system. While the STF increase may prove helpful in some ways, there is little to suggest *these issues* will be addressed by the proposed increase. Too often decisions are made (primarily at Central Office) that aim to dictate how students *should* be using technology rather than accommodating how students *actually* use (or want to use) technology. The result is a lot of money and effort spent on projects and services which students have little use for, or worse, which students simply can't use due to compatibility issues. Taking our email system as but one example, students have been demanding email forwarding for years now. The fact that we still do not have email forwarding (a shortcoming which can be quickly and simply addressed) is a failure of governance which no increase to the Student Tech Fee will address, and yet this is the technology issue most frequently brought to the DSC by students: it's a situation that indicates that the STF increase will likely be perceived as asking students to pay more for the same flawed technology system.

With the CUNY Board of Trustees' decision to increase the STF, the DSC strongly recommends that this increase be matched with greater transparency in how STF monies are spent, as well as a means for students to participate in this decision making process. It is fruitless to task IT, at both the individual campuses as well as at Central Office, with predicting or speculating what unique technology needs different students have. Students are a valuable source of technological knowledge and they should be the first source IT consults when making technology decisions. The lack of transparency and student involvement at Central Office makes the ambiguity surrounding the CUNY Board of Trustees' statement that "the University seeks to more broadly define the use of the fee to capture important technology costs not currently covered by the fee," particularly troubling. The STF already accommodates broad uses, such as paying for electronic databases that would ideally be part of the library's budget, funding CUNY-wide licenses that GC students either have no use for or could have been addressed with free software, paying for papers and printers which are often used by more than just GC students, and previously funding the salaries of IT personnel. Exactly how will the use of STF be more broadly defined? Proposing such ambiguous expansions to how STF monies are spent, with little to no student involvement is inappropriate. While the GC has set-up vehicles for student participation, there appears to be little, if any, meaningful student participation in how Central Office reaches their decisions.

In summary, the increase to the STF should be matched with greater transparency and valued student participation regarding how those funds are spent. CUNY should not be dictating how its students use technology, but rather, learning from their students in order to appropriately address their technology needs. Ⓐ

The authors are DSC Co-Chairs.

adjuncting

Grad Students, Job Security, and Health Care

JESSIE GOLDSTEIN AND RENÉE MCGARRY

Entering this new school year, it may seem like we got everything we asked for last year. After writing letters, calling the Chancellor, the President, legislators, and a large rally, the latest communications from the PSC and CUNY indicate that soon health insurance for doctoral student CUNY employees will be in our hands. Of course, the question remains: how soon? And, can we truly see this as success?

To start, it's best to go straight to the tentative contract settlement announced by the PSC. The proposed settlement, announced in late June and passed on to the union membership by an emergency meeting of the Delegate Assembly on July 1, does nothing to lift CUNY employees out from the basement of our nation's lowest academic salary scales. For example, the 3% increase proposed for the first year of the contract raises the pay of an adjunct on the lowest step (perhaps you, a graduate student with little to no teaching experience and without a master's degree) by $75 per course. Hardly impressive, and hardly what we deserve.

We didn't win significant increases in pay for contingent workers in the system, and other demands were not met as well. The contract doesn't even broach the subject of job security for part-time workers. For graduate students, this question is often tossed to the side, as we see ourselves as just passing through on our way to bigger and better things. But are we? Are the five, six, seven, or ten years of our lives that we spend teaching in the CUNY system really just temporary? Or are we attempting to reinforce the hierarchy that already exists? Without job security, graduate students are just as likely to lose adjuncting positions as anyone else. When that happens, without cause or justification, after compliments from students, and stellar observation reports, graduate students feel just as dejected, vulnerable, and robbed as other adjuncts. For many of us, adjuncting is what pays the bills and the tuition. We cannot, and should not, view these positions as temporary.

Along these lines, members of the Adjunct Project have spent the summer forming a coalition with other contingent workers in the CUNY system. Working alongside adjuncts from a variety of campuses, we have created a vision of the contract we'd like to see in the future. Of course, pay equity is among the top demands, as is job security. Additionally, we are united in consistently questioning the adjunctification of the university, and are committed to tearing down the two-tier labor system that exists within CUNY.

What of doctoral student health insurance, then? Certainly, we can see progress. CUNY and the PSC have promised that doctoral student employees will be added to the state health insurance plan in the near future. Details have yet to be released, though, and there has been no mention of a timeline for this process. It seems unlikely that it will be instituted for the fall semester, which leaves many students with questions. Should they renew their current coverage? Or is there a chance this will come through? Unfortunately, neither organization has released any answers to alleviate the anxiety of our student body. While all of us are looking forward to low-cost, quality health coverage, we need our questions answered and we need to continue advocating for students who remain uncovered by this proposal, namely master's students and non-adjunct student employees.

During the week of September 8, the Adjunct Project will sponsor a series of events to answer whatever questions we can, and pressure CUNY to expedite our coverage and extend it to more students.

It's been a busy summer — and the work will continue during the school year. In addition to these very important contract issues, a group of students has begun working on a CUNY Disorientation Guide, which seeks to demystify the system and make its inner workings more transparent. Rumblings of radicalism are making their way across all campuses as fledgling groups, such as the CUNY Student Movement and the CUNY Social Forum, seek to unite students, faculty, and alumni and work to create space for dialogue about what CUNY was, is, and what we want it to be.

As the academic year begins, we are looking forward to hearing from you, hearing your needs, and what you'd like to see the Adjunct Project accomplish in the coming months. Our meetings will be held on the second Friday of each month at 4pm in room 5414.

Join us, and let your own voice be heard! Ⓐ

dispatches FROM THE FRONT

Of Earth Monsters and Adjunct Lecturers

RENÉE MCGARRY

Where other cultures have an earth mother, the Aztecs have an earth monster. Their creation myth takes all our ideas about this familiar paradigm and goes topsy-turvy. The female creature from which the earth grew doesn't nurture her people but terrifies them and demands ritual sacrifice. Quite frankly, this image is what made me fall in love with the Aztecs. Sometimes, when I look at the bottom of an Aztec sculpture, the most common place to carve this creature, I see a lot of myself.

I've always been jealous of instructors who can be all earth mother with their students: caring, nurturing, and meeting their needs with warmth and kindness. Yet, while I admire it, it's never something to which I've aspired. Last year, though, I realized that while I could not, and didn't want to be, an earth mother, I was actually quite happy to be an earth monster.

We're all faced with challenges as instructors, but I think women are faced with an extra-special obstacle. Students often want us to baby them, and get frustrated when we make demands of them in the classroom. I always wondered: how can I be warm and caring and still maintain a cool distance that communicates that I have expectations? It's a question of balance, and I've always found myself on the colder end of the spectrum. My students could never tell if I was laughing at them or with them. Even I didn't know. My responses to comments or questions were almost universally sarcastic. And more than once I heard one student say to another, "No, YOU ask her!"

While I can't entirely change my personality (especially without some major behavior modification therapy), I realized last year that I could adapt pedagogically to melt the ice a little. I was lucky enough not to have to transform on my own, and I don't think I ever could have. A small interdisciplinary group of students worked with me to find the land of the warm-fuzzy, and I am sure they will agree that we always challenged each other. We're talking about dealing with me, a girl who recognized the free-write as a pedagogically valid and useful tool, but dismissed it simply because it was too "hippyish." Between the constant cracks about having a bonfire and singing *Kumbaya*, I'm surprised we ever made any progress. It wasn't their job to make me softer, but it was all of our jobs to make each other better teachers.

Part of my reticence was disciplinary. Art history is largely taught in the dark, literally. The most familiar and most used format is the good old-fashioned slide lecture, which creates what Robert Nelson calls "the performative triangle consisting of speaker, audience and image." It's a strange relationship, and more frequently than not, this threesome becomes a very intimate coupling of the speaker and the image. And the student is ostensibly just there to watch.

I desperately wanted to get out of this habit. Of course, when we start in the classroom we teach the way we were taught, and the pattern was very easy to slip into. I was lucky to have colleagues who wanted to help me. Because we came out of different disciplines, we couldn't always apply each other's ideas but just discussing a different mindset became quickly transformative. Sometimes I backslid and found myself "triangulating" for an hour at a time. I was learning quickly that it's easy to lecture; it's harder to give up control.

In order to clarify my own values, I wrote a teaching statement. I saw myself changing even as I wrote it, saying something about aiming to create a classroom atmosphere where students were unafraid to be vulnerable, not scared to take risks. I steered clear of that clichéd safe space thing, but it was what I meant. I knew that meant a lot of things about my teaching style had to change. I was going to have to embrace things I may have previously scorned. I was going to have to let my students talk more than me. I was going to have to take the images off the screen and put them in front of these kids and trust what they had to say.

I was terrified, since I knew I was going to have to check my sarcasm at the door as well. Suddenly, though, I realized that the classroom wasn't all about me. This sounds obvious when someone says it aloud, but how many of us honestly see our classrooms as collaborative spaces that are created with our students, not intricate performances choreographed for them? I was boggled by the question of creating a classroom community that wasn't about me, where I wasn't going to consistently win the most valuable player award. How does an instructor let her students direct warmth toward other students and make them love the class not her? Can anyone's ego handle that?

I knew I had to try. I began introducing critical pedagogy into my classroom, and slowly witnessed change. Some of it was student resistance. You know how it was easy for me to lecture? Well, it was also easier for them to listen to me than it was to actively participate in a classroom community.

But before I knew it, the classroom looked completely different. I turned on the lights. My students were getting out of their chairs to point to the images on the screen. My students were getting out of their chairs without me asking them to do so. They were drawing in their notebooks and showing each other the results. Their chairs moved more easily with each group work assignment. Students wanted to write on the whiteboard. They spoke with confidence, as if their opinions mattered. Their opinions did matter. I was eventually hearing their voices more frequently than I heard my own.

Last semester was tough for me as a teacher. I fought hard to make fundamental changes that went against the grain of the discipline and sought to embed them into my classroom, taking into account the both my own needs, as well as those of my students. I can't say I was surprised when on the last day of class I instinctively said, with no small heaping of snark, "All right, guys, it's our last chance to hug it out." Students stood up to file out of the room and approached me as I quickly added "Oh, with each other, not me." After all, don't touch the earth monster. Ⓐ

cuny news IN BRIEF

Cuts to CUNY Budget

As part of Governor David Paterson's effort to trim New York State's budget by $1 billion, legislators approved a package of spending cuts directly impinging on the welfare of CUNY students.

In addition to significant cutbacks in Medicaid, the state corrections department, and other local assistance programs, CUNY suffered a $26 million reduction in state support. Moreover, CUNY was forced to transfer an addition $25 million to state coffers in order to match cuts suffered by other universities state-wide.

This stick-up job resulted from Patterson's unwillingness to raise taxes on resident millionaires throughout the state. Contrary to the recommendations of his advisor Joseph Stiglitz, who publicly stated that "it is economically preferable to raise taxes on those with high incomes than to cut state expenditures," Patterson indicated that this measure would be pursued only as a last ditch effort to ameliorate the state's $5.4 billion deficit.

GC Technology Fee Increases

While students were away for the summer, the Executive Committee of the CUNY Board of Trustees was hard at work raising overall tuition fees. On July 21, the committee approved an increase of $25 to the technology fee, raising it from $75 to $100 for full-time students, and from $37.50 to $50 for part-timers.

According to the chancellor's office, higher fees "will assist the University in providing expanded services to students and building campuses that enhance every student's educational experience." Yet, it is clear that the fee increases were not motivated by an articulated agenda for improvement. The chancellor has "asked each college's Technology Fee Committee to meet and develop a technology plan that makes the best use of this revenue to meet the specific needs of the individual campus." On a positive note, students suffering financial hardship may appeal for waivers, and individual colleges have been instructed to assist needy students wherever possible.

Graduate Center Gets New Nurse Practitioner, Finally

After nearly a year without a certified, on-site Nurse Practitioner at the Graduate Center's main campus, the Wellness Center has finally filled this outstanding void by hiring Adraenne Bowe. The Health Services Center lost the invaluable services of Mary P. Clancy in July 2007. Since then, students have been without services promised to them through payment of their student activity fee. The Wellness Center is a vital source for student health and well-being.

In addition to providing free medical consultations, physicals, and other care to enrolled students, the center offers critical services to the most vulnerable members of the community: those who have little or no insurance. The arrival of Bowe provides much-needed relief.

Bowe comes to the Graduate Center Wellness Center with an extensive background in health care.

While working primarily in urban settings, Bowe has received certification as a Nurse Practitioner in family health (FNP), pediatrics (PNP), and adult health (ANP). Her past experience includes work in occupational health, community-based health clinics, outpatient hospital clinics, and emergency care, as well as years working in college-based communities. Ⓐ

grad life

The Summer Fling

ERIN LEE MOCK

I'll never forget approaching the field in Prospect Park last summer for a friendly game of Graduate Center Humanities-on-Humanities softball. I squinted in the sun, searching for the group to which I belonged. Looking to the left, I saw a group of athletic teenagers sprinting with ease around their diamond. On the right, a number of corporate-by-day players, whose company uniforms barely revealed gym-toned physiques, and whose casual high-fives gave away a slightly off-putting confidence. In the middle, I found my people: a mass of twenty-and-thirty-somethings, categorizable only as skinny or chubby, faces flushed from unaccustomed sun exposure, wandering aimlessly around the bases, already discussing the location for follow-up beers.

Don't get me wrong: I absolutely belonged with this motley crew. My blindingly pale, doughy calves were peeking out for the first time in months (years?) from beneath a pair of shorts, and the taste of a cold Hoegaarden was on my mind from the moment I stepped foot off the F train.

We were all engaged in the well-meaning activity, more psychological even than physical, of doing what we could to purge our sedentary cerebral geek identities for just a moment. Here we were, playing a sport, moving our bodies, and nobody could be picked last.

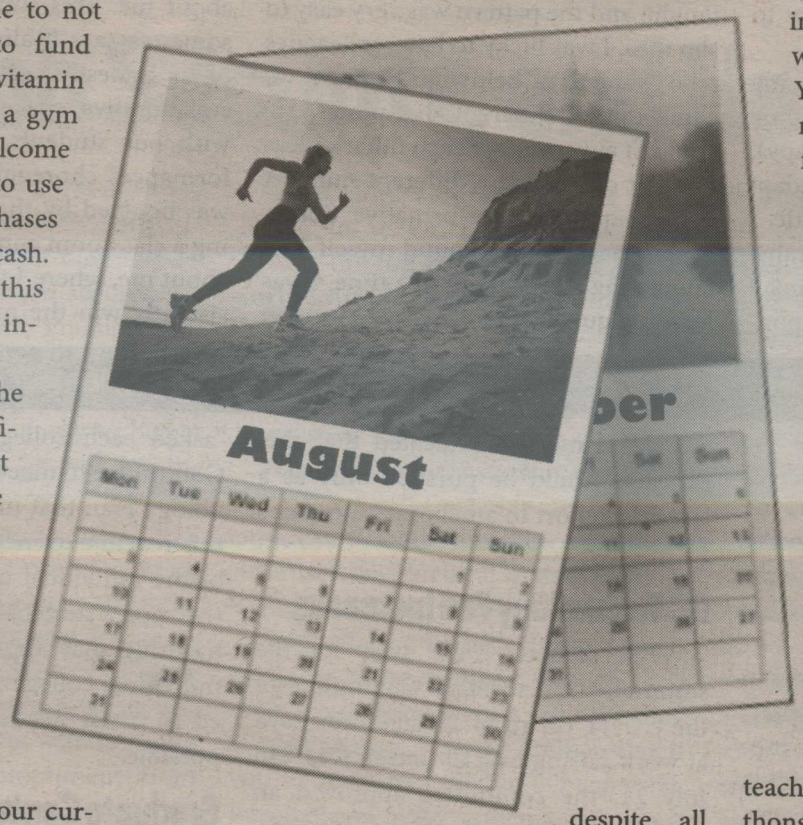
Graduate school is unhealthy. It does not have to be, it's not in all cases, but I would venture that the average graduate student, without intervention, is essentially a physical and emotional mess. Most of us arrive with a good deal of pre-disposition: we turned to books *because* we weren't jocks, *because* we had more faith in our minds than in our bodies, *because* reading didn't aggravate our allergies, asthma, Osgood-Schlatters disease. Our bodies were uncooperative and, more often than not, in our way. We were accepted into graduate school because our college studies had remained uninterrupted by rowing practice or away-meets with the university track team. Our writing was often fueled by the creative flights associated with hunger, caffeine highs, and re-ups of high fructose corn syrup, after nights of furious alcoholic deliberations with others like ourselves about all those cerebral topics that allowed us to forget about our bodies.

What's more, while reading and discussing what excited us, many of us in the Humanities found plenty to romanticize or, at least enable, our frailties and indulgences. I often justify my dependence on alcohol and caffeine through literary allusion: I drink hard like Joan Didion, Dashiell Hammett and Lillian Hellman, Ernest Hemingway, Harold Ross. I analyze the feeling of my body under the influence, like Walter Benjamin considered carefully his experiences of hashish and William Burroughs contemplated the world through the glaze of heroin. Many of us found inspiration not only in our heroes' bad behaviors but in their justifications of, and contrarian delight in, those behaviors, as embodied in G. K. Chesterson's snotty complaint that "[t]he trouble with always trying to preserve the health of the body is that it is so difficult to do without destroying the health of the mind," and Mark Twain's famous remark that, "[t]he only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd druther not." I find moderate drinkers, tea-sippers, and healthy breakfast eaters suspect and smug. People who function without the aid of at least 2 cups of my own required morning stimulant seem somehow to be quietly saying, "I'm better than you." And I comfort myself, like many of my academic peers, by feeling smarter.

So, here I arrive, with so many others like me, at graduate school. Welcome to 2/2 teaching loads while taking 3 courses of your own. Welcome to a place where you can never stay up late enough because there's always something you *should* be reading or writing or grading. Welcome to a gang of fellow social misfits, all of whom need alcohol as a social lubricant and a way of forgetting our many, many inadequacies. Welcome to not enough money to fund organic produce, vitamin supplements, and a gym membership. Welcome to too little time to use any of these purchases even if we had the cash. Welcome to all of this . . . without health insurance.

And while the chances of our finally getting decent health insurance look quite good (thanks to everyone who worked in that effort!), very little else about the unhealthy culture of academia is likely to change, if our current professors can be looked to as examples of what years of academia do to the body. Certainly, eight hours in the sack each night is even less possible when working toward tenure Going for your morning run around campus is even less appealing when you're teaching a 4/4 load. And coming home to make a healthful home-cooked meal, much less shopping the farmer's market for fresh ingredients, seems even less likely with committee work piled on top of ungraded papers and articles waiting for revision. One professor I know carries a flask in her suit jacket pocket so that she can start drinking on the train on the way home following afternoon classes. Another professor's voice sounds twenty years older thanks to a strict diet of chain-smoking and candy since graduate school. A third professor claims he has not slept more than four hours a night since he started as a first year in the Ivy League thirty years ago. While the luckiest of us might gain tenure, which allows greater possibilities for lifestyle changes (a favorite professor of mine balances out her heavy drinking with a private yoga coach), our lack of health too easily becomes part of our academic identities. We laugh publicly about our borderline alcoholism, frighteningly sparse and/or processed diets, our pathological insecurity, untreated depression and anxiety, insomnia, and sedentary nature. In an atmosphere that can be competitive and divisive by field, discipline, period, or theoretical approach, it seems that our overall terrible health is one thing many of us share in common.

Moreover, many of us don't want this culture to change because we entered it with all these predispositions; joining a group of people who actually shared, defended — lauded even — the most commonly condemned of our bad habits, made us feel better about ourselves and,



despite all evidence to the contrary, surprisingly whole. It's not the problem we don't speak about, the problem we don't admit, or the problem that has no name, but the problem we shout from the rooftops and, in doing so, unite in its perpetuation. It is as if, in accepting the infantilization we experience as graduate students, we embrace a childhood image of adulthood, where bad is good, we can eat ice cream for every meal if we want to (damn the parents/bourgeoisie/medical establishment/government for suggesting we clean the vegetables off our plate first) and we'll stay up as late as we please, thank you very much!

With all this in mind, I embarked this summer on a health quest. While studying for my foreign language exam and my orals and preparing three classes for the fall semester, I sadly realized this might be my last chance to explore what it felt like to be in decent health. I vowed to exercise at least five days per week, to cut down on my ample intake of sugar and alcohol, and try to get many good nights of sleep. I set up a calendar above my desk to record and reward myself with stickers (seriously, it was mighty effective) for days without reliance on liquor and insulin spikes to fuel my reading or to chill out, and stickers for the days I stuck to my fitness routine. My calendar is bright with colorful metallic stars and, without question, I feel better. My sleeping habits have dramatically improved. I have been cooking, with actual recipes. I have replaced a significant number of black coffees with green teas. I have stopped feeling like I have a constant headache. And though I have not done it yet, the idea of learning to meditate suddenly doesn't seem like a total joke.

What is a joke, and a cruel one, is any notion that this health kick of mine will continue when classes resume next week. I don't blame the institution of academia entirely — I watched one classmate run the New York City marathon last fall after months of his turning down the free wine at departmental receptions — but I don't think it's a cop-out to say academia functions in a way that makes trying to care for one's body and soul, in addition to one's mind, teaching evaluations, and publication credits, more than a bit difficult.

My current plan is to stick with this health journey, but even now the idea of getting an hour of exercise in, showering, and getting dressed before my two hour commute to teaching sounds a bit farfetched. Making healthy lunches to take on my 14-hour teaching-office hours-teaching-office hours-teaching-office hours-class marathons seems overwhelming. Sleeping eight (hell, five) hours a night, with my orals lists looming seems unlikely. And hardest of all, I don't know how I'm going to get through a faculty membership reception without a glass of the GC's cheap wine. Like the graduate student softball player trying an athletic identity as a summer lark, I fear that my unhealthy inner geek, when my newfound health nut is faced with the slightest pressure, will always prevail. Ⓐ

political analysis

China, New York, and the American Way

JUSTIN ROGERS-COOPER

What does the success of the "genocide" Olympics mean for the future of US politics, and even for the election in November? At first glance, this may sound like a minor foreign policy issue. After all, didn't George Bush basically agree with people like Steven Spielberg about the need to "honestly" criticize the Chinese regime? Isn't it true that Spielberg was able to cut ties with a government that Bush didn't have the luxury to spurn outright? In other words, isn't it simply inevitable that "we" can't "afford" to divest from China, politically or economically?

Remember, however, that the inevitability of America's economic relationship with China comes as a result of very specific trade policies. These policies have become a full-blown economic integration, and the political consequences of this should give the average American serious pause.

The facts are everywhere. The US trade deficit with China runs about 117 billion dollars a year. For much of this decade, foreign direct investment (FDI) from the United States runs at least $3 billion a year. Much more importantly, China purchased hundreds of billions of dollars of US debt during the Bush term. This was probably very helpful for the Congressional "emergency" spending used for Iraq and Afghanistan. In other words, China is basically paying for the war on terror and China now has over $1.2 *trillion* of US-backed assets. This is the largest currency reserve in the world and createsserious leverage for China over Washington and New York.

More ominously, last year China announced it was starting a sovereign wealth fund, like the Abu Dhabi one that recently bailed out Citigroup. They then promptly handed $5 billion to Morgan Stanley. These ties between Wall Street and Beijing are moving in directions that most American politicians can't publicly follow. Relations between New York and Beijing elites are similar to the US corporate involvement with Nazi Germany before World War II, when the Ford Motor Company and IBM worked closely with the Third Reich.

In the *New York Times*, Keith Bradsher has meticulously chronicled the way Wall Street hedge funds invested in and supported all those security cameras China installed for the Olympics. There are people working at Oppenheimer and Company right here in Manhattan who successfully profited off Chinese political repression. Those talking of divestment from China should start right here in lower Manhattan.

What's scary is that US corporate investment in China is just getting started. Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo work with the Chinese to censor internet searches, and profit handsomely. General Motors *alone* wants to invest three billion dollars in China. The Chinese embassy boasts about General Electric teaming up with China Life Insurance Group to "explore finance and other industries together." General Electric is the sixth largest corporation in the world. This is the same General Electric that owns and runs NBC. NBC, of course, just made about a billion dollars on the Olympics. And the Olympics have helped to legitimate China's rise.

The meaning of all this can't be stated strongly enough. The US-China relationship is the most important issue, event, and story of our lives.

When we talk about the economy as a presidential issue, we are talking about China. The fact is that US corporate firms have already created a *de facto* American foreign policy towards China. The entanglement of US and Chinese investments, as with General Electric and China Life Insurance, means that US economic growth will become ever more dependent on Chinese consumers — not American ones.

It also means keeping the Beijing regime happy. Concessions made toward the Chinese regime must be made in order for the American economy to grow. This is the stubborn paradigm that girds the hypocritical calls for both John McCain and Barack Obama to propose "specific" policies about the economy. Newsflash: neither Obama nor McCain will ever make any major economic policy in the United States besides raising or lowering taxes. They cannot intervene in US growth globally other than, to, say, attempt to direct it more toward India.

The obvious problem with American economic integration with China is political. There is no need to rehearse China's problematic role with Taiwan, Tibet, Sudan, or Zimbabwe here. These issues are no more important than China's explicitly authoritarian police state, its one-party government, or its environmental policies. Just as it is impossible to separate China's growth from Darfur, it's impossible to separate US corporate complicity with China's actions there or against Tibet. We have become economically dependent on a repressive state. US consumerism is now irrevocably inseparable from China. You can refuse to buy goods from businesses that deal with Sudan, but you simply cannot refuse to buy goods from businesses that deal with China. This is the "freedom" of the free market.

It may not be accidental that as US corporate integration with China has become more entangled in the last decade, since the US political system has come to resemble China's more and more: the loss of legal rights, the rise of a surveillance culture, the enormous Homeland Security initiative, the old talk from Karl Rove of one-party Republican rule. Had the Rove plan worked, the American system would have become, in effect, much more like China's.

There are reasons this isn't discussed openly. The first has to do with the way we think about political categories like "foreign" and "domestic." We put, for instance, the huge economic problems in Ohio and Michigan in a box called "domestic economy."

Second, we can't discuss many of the problems associated with China because it's a gigantic 'way of life' issue. Just as our way of life depends now on carbon fuels from petro-states, our reliance on China for "growth," cheap labor, cheap factories, cheap manufacturing, cheap pollution, and cheap sweatshops has basically kept the American standard of living artificially high. As with cigarettes, it took years to convince people that carbon emissions were dangerous. It would take a comparable paradigm shift to persuade folks that the freedom "deficit" in China is really tied to US corporate policies. People want to see the Nike swoosh in Beijing as a symbol of athletic power, and not as a symbol connected to Tibet and Darfur.

In a sense, the election in November will not decide the future of this issue. Instead, both Barack Obama and John McCain are trying to score points with voters in swing states like Ohio, where the credit and housing crises are the least of anyone's problems. In states like Ohio and Michigan, jobs have been lost to China in the hundreds of thousands for decades now. US firms moved labor overseas because it was cheaper; this was a response, in part, to the success of labor organization in these regions, especially in manufacturing. In places like Flint and Youngstown, people have been dealing with the scary side of US-China integration for years. It's more than ironic, then, that Ohio remains at the center of Democratic and Republican ad campaigns. Politically and economically, Youngstown is the canary in the coalmine of American life.

As more jobs leave, the interdependent problem of Chinese labor and American consumerism will grow. High fuel prices only compound the serious danger of falling living standards. Ask someone in Ohio and Michigan. What happens there isn't because of any bubble or contagion. In that sense, what happens in Ohio is a leading indictor for the cultural, economic, and political possibilities for the rest of the nation. We can still think of it as a swing-vote state, but also as a microcosm of the larger potential future of the United States more generally.

To visualize this connection, picture first an abandoned manufacturing plant in Youngstown, one of the northern Ohio towns left behind when US firms began exporting manufacturing jobs. Imagine a building that looks as if it's deeply compromised by structural decay: broken and battered windows, crumbling bricks, shuttered doors, an empty lot. John McCain stood in front of just such a place during the Republican primaries, where his message to blue-collar workers was, literally, "the jobs are not coming back." These are the jobs that started leaving in the 1980s, and which were a prelude to the jostling over "outsourcing" that briefly became an issue in the 2004 Bush-Kerry campaigns.

These long-term structural changes reflect a consistent set of US policies which were initiated by the Reagan administration, intensified by the Clinton administration, and are now largely taken for granted here at end of Bush's present term. You can find them on Barack Obama's website. These policies are called "neo-liberal" because they reflect a shared set of assumptions about the self-correcting role of market economies, a notion popularized by Milton Friedman. In addition to justifying the vast transfer of wealth, jobs, and goods in the name of "efficient" and "global" capitalism, this philosophy did much to naturalize the negative effects and limited benefits of capitalism itself. It worked to repeal much of the power of government regulation, initiated during the New Deal-era, to contain and manage the serious recessions endemic to capitalism.

Neo-liberalism has returned us to a weird replay of the 19th century, where the "freedom" to purchase goods at a loss — for another's profit — seems like perfect common sense and is widely promoted among all classes and groups. Unlike the 19th century, political alternatives like socialism, communism, and anarchism are taken seriously by only a few. In a classic Orwellian twist, the idea that profit might be re-routed back to the classes who "freely" decided to lose that money is today called "class warfare." This new class warfare rehearses the arguments of those like Grover Norquist. His passion for tax cuts makes sense thus: we all deserve to have more of our own money. This isn't old news. McCain is running his entire economic campaign on just these tax cuts.

But the real story involves both McCain and Obama. Importantly, the "freedom" of the free market is the "freedom" and "equality" of liberalism itself, both Republican and Democrat. It comes from the entanglement of the liberal political state with capitalism. At the center of this fiction are "equal" individuals who are "free" to spend their income on their own desires (houses, cars, etc). This money is then collected by banks offering interest bearing loans (for houses and cars). The enormous wealth gaps produced by this system are never accurately *named* by the most influential media outlets. Politicians like John Edwards arrive occasionally to channel some of the intense emotions of the millions who feel their lives have been damaged by this system. When politicians speak in populist modes, they often point fingers at special interests or campaign finance. These are scapegoats. It's capitalism, stupid. The problem with democracy isn't just unreasonably compounded by it. They are incompatible together. The myth of our freedom in this democracy is probably *the* most fundamental

Continued page 9

The PSC's "Adjunct Problem"

The proposed contract and the future of CUNY's biggest union

ADVOCATE STAFF

Uprising

On July 1st 2008 the delegate assembly of the Professional Staff Congress, CUNY voted overwhelmingly to approve sending the proposed contract settlement between the PSC and the City University of New York to the larger union membership for a final ratification vote. Although the majority of the delegates in attendance supported passing the contract on to the membership — the vote was 92 for and 13 against, with 7 abstentions — there was a vocal and organized group of adjuncts, part-timers and Graduate Center students who attended the meeting that evening in an effort to convince the delegate assembly to vote against the proposed contract and send the bargaining committee back to the negotiating table for another round.

The majority of these concerned adjuncts in attendance were not delegate assembly members and thus did not have an actual vote. But many of them were allowed — after a long wait and sometimes contentious negotiations between delegates who wanted to end discussion and those who argued for more discussion — to speak on the proposed contract and express their dissatisfaction with what they see as a contract that does very little for adjuncts and almost nothing to address the larger structural inequalities that exist within CUNY. Debate at the meeting was so limited at times that many adjuncts resorted to protesting their silence by placing their "guest" badges over their mouths.

"What happened at the DA meeting included a positive new development: the presence of large numbers of adjuncts and grad students who made it clear that their voices would be heard" said Sándor John, an adjunct lecturer and an independent PSC delegate assembly member from Hunter College. Like the other adjuncts in attendance John advocated that the DA vote no on the proposed contract.

Among the biggest complaints about the proposed contract expressed at the DA meeting were the lack of job security for adjuncts, increased inequality between part-time lecturers and full-time professors, and below-inflation wage increases across the board. In fact, leaflets handed out at the meeting by adjuncts included three very similar key demands: progress on job security, including a demand for 3 year appointments for adjuncts; health coverage for all CUNY employees; and an increase of $1,000 per 3 credit course to help close the gap between full-timers and part-timers.

Faced with a series of tough and sometimes hostile questions from adjuncts and graduate students at the DA meeting, members of the PSC bargaining team — including President Barbara Bowen, VP For Part Time Personnel Marcia Newfield, and Treasurer Mike Fabricant — responded by arguing that CUNY management had been especially intransigent this round of bargaining and that the bargaining team did everything they could, including negotiating until four in the morning the last day of talks, to get a fair and decent contract. Members of the bargaining team also defended themselves by arguing that they had stood firm against a series of regressive structural demands from CUNY management. "One of the major battles of this contract," said Bowen "is largely unseen and that is our victory against Goldstein's demands." All of those demands were turned back" she noted, including calls to remove chairs form the union, jettison existing salary steps in exchange for merit pay, and weaken job security for HEOs. University Wide Officer, negotiating team member, and Professor of Sociology at the Graduate Center, Stanley Aronowitz, was particularly adamant, arguing that this contract was the best economic package possible given the Governor's then impending budget cuts to Higher Education. Aronowitz argued that there was no guarantee that any renegotiation with CUNY would result in a better deal, and might actually lead to a worse offer from the university.

Adjuncts in attendance responded to this line of reasoning by arguing that many of the issues that matter most to them are largely structural, such as job security and increases in pay equity. Adjunct lecturers and graduate students at CUNY, for instance, currently receive only a small fraction of the pay that their full time colleagues receive for much of the same work. This has resulted in what many adjunct organizers have called a "two-tiered" labor system within CUNY; a condition that Aronowitz himself has called a new phase of subalternity.

What's in the Contract and What's Not?

The July 1st DA meeting, it turns out, was only the beginning, and many of the adjuncts who came out that night have since organized an aggressive and vocal campaign to urge union members to vote "no" on the proposed contract and to fight for greater attention to adjunct issues within CUNY and the union.

Although the new contract offers some improvements — a series of yearly wage increases, an increase to the welfare fund, which provides health insurance for adjuncts, a new parental leave benefit for Full time employees, and a sick bank for full-timers among other advances — critics of the contract still say that is not enough.

PSC President Barbara Bowen at the Oct. 30 Cooper Union rally

Among the biggest complaints about this new contract is the lack of Job Security. "Job security for adjuncts is crucial if we are to become the so-called flagship institution envisioned by Chancellor Goldstein and the Board of Trustees. But it seems that the Chancellor, the BoT, and the PSC have failed to fully acknowledge the big, white elephant roaming the halls of CUNY," said Douglas Medina, who is an HEO at Baruch College. Adjuncts are especially unhappy about this particular provision because job security was something the union leadership said it would prioritize. At the Cooper Union rally, held last October 30, Bowen told the membership that job security for adjuncts would be one of the priorities in this new contract, which, according to the PSC Clarion, was supposed to be part of the second phase of a three phase contract plan for the union. Despite the prioritization of adjunct job security at the Cooper Union rally, however, Bowen and other members of the bargaining team failed to get any increase in job security for adjuncts in this new contract. "We have not transformed the system into one that provides complete job security to adjuncts" said Bowen.

This lack of job security is a huge problem for adjuncts, but equally disturbing is the incredible inequality that exists between adjuncts and full-time professors. Many adjunct activists argue that across the board pay increases, such as the kind that the new contract offers, only increase the already enormous gap between what a full time professor makes and what an adjunct makes, even though many adjuncts often teach a bigger course load than professors. For instance, an experienced adjunct lecturer on the top step of the pay scale, teaching seven classes per year (three in the fall, three in the spring and one in the summer) would make less than $26,000 a year before taxes, while an Assistant Professor on the highest step of her pay scale with a slightly smaller teaching load would be making no less than $71,700, an Associate Professor $84,900, and a Professor at the highest step would be making upwards of $102,000. Granted, many of these professors' salaries are quite low compared to other universities and colleges across the country, especially considering the cost of living in NYC. Nevertheless, the huge divide between adjuncts and full time faculty is what is most astounding about these figures.

"CUNY treats most of its teachers worse, in key respects, than Wal-Mart treats its employees" said Sándor John, adding that the university "is making enormous amounts of money off of the poverty wages it is paying its faculty." This inequality, John argues, has created a permanent multi-tiered labor force at CUNY that hurts everyone who works and studies at the university. Adjuncts rightly feel underappreciated and overworked and their students, who are themselves often subject to similar forms of inequality, suffer for it. Many adjuncts, who work several jobs, sometimes commuting between two or three different campuses, have less time to devote to individual student needs than full time faculty members.

One of the most obvious but perhaps least understood aspects of the contract's deficiency is its wage increases. According to the proposed contract, all CUNY employees would receive 10.5% compounded across the board wage increases from 2007-2009 as follows: 3.15%, effective September 20, 2007; 4%, compounded, effective October 6, 2008 and 3%, compounded, effective October 20, 2009. At the Delegate assembly meeting the bargaining team said that negotiations over wage increases were limited to what they called "pattern bargaining" claiming that other city unions had received similar wage increases. But not everyone agrees with the leadership's perspective. "We were told by the PSC that they couldn't secure more at the table for us because of pattern bargaining across the city. But K-12 teachers and police officers did far better than we did renegotiating this year. What did those unions do that the PSC did not?" said Jen Gaboury, an adjunct lecturer at Hunter College and student in the Political Science program at the GC. Indeed, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association recently announced a contract that included 17% across the board wage increases over four years, which equals 4.25% per year, compared to the 3.5% per year gained in the proposed PSC contract.

In addition to this, opponents of the contract complain that the wage increases do not sufficiently keep

pace with inflation. According to the consumer price index, the rate of inflation from January 2007 to January 2008 was 4.28% and for July, 2008 the rate of inflation was a full 5.6%, more than 2 percentage points more than the proposed wage increases. CUNY has a long history of below-inflation contracts, which have completely devastated the real dollar value of the wages of those who work within the university, and shows no sign of change. This especially hurts adjuncts, who only receive regular step raises every three years, while professors and full timers receive steps every year. This means that professors and full timers will see an erosion in the value of their steps for the three years of this contract, but adjuncts will actually see a relative drop in the overall value of their earnings, even as the cost of rent, subway fares, and food in New York City continues to rise at a rate much higher than inflation figures for the rest of the country.

The Problems With Union Democracy

One of the more contentious issues surrounding the new contract actually has little to do with its content and is a direct result of the sometimes ideological and sometimes strategical differences between concerned adjuncts and the union leadership. Adjuncts supporting a NO vote have argued that the union leadership's position of choosing to actively promote the proposed contract is hugely undemocratic. "The process has been atrocious, anti-democratic, and rushed. In fact, saying the process has been anti-democratic is putting it mildly for a so-called progressive union," said Douglas Medina. But the union leadership disagrees. According to Bowen the executive council is "obliged to abide by the vote of the elected representatives of the Delegate Assembly." In other words, the Executive Council, which includes many of the negotiating team members, is actually constitutionally bound to actively promote whatever decision is made by the assembly. In this sense, they argue, the EC must do whatever it can, including using its significant financial and organizational powers to promote a YES vote. Towards this end the EC has, since July 1, been actively promoting the proposed contract through several postal mailings and e-mail messages to all members describing the benefits of the contract and urging the membership to vote YES. Critics say that these tactics amount to little more than an attempt by the bargaining team to push this contract through and force the membership to vote YES on the very same contract that they helped to negotiate.

The right thing to do would have been to provide more balanced information about the contract so that the membership could decide for themselves, say the adjuncts. "Absolutely everyone who teaches at CUNY should join the PSC," said Sándor John. "We need to organize to make the union stronger and to push forward the interests of those who work and study at CUNY." But for John, this struggle will necessarily be convulsive and requires a democratic structure that represents all of the members of the union. "Any serious struggle to change the intolerable working conditions of CUNY's labor system will necessarily be a convulsive one challenging not only the rules of the game laid down by the BOT and CUNY management, but also the restrictive notions of union democracy that correspond to the status quo. A mobilized membership will demand the fullest participation and debate without bureaucratic restrictions."

Although the union has not technically placed any restrictions on the actions of those campaigning for a NO vote, they have been less than accommodating to the many calls from John and other activists — including more than 28 delegate assembly members — who have urged the union to provide some sort of balanced and informed presentation of the contract. Shortly after the DA meeting in July, activists urged Peter Hogness, the editor of the union newspaper, *The Clarion*, to provide space for a statement urging a NO vote. That request was denied by Hogness, who said that the deadline for submissions had already been passed. Activists then asked the union leadership to form a union committee to develop a formal pamphlet that would provide a one page statement arguing for the contract and a one page statement against the contract. This request was also denied by the union leadership as were other proposals made by the adjuncts to provide the membership with a balanced view of the new contract. Eventually, however, Bowen agreed to create a PSC run website for delegates, and only delegates, who voted on the contract to post the reasons why they voted for or against.

President Bowen argues that the union has "followed a strong democratic process throughout this contract debate. We have done everything we can to be transparent with the membership" she said, adding that the EC "clearly welcomes this debate."

"Part of the democratic process is that any 'Vote No' campaign would have a responsibility to do its work as an independent group" said Mike Fabricant, who helped lead a series of discussions on the proposed contract at the various CUNY campuses. These discussions provided a fruitful forum for those who supported and those who were against the proposed contract, which fostered valuable debate among union members. However, because they were held in the summer, they were very poorly attended. Only fifty or sixty union members attended each meeting, in a union that has over 20,000 members. For many, the incredible disparities of power between the resources of the union leadership and its individual members almost guarantees that the vote will go whichever way the leadership and the DA wants it to go. This, say adjuncts, essentially means that contract ratification has become little more than a *de facto* process of the PSC Delegate Assembly and that the membership ratification vote has become largely meaningless. This is especially problematic given the limited number of members who actually vote for delegates, not to mention the large numbers of adjunct lecturers, graduate students and part time faculty who are not even members of the union and are not allowed to vote on ratification.

The Future of the Union

Despite the contentious discourse surrounding the proposed contract most of the parties involved say they are confident that the debate has been a fruitful one. "There was nothing said by adjuncts [at the DA meeting] that we haven't said ourselves in meetings of the bargaining team" said Fabricant, arguing that the PSC leadership wants to do everything it can to address the issues many of the adjuncts are calling for. "We understand the pain associated with the experience of adjuncts" said Fabricant. For her part, Bowen said that her "hope is that we come out of this contract with more unity and more militancy."

John shares that desire, but for him a truly functional and powerful union will require more radical changes than merely a change of heart. "We've made a real start by forcing the beginning of a debate on what is required to take on this process of defeating inequality. This has been the first time there has been an organized movement to say we won't accept more of the same." But, he added, "we need to organize to make the union stronger and to push forward the interests of those who work and study at CUNY; but that struggle is incompatible with a conception of unionism that is dependent on the favors of republican and democratic politicians whose job it is to protect the interests of the ruling class."

The last day to vote on the PSC contract is September 2nd. Ⓐ

China and the American Way

Continued from page 7

and basic structural lie in our everyday lives.

Corporations make public policy, and their surrogates now run the entire governments of New York City (Bloomberg) and New Jersey (Corzine), not to mention the office of the Vice President (Cheney). It is no longer appropriate to use the government to steer employment and intervene against corporate excess, as suggested in the once-influential work of John Maynard Keynes. The notion that the government might "manage" corporate and capitalist excess was once common sense in the post-war 20th century. By contrast, earlier this summer some House Republicans and Washington experts resisted Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson's idea of "bailing out" Bear Sterns, Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and troubled US firms because such actions were "socialist."

This confused sentiment against 'socialism' is shocking: it ignores the billions of dollars in federal tax breaks for corporate firms, the billions of dollars in no-bid contracts for corporate firms, the billions of dollars of military contracts for corporate firms, and the billions of dollars corporate firms hide through tax shelters abroad. Between 1998-2005, tax shelters hid 2.2 trillion dollars of un-taxed business earnings. These billions of dollars given from the federal government to US business have always constituted a "socialism" as such, and sometimes jokingly referred to as 'corporate welfare.' This is also the hidden truth of the neo-liberal era: at no time was the 'free' market regulating itself.

The past 28 years of US economic policy has been a continuous transfer and redistribution of public wealth from the federal government back to corporate firms. This is also the lie of Grover Norquist and conservative advocates of low-taxes: to say the rich already pay 'too much' in taxes ignores the fact that many billions are re-routed back to the rich in the form of government contracts — this is, after all, the huge reason behind the prodigious growth of private military contracts in the Bush administration.

US free-market liberal capitalism has successfully normalized the idea that transferring wealth to private firms and individual tax-payers is the "right" way to spend money. The ways these attitudes seeped into everyday consciousness over the past 28 years, especially among liberal democrats like Barack Obama and his followers, is the most disturbing reality of our times. What's more disturbing, perhaps, is that as the neo-liberal era has begun to implode today in the wake of the housing and credit crisis, political leaders cannot really imagine any new economic and political alternatives.

They can't do this for two reasons. One, there are no serious economic advisors in either party that can think outside this system. They don't understand anything other than the status quo of "globalization" as it's been articulated. More importantly, the money and interests that filter US political culture simply cannot be purged through the system controlled by that money and those interests.

Two, the political system is so corrupt and delusional that any real change will have to take place outside of it. Historically, the groups that led real pragmatic change against institutional power came from anarchic networks: the Abolitionists, the Underground Railroad, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam antiwar movement, and, on the other side, the Ku Klux Klan. These groups operated outside the law. Lives were sacrificed and risked. The problem with democracy is simple, and the reason capitalism corrupts it so easily is simple: institutions themselves are corrupt. They channel power. They harden power. They preserve hierarchy. The *structure* of our everyday life is corporate.

The process of electing leaders is itself the problem: it doesn't matter who's in the White House if the position itself is corrupt. If real "change" is going to happen, it simply *can't* happen inside the system. This is why Obama is not Martin Luther King, Jr.

The road between New York and Shanghai goes through Youngstown. Because of this, the future of the United States can't be visualized in midtown Manhattan. The future arrived long ago in Ohio, and echoes more and more in China. And here's what's really interesting: the network that cuts the tie of the U.S.-China integration might not come from the United States. It might come from China. Keep your eye on both. Ⓐ

What's Happening to America?

A forum on the state of the nation

There is reason to believe that the United States is plumbing the depths of moral and political crisis. The easy response to this claim pins the blame squarely on George W. Bush, and his crooked cronies in the White House. And yet, upon further reflection, the Bush administration seems more a symptom than a cause of the crisis. Put plainly, our national life has been swept up in its own failures and weaknesses. Our menu of problems should cause concern. To begin with, the rhetoric through which issues of national import should be debated has been whittled to its most base elements, then distorted through the phony prisms of patriotism and national security. Hopes for the resurrection of a meaningful civil rights movement have been likewise suffocated, as the country resists gay marriage, and continues its tradition of segregation behind the mask of public education. Meanwhile, our economy slouches ever-closer to recession while at the same moment millions rush out with their stimulus package buy-offs to purchase iPhones and other momentary satisfactions. And in the international realm, the country's foreign policy has abdicated any responsibility to future generations, and opted instead to become an adjunct of corporate interests.

Of course, there are millions of citizens who do not consider the present moment worrisome, who are comfortable with the fruits of their American experience, who view the United States as the defender of opportunity, democracy and the exercise of freedom, who regard the idea of moral-political crisis as alarmist, extremist. Many more regard our current condition as the concluding chapter in the nightmare that has been the Bush presidency. They see the last eight years as a bump in an otherwise acceptable historical trajectory. For these observers, the American system–our political methods and institutions–will correct any errors that may have been committed at the ballot box in years past.

Yet throughout the country, the sense that people are frustrated and fed-up has grown palpable. The call for urgent change has been sounded, and people — young and old — have responded. Barack Obama's groundbreaking presidential run is evidence enough. And still, the demand for change rippling through our nation somehow rings hollow. The question of "change who?" is clear enough. But equally important, and perhaps more challenging, questions have received less attention. Change what? Change where? How?

The Advocate seeks to initiate an intelligent, considered, and provocative debate on these issues. In this, we are not without precedent. Concerned about the direction of national life, and understanding that they stood at a pivotal moment in the country's history, the editors of *The Partisan Review* queried prominent intellectuals in '67, encouraging responses to a series of questions seeking to understand "What's Happening to America?" The responses received in 1967 offer a brilliant, often disturbing, glimpse into an America about to be hurled into chaos the following year. That America looks awfully similar to the one we have now.

The turbulence of 1968 marked a proud moment for the American left, but set the country on a course that produced the politics of today. In the words of Michael Walzer, writing in a recent issue of *Dissent*, 1968 "changed American culture for the better in many ways. But it did not produce a sustainable politics; its institutional legacy is virtually nil. In fact, it contributed to forty years of rightward momentum… Next time, we have to do better."

With all due respect to Professor Walzer, "next time" is now.

With a reverent nod to the past, and a hopeful eye on the future, we issued a call-to-arms for provocative, informed debate to many of the nation's brightest, most exciting minds. Needless to say, this call was broadcast across the political spectrum, and we have received a tremendous response. Over the course of this coming semester, if not longer, *The Advocate* will publish the thoughts of public intellectuals, academics, social activists, and of course, students motivated by the following agenda of suggested questions to focus productive discussion.

1. Does it matter who is in the White House? Or is there something in our system which would force any president to act as any other?
2. What role, if any, do public intellectuals play in American life?
3. Must the American intellectual or artist adapt him or herself to mass culture? If s/he must, what forms can this adaptation take? Or, do you believe that a democratic society necessarily leads to a leveling of culture, to a mass culture which will overrun intellectual and aesthetic values traditionally embraced by American intellectuals and artists?
4. Where in American life can artists and intellectuals find the basis of strength, renewal, and recognition as our new century progresses?
5. What is the biggest open secret in American life?
6. Where do you think our foreign policies are likely to lead us?
7. What, if any, issues do you feel deserve more attention from Barack Obama and/or John McCain in their bids for the presidency?
8. What, in general, do you think is likely to happen in the United States during the next presidential administration?

For our inaugural forum, *The Advocate* is proud to publish essays by three of the world's leading authorities on American politics and culture. In her opening essay, France Fox Piven offers the exciting prospect of a significant realignment of American electoral politics in the wake of our November election, a realignment that could render future regimes vulnerable to progressive social movements. But movements for meaningful change, as Peter Hitchcock usefully reminds us in his essay, will undoubtedly crash into the walls of inertia that have come to characterize our country's economic and political life. If these walls are successfully torn down, credit will certainly be due in large part to our country's youth, a segment of our population Henry Giroux forcefully argues are increasingly reared on punishment and fear. Together, the three authors combine to deftly illustrate an America at the crossroads of crisis and possibility, a country suffering derailed democracy, and ripe for reconstruction.

* * * *

FRANCES FOX PIVEN

Real Change

The list of our problems in the United States is long. The economy is sliding into recession, and turmoil in the financial sector resulting from reckless antics by managers is spreading, threatening something much worse than recession. Meanwhile, as at the end of the 1920s, the illusion of prosperity is parting to reveal the facts of staggering increases in inequality as the rich become fabulously richer and most working and poor people work harder and longer for less. The corruption of our politics worsens markedly, the result of massive increases in the graft called lobbying, of the manipulation and stealing of elections, and the ever-louder din of propaganda, much of it stemming from government itself. Daring reinterpretations of the constitution whittle away at restraints on presidential power in order to allow the pursuit of rash and unpopular wars by whatever means necessary, including the use of mercenaries, and the practice of torture. The always inadequate regulatory measures of the New Deal that went part of the way toward constraining market actors are chipped away, and so are the economic security programs for the poor, the aged and the unemployed that were inaugurated in the 1930s and expanded in the 1960s. Environmental safeguards are given short shrift as a predatory government allied with corporate power proceeds to privatize the public weal. I could go on, and so could you. We are reaping consequences of four decades of political domination by big business and its right-twing populist allies. The nation as we imagined it is no more, and this means vast uncertainties about our future and, because the United States is so powerful and its footprint so large, the future of humankind.

But wait! A glow of light is on the horizon. It is of course the approach of the 2008 election. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not making fun. In fact I'm desperate for the 2008 election. I think the sheer scale of public disillusion with the Bush administration guarantees large margins of victory for the Democrats in the congressional contests. Of course, the Democratic majorities yielded by the 2006 election led to only feeble efforts to control the bellicose and delusional team in the White House. But larger majorities, especially a veto-proof majority in the Senate, would surely help. So, at the very least the head-long rush over the cliffs of financial breakdown, spreading war, and ecological disaster may be cushioned and slowed. But our problems are truly serious, and we need a president to lead in reversing course and setting new directions, a strong president with good sense, and democratic inclinations. Even more urgently, we need to get rid of the Bush administration, and as soon as possible before yet more harm is done. But public dismay with current policy directions notwithstanding, I don't think Barack Obama's victory is by any means assured. I hope of course, but I am worried about stolen votes and rigged computers, the right-wing rumor network, the formidable propaganda machine, and also the residual racism and xenophobia of lots of Americans that this apparatus will tap.

Push all that aside for a moment. My ruminations are, after all about, what we don't and probably can't know. Maybe Obama and his team can pull off a victory. Think of the excitement, the exhilaration of the campaign they've run so far. Was there ever a better slogan than "we are the ones we've been waiting for?" Bush and Cheney can be routed! If they can, it will be in significant part because Obama's youthful charisma, his mantra of change, and his campaign's ground strategy are changing the shape of the electorate, making it younger, and darker. This is no mean feat, and a step toward making American politics more democratic.

Americans take pride in being the world's leading democracy. But in fact we have very low levels of voter participation compared to other developed democracies, and turnout is skewed to over-represent older and better-off whites. The reasons for this are embedded in a history of party competition that relies not only on the fabled democratic process of mobilizing voters, but on party strategies for deterring prospective opposition voters from casting their ballots. Election contests can be won either way, by

bringing more voters to the polls, or by preventing the voters who support the opposition from casting their ballots.

The strategies by which vote suppression is accomplished have been crystallized over time in obstructive voter registration and balloting procedures, and are rejuvenated at each election by party machinations to suppress unwanted voters. The result is a constricted electorate that under-represents the young, the poor, blacks and other marginal groups. In effect, not only do the voters pick the parties, but the parties pick the voters. The enormous turnouts of the young and African-Americans in the primary races argue that is changing, spurred by the excitement of the Obama campaign. Grit and enthusiasm can go far to helping people hurdle the barriers created by well-known tactics of long lines, broken machines, obstructive voter registration requirements and harassment at the polls by party operatives and off-duty cops. Moreover, the campaign is not relying on enthusiasm alone but has fielded a massive grass roots voter registration volunteer effort.

OK, so he wins. But once an election is over, voters are not much of a force. In office, anyone with the ego and ambition to run for president is likely to look to accumulate political capital (and star status) in the usual ways and this means bending toward those who have influence, wealth, prestige. Indeed, we've seen some of this already in the general campaign, as Obama backtracks and compromises: on FISA, on Iraq, on health care.

However, I think fastening on Obama's policy statements may miss the point. Think about Franklin Delano Roosevelt's historic campaign in 1932. His speeches were memorable, and replete with attacks on the "economic royalists" who had brought us the Great Depression. But his platform was overcooked mush, not distinguishable from the platform of 1928. Nevertheless, his rhetoric and the swell of voters surging to Democratic columns, energized social movements and set in motion a process that changed the United States, whether FDR intended it or not. The emerging but still unstable electoral alignment of 1932 created a big new political space in which insurgent movements flourished, nourished by the sense that the new administration could not afford to ignore their demands It was these movements of the unemployed, of the aged, of industrial workers and farmers that actually forced Roosevelt to act on relief and public employment, labor rights and farm supports, and old age pensions. They pressed FDR hard, and because they did, they helped to forge the policy initiatives that we now know as the New Deal.

If turnout remains high, an Obama victory could mean a realignment of American electoral politics around a majority coalition similar to the one forged in the New Deal era, with African Americans and Latinos replacing the white South as the reliable core of the coalition. The composition of this new coalition would encourage presidential rhetoric that in turn could spur movement activism. It would simultaneously generate the hope that is always the fuel of movements from the bottom of society, and it would put in place a regime that is vulnerable to those movements. If there is political salvation in the American future, it can only be forged through the dynamic interplay between progressive social movements and elected politicians.

Frances Fox Piven is Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the GC and is the author of numerous books, including *The War at Home: the Domestic Causes and Consequences of Bush's Militarism* (2004) *Why Americans Still Don't Vote* (2000) and with Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare* (1971).

PETER HITCHCOCK

"No Problem"

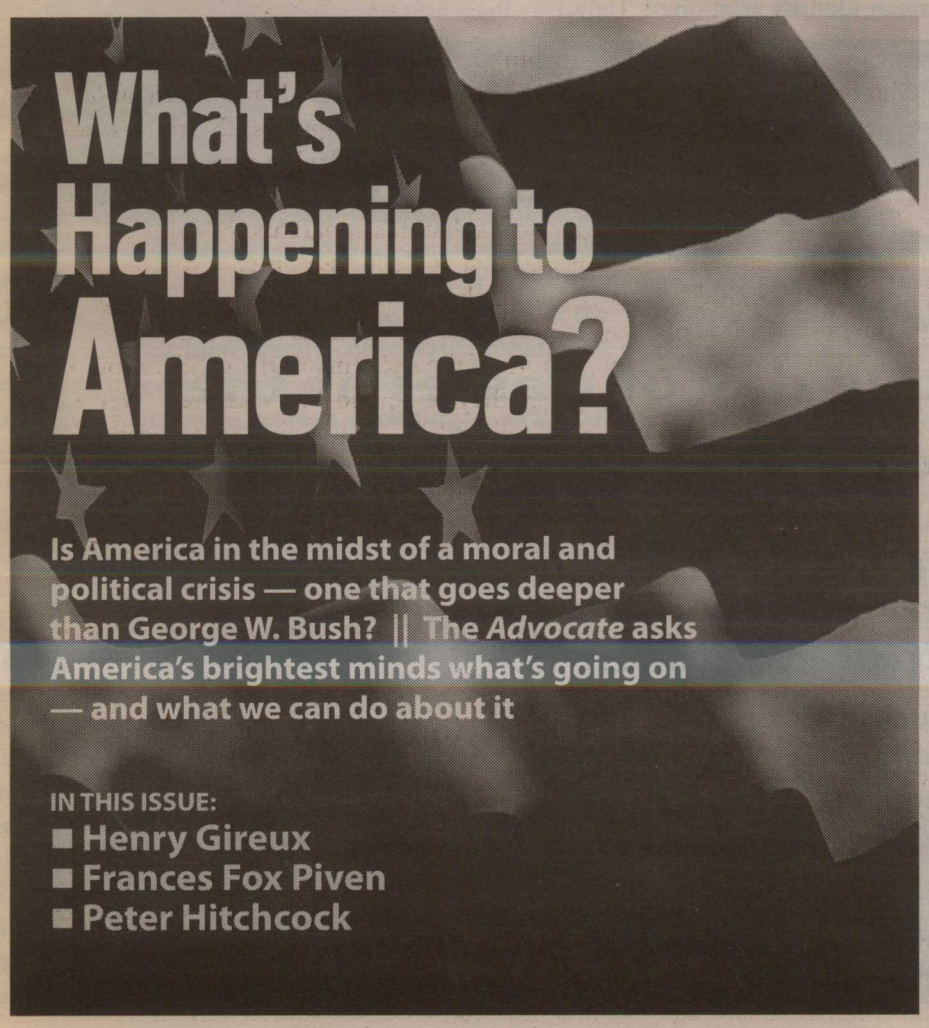
A decade or so ago while living in Taibei I was asked to address a group of Taiwanese Fulbrighters about the United States to which they were heading. I chose to group my comments around a polemical history of space and race. While these were hardly surprising choices, their exact purchase on the political unconscious of American history remains vexed. Most of my listeners got the references, whether to Melville, Jim Crow, the Exclusion Acts, or internment camps, but such history was only obliquely connected to their present. Today, I would still stress the importance of the historical genealogy, but 9/11 has proved a resilient dividing line between what was and what is in American cultural and political life, despite the fact that it has been a flagrant alibi for other agendas. (Thus, to the above, we might add Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, Black Sites, the Military Commissions Act, the Patriot Act, the border wall, etc.) Another difference, of course, is that those Taiwanese are more likely heading for direct flights to the mainland than they are the land of "whatever" for edification and rapid accumulation.

There is still plenty of space in the United States but it is a country that feels considerably smaller in its outlook. Suburban sprawl and the growing of grass in deserts still goes on but such lateral exploitation was always dependent on less than 6% of the world's population being able to consume 25% of its power resources — fossil fuels in particular. The lonely long commute in a seven seat SUV was a natural extension of American pioneer spirit and individualism and it mattered little if the supporting hegemony was secured by the excesses of military or trading might. It was a given, like Superbowl winners being "world" champions. The Advocate Editors ask: "What is the biggest open secret in American life?" My reply would be that this form of American life is absolutely unsustainable. This has been known for a long time of course, but public discourse in this great country is dominated by plausible denial, America's homegrown derivative that will bundle reality and anxiety as triple A security. It is not that the American dream is more properly defined as American psychosis but there is something compulsive about American denial that hasn't been seen since, well, the last time an empire found itself naked. In a world of dog-eat-dog capitalism, the American "middle" class (basically those caught between abject poverty at one end and a Netjets subscription at the other: only in America is this a valid sociological, economic or political category) is counting pennies and wondering if debt/asset ratio might actually mean something. The denialists trumpet that a thirteen trillion dollar economy is too big to fail and there is much truth to the idea. Yet one still has the nagging suspicion U.S. credit worthiness is not guaranteed in perpetuity and for the most part its heroic consumer (70% of U.S. economic activity) is maxed out. Space only feels large when one can afford to live in it.

Race drives American identity. Thanks to massive protest, resistance, and laudable civil rights activism American ideals are less encumbered by the awkward discursive binds of the founding fathers. Diversity does not automatically guarantee a diminution of racism, open, implied, or institutionally inclined. It has, however, made the presence of race in American life more creatively agonistic, a place where white supremacism has less and less warped ratio on which to build. The possibility of a Black president must be welcomed in this regard. But even here, Obama's mixed-race heritage might be just as forcefully foregrounded lest America merely repeat the odious follies of the French Code Noir or one drop rule. There has been much discussion of race trumping gender on the road to the White House and it is an important point. Obama, however, is an exception and in the Senate at least white men appear to trump everything (uh-oh, the warped ratio lives!). Is capital race blind in America? Certainly not, but if you're going to represent, you better come with a half billion in the wallet. Capital just says "exploit," so if that means someone who shares the same skin tone so be it. Obama's payback may be entirely conventional, but of course one dares to "hope."

*Let's briefly comment further on the crisis economically, politically, and academically. We are wit*nessing the end of a chronotope; namely, the time/space of American consumer capitalism. This is far from the end of America, or consumer capitalism, but it will be a tough act to follow. Equitable distribution of life on the planet is not around the corner but there is enough global competition to ensure the United States will not be the world's leading economy for much longer. Who cares? Quality of life is not measured by the most calorie consumption (go US!), energy consumption (go US!) or military power (go US!) but it's hard to imagine that Americans will be weaned from all you can eat menus, stuff-itis and killing foreigners in the national interest any time soon. Americans are incredibly kind-hearted, but when push comes to shove, they don't hesitate to warn that "this is my food, my stuff, and my gun so back off or I will eat you, own you, and kill you but not necessarily in that order." The crippling of this beast, however, is of very serious consequence.

So much of commerce in the world depends on American economic decisions (by which I mean, decisions with respect to America, not necessarily the acts of Americans) that the nature of the crisis must be understood through the eye of America's role. The denialists, stung by the somewhat truncated nature of the "new American century" as well as an inkling that global warming might not be a communist plot, may place less faith in the end of history as one in the win column of American triumphalism but they still cling to message repetition as the truth serum of the hour. Capital likes that repetition but American capitalists have long since abandoned the idea that accumulation must itself be American for the wealthy to get even more obscenely wealthy. An individual may still need a passport, but exotic financial instruments and mundane species of bank accounts are slippery on questions of nation and nationalism, especially where the dreaded t-word (taxes) is to mind. The problem is not the omniscience of strategic nationalism but whether other global players of this breed can get by



if America is perceived as the land of diminishing returns. Will they ask for debt to be paid (China and Japan, for instance, hold oodles of U.S. bonds)? Will the phantom international community, including demonstrably American surrogates like the IMF and the World Bank, call for urgent and painful "structural adjustment"? If, as Noam Chomsky has suggested, the United States displays more than a few symptoms of the failed state, who in their right mind would dare suggest intervention? No, the thinking goes, America has cleaned so many other people's houses it must be left (for fear of nuclear annihilation) to clean its own. And, since even amateur economists know the nostrums of the Federal Reserve are much over blown, the world is a bit jittery about long-term prognoses.

The political institutions of the United States have formed a beacon for global democracy yet even here there are systemic issues that will not right themselves. After the dubious presidential elections of 2000 (the Supreme dysfunction) and 2004 ("that fall I heard the drumming, democracy dead in Ohio") you would think that the world's election observers would flock by the hundreds to validate the coming election. The US political establishment, however, is very proud of its broken machine (and machination) even if it produced the worst president in US history, so the rot will remain (different counting machines, flagrant redistricting, the annulment of meaning to votes outside swing states, etc.). The decay is most evident in the survival of the Electoral College and in campaign finance; the latter is the baldest statement yet devised by humans on economic power determining social policy. Taking private money out of public decisions is tantamount to treason and flies in the face of privatization in general.

> Quality of life is not measured by the most calorie consumption (go US!), energy consumption (go US!) or military power (go US!) but it's hard to imagine that Americans will be weaned from all you can eat menus, stuff-itis and killing foreigners

Privatization. It is the solution to all that is decrepit in the public sphere and yet its cure is poison (the original meaning of the Pharmakon). The academy itself becomes a pharmacy in this respect. Higher education is where the American dream comes full circle. Harvard College incorporated (America's oldest corporation) and the history of the American academy became one of incorporation. It has taken quite some time but public institutions of learning have learned to privatize. In CUNY we have nurtured an administration that equates fiscal responsibility with private investment. We can rightly claim this lesson derives from city and state directives and changed (e)valuations of public education. Still, it has wrought incalculable effects on the "business" of teaching. That CUNY gets by with less and less is well known so its leaders must all be accumulators first (often directly from the financial community) who must treat public education as primarily a calculus of profit and loss. Along the way public higher education has moved from a sign of social health to one in which it is an adjunct of excellence, one that, without its excellent adjuncts, would surely dive into Chapter Eleven. The crass exploitation of adjuncts in public education is not the last stand of privatization (that would be virtualization) but deprofessionalization is the academy's cruelest trick and condemns large numbers of otherwise highly-trained intellectuals to a job that is barely one and even greater numbers of undergraduates to a system in which they are customers not learners. When Chomsky talks of the failed state, he must mean this too. But of course the travesty of public education is also an arena of plausible denial.

This affects the politics of race deeply, not just because public education has often nurtured those that racism would otherwise spurn but because it flattens or depreciates the positive gains around race America has achieved in general. If my Taiwanese Fulbrighters shuddered to consider the meaning of race in American history, the prospect of a black or mixed-raced president must count as a tremendous advance for an America that only just beat South Africa to reform. Commentators have been quick to elaborate the continued complexity of race, despite Obama's symbolism of creative change. His candidacy points to differences on race between political generations but also to the nuance of class in that emergence. The nation of immigrants continues to be quite picky about who among them has the right to represent them. And if the response to Katrina is the stuff of failed states, no one could have missed the primary constituencies who were subjected to failure. It is said that in under forty years whites in the United States will represent less than half the population and, while it would be incautious to proffer socio-political and economic change purely on the basis of demographics (after all, apartheid was the product of a white minority) it should strengthen the argument for a radical recasting of American identity as at one with global difference generally.

The means of change, however, are more complicated still. As I have indicated, there is a certain inertia in the economic and political life of the United States that is highly resistant to the closing down of all that made W possible. The two party game is no better than a one party game in this respect and the economic barriers alone will keep really new newcomers out of the fray. Radical theory now abhors party politics which has made it easier to deride both theory and third party options (denialism is not the monopoly of the Heritage Foundation). The political and economic hegemony may be suffering but is largely intact. Meanwhile, the political possibilities emergent in new media technology appear pinned to a rather nostalgic subjectivity: I-phone, Wii, Youtube, My-space, etc. The role of the public intellectual has been reduced to "Twitter," and "viral video" simply has more alliteration than "advertising." If the revolution is to be text-messaged would the people need to control bandwidth first? Is the flash mob a flash in the pan? If we find ourselves with GPS isn't someone finding us too? New organizational tools are being privatized as fast as they are being socialized. And information overload can produce quiescence as efficiently as ignorance. The vocation of the public intellectual is far from dead but her voice barely registers above noise as existential doxa.

Edward Said provocatively suggested that "the [public] intellectual's provisional home is the domain of an exigent, resistant, intransigent art into which, alas, one can neither retreat nor search for solutions. But only in that precarious exilic realm can one first truly grasp the difficulty of what cannot be grasped and then go forth to try anyway." One does not require actual exile to engage this task, nor does one only need theories of space and race to fathom America. A significant problem in the current crisis, however, is what is left of the public domain and would this America trust the intellectual to speak in it? At a time when certain banks may have to be nationalized to save them we might assert the same remedy for the public university (at a fraction of the cost). The reason we can laugh at this idea is itself symptomatic of the crisis. And when laughter is precarious we will be left to enjoy our symptom in silence.

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HENRY A. GIROUX

Youth and the Crisis of the Future

While there is little question that the United States — with its burgeoning police state, its infamous status as the world leader in jailing its own citizens, and its history of foreign and domestic "torture factories" — has, over the last eight years, moved into lockdown (and lockout) mode both at home and abroad, it is a mistake to assume that the George W. Bush administration is solely responsible for this transformation. Such claims risk reducing the serious social ills now plaguing the United States to the reactionary policies of the Bush regime — a move which allows for complacency as Bush's reign comes to a close on January 20, 2009. The complacency caused by this sense of immanent regime change fails to offer a truly political response to the current crisis because it ignores the extent to which Bush's policies merely recapitulate Clinton era social and economic policy. What the United States has become in the last decade suggests less of a rupture than an intensification of a number of already existing political, economic, and social forces that have unleashed the repressive anti-democratic tendencies lurking beneath the damaged heritage of democratic ideals. What marks the present state of American 'democracy' is the uniquely bipolar nature of the degenerative assault on the body politic, which combines elements of unprecedented greed and fanatical capitalism with a new kind of politics more ruthless and savage in its willingness to abandon — even vilify — those individuals and groups it renders disposable. Nowhere is this intensified assault more evident than in what might be called the "war on youth," a war that constitutes not only attempts to erase the democratic legacies of the past, but disavows any commitment to the future.

Any discourse about the future has to begin with the issue of youth because young people inevitably embody the projected dreams, desires, and commitments of their society. Lauded as a symbol of hope for the future while scorned as a threat to the existing social order, youth have become objects of ambivalence caught between contradictory representations, discourses, and spaces of transition. Pushed to the margins of political power within society, youth nonetheless have become a central focus of adult fascination, desire, and authority, especially in the realm of popular culture. Increasingly denied opportunities for self-definition and political interaction, youth are transfigured by representations, discourses and practices that subordinate the language of individual freedom, social power, and critical agency.

At stake here is not merely how American culture is redefining the meaning of youth, but how it constructs children in relation to a future devoid of the moral and political obligations of citizenship, social responsibility, and democracy. As their identities are constructed primarily within the language of the market and the increasingly conservative politics of media culture, contemporary youth appear unable to constitute themselves through a defining generational referent that gives them a sense of distinctiveness and vision, as did the generation of youth in the 1960s. Of course, the relations between youth and adults have always been marked by strained generational and ideological struggles, but the new economic and social conditions that youth face today, along with the callous indifference to their spiritual and material needs, suggest a qualitatively different attitude on the part of many adults toward American youth — one that indicates simply that the young have become our lowest national priority. Put bluntly, American society at present exudes both a deep rooted hostility and chilling indifference toward youth, reinforcing the dismal conditions that young people are increasingly living under. The hard currency of human suffering that impacts children is evident in some astounding statistics that suggest a profound moral and political contradiction at the heart of our culture: for example, the rate of child poverty actually rose in 2004 to 17.6 per cent, boosting the number of poor children to 12.9 million. In fact, according to McClatchy newspapers "[a]bout one in three severely poor people are under age 17." Moreover, the Seattle Times reports children make up 26 per cent of the total population but constitute an astounding 39 per cent of the poor. Just as alarming is the fact that 9.3 million children in America lack health insurance and millions lack affordable child care and decent early childhood education. Sadly, the United States ranks first in billionaires and defense expenditures and yet ranks an appalling twenty-fifth in infant mortality. As we might expect, behind these grave statistics lies a series of decisions that favor economically those already advantaged at the expense of the young. Savage cuts to education, nutritional assistance for impoverished mothers, veterans' medical care, and basic scientific research, are often cynically administered to help fund tax cuts for the already inordinately rich.

This inversion of the government's responsibility to protect public goods from private threats further reveals itself in the privatization of social problems and the vilification of those who, for whatever reason, fail to thrive in this vastly iniquitous social order. Rather than investing in the public good and solving social problems, the state now punishes those who are caught in the downward spiral of its economic policies. Consequently, the implied contract between the state and its citizens has been broken, and social guarantees for youth, as well as civic obligations to the future, have vanished from the public agenda. Within this utterly privatizing market discourse alcoholism, homelessness, poverty, joblessness, and illiteracy are not viewed as social issues, but rather as individual problems — that is, such problems are viewed as the result of a character flaw or a personal failing and in too many cases such problems are criminalized. In this sense black youth are especially disadvantaged. Not only do a mere 42% who enter high school actually graduate, but they are increasingly jobless in an economy that does not need their labor. Marked as a surplus and disposable population, the *New York Times* reports that "black American males inhabit a universe in which joblessness is frequently the norm [and] over the past few years, the percentage of black male high school graduates in their 20s who were jobless has ranged from well over a third to roughly 50 percent."

> What marks the present state of American 'democracy' is the uniquely bipolar nature of the degenerative assault on the body politic

Under the reign of ruthless neoliberal politics with its hyped-up social Darwinism and theatre of cruelty, the popular demonization of the young now justifies responses to youth that were unthinkable 20 years ago, including criminalization and imprisonment, the prescription of psychotropic drugs, psychiatric confinement, and zero tolerance policies that model schools after prisons. School has become a model for a punishing society in which children who violate a rule as minor as a dress code infraction or slightly act out in class can be handcuffed, booked, and put in a jail cell. Such was the case recently in Florida when the police handcuffed and arrested 6-year-old Desre Watson, who was taken from her kindergarten school to the Highlander County jail where she was fingerprinted, photographed for a mug shot, and charged with a felony and two misdemeanors. Her crime? The six-year old had thrown a tantrum in her kindergarten class. Couple this type of domestic terrorism with the fact that the United States is the only country that voted against a recent United Nations resolution calling for the abolition of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for children under the age of 16. Moreover, it is currently the only nation that locks up child offenders for life. A report issued in 2007 by the Equal Justice Initiative claims that "there are 73 Americans serving [life] sentences for crimes they committed at 13 or 14."

Punishment and fear have replaced compassion and social responsibility as the most important modalities mediating the relationship of youth to the larger social order. Youth within the last two decades are increasingly represented in the media as a source of trouble rather than as a resource for investing in the future and are increasingly treated as either a disposable population, cannon fodder for barbaric wars abroad, or defined as the source of most of society's problems. The attack on youth and its related effects are best exemplified in various representations of youth that shape the contemporary political landscape of American culture. Every society creates images and visions of those forces that threaten its existence and how a society understands its youth is partly determined by how it represents them. Popular representations, in particular, constitute a cultural politics that shapes, mediates, and legitimates how adult society views youth and what it expects from them. Such representations produced and distributed through the mass media in sites such as television, video, music, film, publishing, and theater, function as a form of public pedagogy actively attempting to define youth through the ideological filters of a society that is increasingly hostile to young people. All of these sites make competing claims on youth and their relation to the social order. Images of youth, especially in popular culture, invoke not simply a discourse of political and social responsibility, but also bear witness to a cultural politics in which the struggle over meaning is, in part, defined as the struggle over identity, agency, and power. And it is precisely in the name of such a struggle that images of youth must be constructed by, with, and for young people within public spheres that not only take justice, equality, and democracy seriously, but also give substance to social movements willing to develop democratic struggles in which the lives of young people matter.

We have entered a period in which the war against youth, especially poor youth of color, offers no apologies because it is too arrogant and ruthless to imagine any resistance. But power as a form of domination is never absolute and oppression always produces some form of resistance. For these reasons, the collective need and potential struggle for justice should never be underestimated even in the darkest of times. To confront the war on young people, we need to create the conditions for multiple collective and global struggles that refuse to use politics as an act of war and markets as the measure of democracy. Fortunately, more and more young people nationally and internationally are mobilizing in order to fight a world dominated by corporate interests and struggling to construct an alternative future in which their voices can be heard as part of a broader movement to make democracy and social justice realizable. As Hannah Arendt insisted, making human beings superfluous is the essence of totalitarianism, and the war against youth and critical education suggests a new form of authoritarianism is ready to take over if we cannot work together to develop a new politics, a new analytic of struggle, and, most important, a renewed sense of imagination, vision, and hope. We live in a historic moment of both crisis and possibility, one that presents educators, parents, artists, and others with the opportunity to take up the challenge of re-imagining civic engagement and social transformation, but these activities only have a chance of succeeding if we also defend and reinvigorate the pedagogical conditions that enable the current generation of young people to nurture thoughtfulness, critical agency, compassion, and democracy itself. Ⓐ

Henry A. Giroux is Professor and Global Television Network Chair in cultural studies at McMaster University, Ontario Canada. Giroux's many books include: *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling (1997). The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*, (2007) and most recently *Against the Terror of Neoliberalism: Politics Beyond the Age of Greed* (2008).

book REVIEW

Neoliberalism and its Discontents

- Amsden, Alice H. 2007. ***Escape From Empire: The Developing World's Journey Through Heaven and Hell***. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 210 pages. Cloth. $27.50
- Chang, Ha-Joon. 2008. ***Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism***. New York: Bloomsbury Press. 288 pages. Cloth. $26.95

ROBERT SAUTÉ

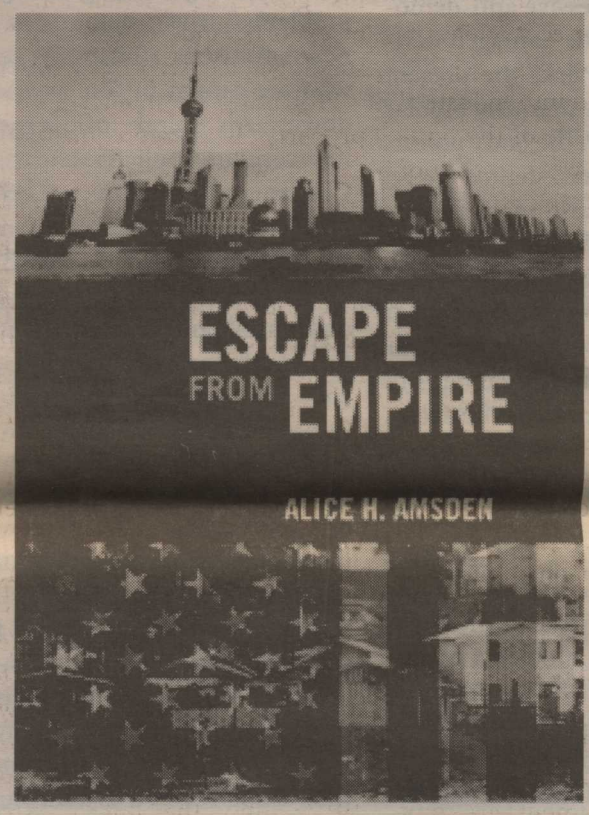
Why aren't all countries rich? It is not a silly question. If we were to believe the economic orthodoxy of the academy and those who manage the central banks and the international institutions of finance and trade — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization — we would have to wonder why some countries are so poor. The theory that is taught in every reputable economics program in the United States contends that economies move toward a steady state. In the long run, if markets are allowed to operate without interference, economies ought to converge so that levels of growth and standards of living are similar. With universal access to information, increasingly lower transportation costs, and free trade, shouldn't all countries resemble the thirty wealthy nations of the OECD? Sadly most do not, and many are extremely poor.

And poverty is a problem. In 2001, 877 million people lived on less than $1 a day. The United Nations *Human Development Report* for 2007 reports that "2.6 billion — 40 percent of the world's population — live[s] on less than US $2 a day." Of course, this poverty is not randomly distributed. The disparities between the wealth of some nations and others are quite striking. One in every six people live in countries the *World Bank calls "high income" or "developed."* The purchasing power of their incomes amounted to $26 trillion in 2001. The remaining five billion people live in low or middle-income countries, and they collectively had incomes worth only $20 trillion.

The consequences of this poverty are profound. 1.5 billion people live without electricity and 1.1 billion lack adequate access to water. In 2003, 10.6 million children died before the age of five. Seventy-two million children of primary school age in 2005 were not in school. Fifty-seven percent of them were girls. In 2004, three million people with HIV/AIDS died, and one million a year die from malaria.

Those who manage the central banks of wealthy nations and the international institutions of finance and trade, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization, what Ha-Joon Chang calls the "Unholy Trinity," have a solution to the problem of world poverty. If countries open their economies to foreign investment, dismantle capital controls, give up on industrial planning — in short, unfetter internal markets and expose industry and agriculture, trade and finance to the salutary effects of competition, sooner, rather than later — poverty will disappear. It is Adam Smith's invisible hand that guides these policies, frequently referred to as neoliberalism. The idea is that the natural propensity to "truck, barter, and trade" leads to an increase in the common good because the innumerable acts of exchange result in a market that in sum expresses the desires of its participants. Buyers and sellers agree on a price that results in the ability of all to exchange their goods or services and carry out an efficient allocation of resources.

That innate call to "truck, barter, and trade" results in another important social consequence, according to mainstream economic theory: specialization and the division of labor. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith explained that the desire to gain advantage in trade would push capitalists to specialize and develop techniques to boost productivity. He used the example of a pin factory; when workers specialized in a detailed division of labor, they could radically increase productivity. With one worker straightening the wire, another cutting it, a third sharpening its point, and a fourth attaching a head, many more pins could be produced than were a single craftsman to perform each operation. Forty years later, David Ricardo extended the principle of specialization to international trade. He demonstrated through the principle of "comparative advantage" that each nation could benefit in trade by specializing in those industries in which the country was relatively more productive. Even if a country had no cost advantage over its trading partner, it could gain from trading those products that it was able to produce most cheaply. If a country could produce all commodities more efficiently than its trading partner, it would still behoove it to specialize in those products it made most cheaply. Comparative advantage provided market advocates with a powerful argument that free trade benefits all.



Anything getting in the way of trade will induce the market to get prices "wrong" and reward inefficiency. For example, tariffs — taxes on imports — will reward inefficient domestic producers and punish consumers through high prices and possibly shoddy products. Fixing the exchange rate of a national currency will distort the price charged for exports and paid for imports; again, getting prices wrong will encourage waste by underpricing some commodities and restricting demand for others by overpricing them. While trade unions and industry monopolies pose threats to the free market, government intervention in the economy is the biggest threat to prosperity because governments are rent seekers; that is, governmental actors seek to manipulate economic conditions rather than contributing to productivity, and they have the power to do so.

According to free market advocates, the best way for countries to grow their way out of poverty is to let markets be. Untrammeled competition between capitalists, between workers, between workers and capitalists, and between nations will produce efficient economies. Let the fittest survive.

Theories work well on paper, and the neo-classical economic theory that receives its sustenance from the idea that markets insure efficient economies is virtually unchallenged in the academy and among economic policy-makers. It is the reigning orthodoxy of the "Washington Consensus," Chang's Unholy Trinity plus the US State and Treasury Departments.

So if the theory is correct, why is there so much poverty?

It could be that there has been no political will to implement the policy. Yet, as Chang explains, since at least the third world debt crisis of 1982, the IMF and World Bank have sought to unfetter markets in indebted low- and middle-income countries. It has done so by tying debt relief to "structural adjustment programs" (SAPs). These interventions required governments to balance budgets, privatize state-owned enterprises, deregulate industries and labor markets, and end agricultural pricing policies. In the 1990s, the World Bank and the IMF went further in demanding that governance conditionalities be implemented along side the SAPs. They included debtor nation acceptance of plans for democracy, government decentralization, central bank independence, and corporate governance. The IMF and World Bank justified these various SAPs and conditionalities as necessary for fixing general problems with debtor economies, but frequently the conditions for emergency credit aided specific high-income countries. IMF loans to South Korea in 1997 contained provisions to reduce trade barriers for specific Japanese products and demanded Korea open up capital markets to foreigners so that they could achieve majority ownership of firms, something several US companies were eager to do.

Perhaps the world remains so poor, despite the best efforts of those guiding the Washington Consensus, because poorer nations have just not implemented SAPs. Privatizing state-owned enterprises was intended to raise the Third World out of poverty by exposing protected companies to market competition. In Latin America, for example, foreign direct investment climbed in the 1980s and 1990s. From 1988 to 1998, cross-border mergers and acquisitions sky-rocketed from $1.1 to $63.9 billion. Yet, when poor countries sold off nationalized companies to balance fiscal accounts, they often did so at fire-sale prices and with large tax incentives. The one-shot revenue enhancements proved expensive.

If international institutions have offered the correct policy prescriptions and developing countries have carried out the policies, to what do we attribute the failure of all to get rich? Something had to be wrong, and that something must be located in the countries themselves. One hundred years ago, Max Weber, the German economist cum sociologist, identified the role of culture in the rise of capitalism; ever since, national cultures have been the explanatory fall back position for those whose faith in market principles has not been met by economic reality. Samuel Huntington asks in *The Clash of Civilizations*, why South Korea succeeded when Ghana did not — they both had similar levels of economic development in the 1960s. "Undoubtedly, many factors played a role, but … culture had to be a large part of the explanation. South Koreans valued thrift, investment, hard work, education, organization, and discipline. Ghanaians had different values. In short, cultures count." The economic historian David Landes, who has spent a lifetime asking why the industrial revolution occurred first in the West, does not hedge his bets: "culture makes all the difference."

Explaining economic development, or the lack of it, by cultural values is tricky because defining a national culture is at best fuzzy, suppressing biases is difficult, and analysts frequently confuse cause with effect. Countries do not have stable, integrated, and mutually exclusive values. Is US culture best represented by the entrepreneurialism of Silicon Valley or a plodding General Motors, the cost plus guaranteed profits of Halliburton or the struggling immigrant street vendor? And as Alice Amsden points out, every culture has its own counter-culture. A little history illustrates the pitfalls of viewing development through the lens of culture. Beatrice Webb, the British Fabian socialist and social scientist, toured Asia in 1911-12. She reported that the Japanese held "objectionable notions

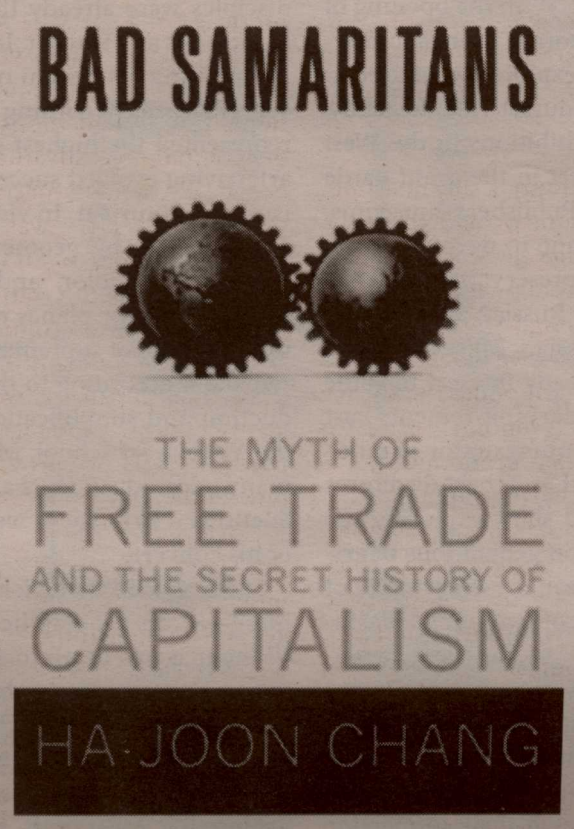
of leisure and a quite intolerable personal independence." Japan "evidently had no desire to teach people to think." About Korea she opined, they are "12 millions of dirty, degraded, sullen, lazy and religionless savages who slouch about in dirty white garments of the most inept kind and who live in filthy mudhuts." Fellow Europeans were hardly immune from equally devastating criticism, and to our modern ears incongruously out of character. In the early 19th century, British writers described Germans as indolent, "not distinguished by enterprise or activity." They were dishonest, excessively emotional, and dull-witted. A French manufacturer complained they "work as and when they please." If the Japanese, Koreans, and Germans had such "bad culture," Chang asks, how could they could they have so admirably succeeded. If they were so different, how did they so thoroughly change their national character? The answer is twofold. We see what we want and frequently want to blame the victims of poverty. When East Asian countries were experiencing low growth rates in the 1950s, analysts blamed their lack of success on the anti-business biases of Confucianism. In the 1980s and 1990s when growth took off in Korea, Taiwan, and other East Asian countries, they attributed the economic miracles to Confucian values of hard work, thrift, and respect for education. Second, economic change is more likely to affect culture than vice versa. Poor economies often lack work, and underemployed people have lots of time on their hands. Not integrated into industrial work schedules or the hustle and bustle of the post-industrial service economy, potential workers in poor countries appear lazy, dilatory, and lacking in punctuality. When those countries catch up economically with, or their workers migrate to, wealthier nations, these same workers become industrious and ambitious.

A final argument might be that the world is indeed poor, but imagine how much poorer it would be if neoliberal policies had not been implemented. If state-owned enterprises continued to exist, if tariffs remained high, if foreign exchange controls had not been lifted, if industrial policies had not been jettisoned, wouldn't low- and middle-income countries be that much worse off? Counterfactuals make for slippery arguments.

We could argue that neoliberal policies have not produced the desired results, that they are unpopular in the target nations — the phrase "IMF riots" comes to mind — and that nations ought to be allowed to design their own policies. Those arguments are compelling politically and ethically, but in the context of an all powerful faith in market efficiency and the inevitability of the Washington Consensus, nagging doubts remain. Perhaps, Margaret Thatcher was right, and there is no alternative.

Amsden and Chang assert there is an alternative. In fact, an alternative has been tried and found superior to neoliberalism. They argue that successful development in both high-income and developing nations historically relied on high tariffs, intellectual property theft, currency controls, and other measures that restricted trade in goods and regulated financial capital. The key to growth was rejecting the doctrine of comparative advantage and pursuing policies that protected infant industries. Recall that comparative advantage requires that countries specialize in those goods that they are most efficient in producing. If a country is most productive in labor intensive industry or agriculture, it should specialize in those products. If it is a high tech powerhouse, it should specialize in that area and trade those products in the international market. As an economist at the University of Chicago once remarked, countries can gain as much producing potato chips as computer chips.

Everything neoclassical economists and op-ed ideologues have told us about how free markets grew the world is wrong — Chang's *Bad Samaritans* is subtitled "The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism." Policy makers in the leading economies may preach free trade, but only recently — and inconsistently — have their countries practiced it. Britain and the US erected high tariffs to ward off competitors and encourage the development of domestic industries. In 1721, Britain levied tariffs on imported manufactures and kept those fees high until its domestic industries were among the most productive in the world, at which point, from the 1870s to the outbreak of WWI, it became the world's leading exponent of free trade. In the 1820s, its average tariff rate on imported manufactures ranged from 45 to 55 percent. In the United States, tariffs were high for most of the 19th century and from the Civil War to the end of WWI they ranged from 40 to 50 percent, among the highest in the world. When the restrictive treaties Western powers forced Japan to sign expired early in the 20th century, it, too, protected emerging industries from foreign competition through tariffs and foreign exchange controls, especially after WWII. Korea did much the same thing when it regained independence post-WWII. Taiwan's emergence as an East Asian Tiger was guided by tariffs, government regulation of exports, and reliance on state-owned enterprises.



Protecting intellectual property is a prerequisite for growth, according to free trade doctrine. Patents and licenses encourage innovation by rewarding their inventors with higher than usual returns. Accordingly, the WTO has implemented a "Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement" to widen the scope and extend the duration of patents, copyrights, and trademarks. Yet, the high income countries all relied in the past on stealing others' ideas. In 19th century Austria, Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the US, residents could take out their own patents on foreign inventions thus claiming an exclusive right to someone else's innovation. Some countries rejected patents, altogether. Only in 1907 did the Swiss extend patent protection to chemical processes, and it was not until 1978 that chemicals themselves could be patented in Switzerland. The Dutch recognized no patents from 1869 to 1912. Philips, the Dutch electronics company, started out in 1891 as a producer of light bulbs based on a design it "borrowed" from US inventor Thomas Edison. Having stolen ideas to get to the top of the economic heap, the US and other high-income nations — the same countries that presently hold 97 percent of all patents — now want to clamp down not only on the pirating of DVDs and software that goes on in developing nations, but they also seek to control nature's bounty. University of Mississippi scientists successfully patented the medicinal use of turmeric only to see their claim overturned when lawyers from Indian challenged it in court.

The strength of Amsden and Chang's argument rests not on a critique of neoliberalism but on the performance of several nations that managed to escape the trap of free trade. Those countries, South Korea, Taiwan, Mexico (to a limited extent), Brazil, India, Indonesia, China, and a few others succeeded because they were able to develop mid-level industries such as steel, auto, shipbuilding, and petrochemicals. Those industries gave them a place as manufacturers in the international division of labor, experience to acquire and adapt technology, and incentives to build institutions so that they could exploit the knowledge they had gained. Many of them managed to become leading exporters as well.

In the great wave of decolonization after World War Two, much of the third world embarked on independent economic development through a policy of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). Newly decolonized countries saw that they could manufacture many of the products that they were importing. Initially, they manufactured consumer items such as air conditioners, scooters, and washing machines but soon sought to expand the scope of production to capital goods. Doing so would save scarce foreign exchange, encourage subsidiary industries, increase the level of technological knowhow, provide middle-class occupations and jobs for skilled workers, and eventually create opportunities for export.

Free traders hated ISI. It involved "picking winners," suppressing competition from imports, deemphasizing raw material exports, and sometimes encouraged corruption. Frequently, products were shabby, but the era of ISI was also the golden era of third world development. During the 1960s and 1970s per capital income in Latin America grew at a rate of 3.1 percent per year or by 81 percent for the entire period. The period up to 1980 represented for the Third World, according to Amsden, "unprecedented expansion in living standards, per capital income, wages, and poverty reduction."

How did developing nations get away with independent economic policies? Weren't they a challenge to the American Empire? Amsden answers that there were two empires. The First Empire ran from 1929 to 1980. It was born of the failure of free enterprise, nurtured by Keynesian heterodoxy and New Deal attempts at industrial planning, matured through wartime mobilization, decolonization and nationalist revolts, and met its decline in Vietnam. It was maniacally anticommunist, but within the bounds of capitalism, it practiced a form of laissez-faire best expressed by Richard Nixon who, commenting on the Third World, remarked, "People don't give a damn." The First Empire interpreted trade law liberally, allowing developing nations to industrialize behind high tariff walls, and extended favorable trade terms. Cold war competition with the Soviet Union encouraged flexibility on the part of Washington.

The US defeat in Vietnam was a metaphor for American hubris, and it represented the penultimate nail in the First American Empire's coffin. The United States lost in Vietnam because it never took the effort to learn about the country, and the National Liberation Front out organized the American Empire. The NLF won because of its popular support, labor abundance, and precision planning. Its Tet offensive, where soldiers practiced first on life-sized models, was analogous to how South Korea built its first steel mill in 1973 — workers conducted mock production runs in a field before the facility was even finished. The NLF's simultaneous invasion of American held cities resembled Toyota's "just-in-time" inventory system. Their grassroots organization operated like the diversified business conglomerates of Japan, South Korea, and most other late industrializers. They made up for a shortage of managerial expertise by pushing authority down to the village (industry and shop floor) where knowledge of politics and logistics (production) was greatest.

OPEC was the final nail in the First American Empire's coffin. With the rise in world oil prices in the 1970s there was a massive redistribution of wealth to oil-producing countries. "Petrodollars," as the newly acquired funds were dubbed, flowed back to the financial institutions of the first world. Those same banks then peddled petrodollars as loans to a multitude of developing nations. Much of the easy money of the 1970s went into unproductive investments, but it nonetheless sustained ISI and those same banks. When the combined effects of deficit spending to finance the Vietnam War and high oil prices pushed

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art REVIEW

Suprematism Revisited

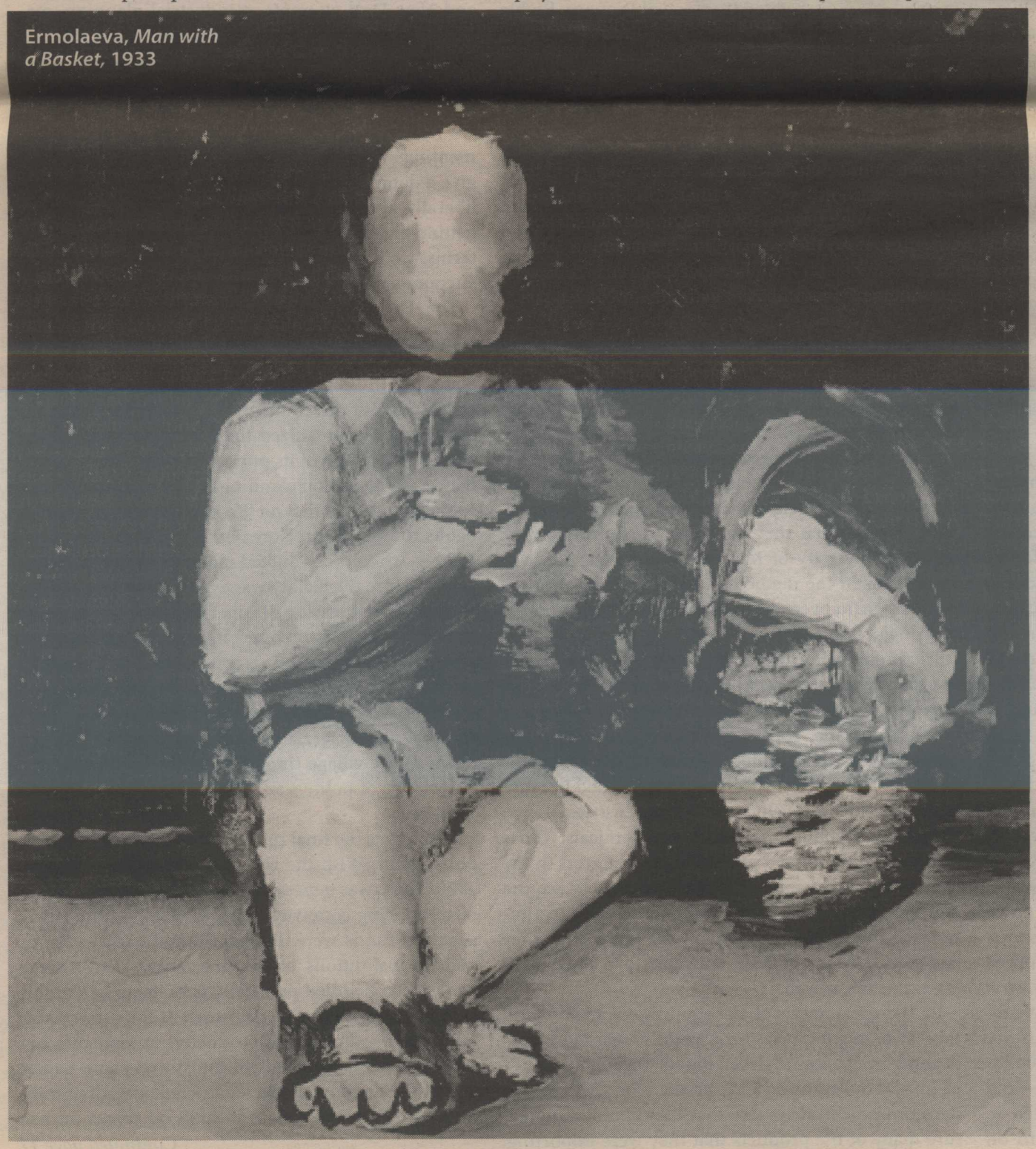
The works of Nikolai Suetin and Vera Ermolaeva

NATASHA KURCHANOVA

Since the late 1980s, the Russian avant-garde has caught considerable amount of attention, both in the country of its origin and abroad. With the opening of Soviet archives and museums' storage rooms, numerous books and exhibitions have explored what used to be closely kept secrets of Communist rule. Recently, the flow of publications and exhibitions in the West has gradually waned, but interest in the avant-garde has remained strong in Russia. Publishers, museums, and research institutions continue to devote considerable resources to the study, preservation, and interpretation of the legacy of the Russian avant-garde. Since the 1990s, the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg has maintained a steady interest in some aspect or another of the legendary movement. Last summer, for example, the museum's curator of modern art, Irina Karasik, put together "The Adventures of the *Black Square*," a splendid show exploring the influence of Kazimir Malevich on generations of artists in Russia and abroad. This year, the department of drawings organized exhibitions of two pupils of Malevich, Nikolai Suetin (1897-1954) and Vera Ermolaeva (1893-1937), both on view from August 7 until the end of September. Although these exhibitions were prepared by different curatorial teams, and the works of the two artists are hung in separate rooms, they form a unified whole through their connection to Malevich, perhaps the most famous modern Russian master.

When Malevich arrived at the art school in the Bielorussian city of Vitebsk in 1919, both his future disciples were already there — Suetin as a student, Ermolaeva as a teacher. Immediately, Malevich began propagating his system of painting, which he named suprematism. According to its founder, suprematism represented the highest stage in the development of art, having evolved successively from Cézanne, Cubism, and Futurism. In visual terms, suprematism was characterized by geometric simplification of form, reduction of color, and dynamic arrangement of forms and color planes on the pictorial surface. The ultimate goal of suprematism was to conquer life and remake it according to the principles of aesthetic reduction and simplification. Soon after his arrival to the Vitebsk art school, Malevich managed to convert many talented students and teachers to suprematism; Suetin and Ermolaeva were among the most talented of his converts.

Suetin joined Malevich in 1920 and stayed close to him — both geographically and stylistically — until the master's death in 1935. (His last tribute to the founder of geometric abstraction was a grave stone in the form of a cube.) The curators of the show have chosen present Suetin mainly as a designer, faithfully following Malevich's precept of the introduction of art into life. Most of the approximately 200 works on display come from the 1920s — the Suprematist period proper. Suetin's designs for posters, tribunes, book covers, trains, street decorations fill the galleries, accompanied by plates, cups, and vases made at the State Porcelain Factory in Petrograd, where the artist began his career in 1922. Ten years later, he would become its chief painter. In the 1930s, Suetin participated in decorative projects for buildings and streets, and in 1937 was awarded Grand Prix as part of interior design team for Boris Iofan's USSR pavilion at the International Exhibition in Paris. After this success, Suetin was invited to decorate the USSR Pavilion for the World Exhibition in New York in 1939.



Ermolaeva, *Man with a Basket*, 1933

There are actually only two paintings of Suetin in the exhibition. The first — *Woman with a Saw* from the late 1920s, belongs to the Russian Museum, and is among his most well-known. An ambitious *Woman's Portrait* (1950-1953), the artist's last work, is — like many of the works from the last twenty-five years of artist's life — from the collection of Nina Suetin, and, like them, is exhibited here for the first time. The late works reveal to the pubic a Suetin who gradually monumentalizes suprematism, and adopts it to the grandiose classicism of the Soviet Union. *Woman's Portrait*, for example, depicts a bust-length figure of a Russian woman gazing steadily and confidently beyond the frame, as if seeing in the distance the bright land of the future that her country will finally reach despite centuries of calamities and turmoil. Numerous drawings from the daughter's collection present a steady process of solidification of the style Suetin took over from Malevich. At first, the faceless figures of late suprematism assume non-threatening, collective, or mythical overtones — for example, in drawings of *The Mother of God* series. Later, these figures reappear — as barely recognizable men and noble women — sometimes comically cast.

Suetin's most interesting works of non-applied nature are not figurative paintings or drawings, but watercolors from the 1920s. Here his reinterpretation of suprematism edges on figuration. Relying on intuition, Suetin smoothes over Malevich's harsh style, and makes it more subtle and poetic. For example, in *Sketch for a Mural* from 1920, displayed on the cover of the exhibition catalogue, the vertical curve transecting the red circle is highly uneven: it resembles more a branch of a tree bending under a gust of wind rather than a geometric element. Because of this irregularity, the entire composition comes alive; the dynamic movement from the lower left to the upper right reminds one of an arrow being released from a bow. Moreover, here Suetin dilutes his teacher's strict palette of blacks, whites, and primaries with various shades of purple, blue, and green, rendering the arrangement of forms more light and airy. In *Suprematist Composition* (1924), horizontally placed light green rectangles of various degrees of irregularity contrast with uniformly painted and sharply-edged black ones, resulting not only in a juxtaposition of colors and shapes, but also in the image of a plane, made up of rectangles with alternating ruler-sharp and uneven edges.

Vera Ermolaeva's suprematism is also poetic, but in a different mode. Unlike Suetin's, her works from the Vitebsk period do not lean strongly toward figuration. Instead, the few watercolors and designs by the artist from 1920-1922 sharply disengage harsh geometric forms from unevenly colored planes

Suetin, *Compositions with Five Figures*

below them, as is the case, most noticeably, in *Sketches for the Festive Decoration of Vitebsk,* and *Suprematist Construction* (1920).

Ermolaeva's professional path also differed from that of Suetin. After moving to Petrograd in 1922 along with Malevich and his other students, she stayed closer to painting than her younger colleague by working at the State Institute of Artistic Culture. The study of Cubist principles remained her concentration during this time. According to Antonina Zainchkovskaya, the curator of Ermolaeva's exhibition and the author of the catalogue, the artist formed a group to investigate color construction in five painterly "systems" — Impressionism, Cezannism, Cubism, Futurism, and suprematism — and (not unlike Kandinsky two years earlier in Moscow) was attempting to elaborate laws of color perception.

In the second half of the 1920s, after the closing of the Institute, Ermolaeva joined a group of "painterly plastic realists" who continued studying the works of the founders of modernism and who remained within the confines of traditional painterly genres: portrait, still life, and landscape. In addition to the Suprematist period, Ermolaeva's gouaches and watercolors from the second half of the 1920s and the 1930s are among the most impressive in her oeuvre. In her portraits at that time, she followed Malevich by painting faceless figures — peasant and otherwise — staring blankly from the canvas. Despite her fascination with Malevich, Ermolaeva's most interesting work from this period leaves the teacher's legacy and turns to older masters of modernism, such as Cézanne, Matisse, and Van Gogh. In her still lifes from 1932, for example, her tasks are not ideological or critical but purely painterly: investigation of possibilities of color in the construction of painterly space, illusion of recession in depth, and representation of distance between objects. In *Still Life with White Cup*, the three items of the composition — a bowl, a jug, and a cup — are summarily painted with hasty outlines and quick brushstrokes. Their close proximity to each other, however, indicate the objects that are further away from us and the ones that are closer, with the white cup appearing to nearly fall out off the edge of the picture. Likewise, the illusion of painterly depth is created with the help of color and the direction in which the brush moves: a band of dark-green on the left with vertical brushstrokes turns sharply into another band of ochre yellow with gouache layered horizontally; then, equally sharply, the tone brightens up, with the direction of the brushstrokes changing again; finally, the color alters to a darker shade of yellow with an addition of orange and white. The result of this dizzying array of color and brushwork is an energetic, unified composition with balanced color accents and a clearly expressed painterly focus.

Although painting consumed a major part of her intellectual energy, Ermolaeva had to make her living, which she did by illustrating children's books. The exhibition features several illustrations for the State Children's Publisher (Detgiz), where the artist was employed from 1925 until her arrest nine years later. Her images for children's books are all figurative — humorous, colorful, and inventive — at times returning to the style of her Primitivist, pre-Suprematist works, presented at the exhibition by designs for the play by an obscure playwright K. Landau *How a Gardner Tricked Two Ministers and Married Tsar's Daughter*. The costume and set designs for the play — discovered in storage rooms of the city's theater museum by the curator — are on display for the first time.

Because of her commitment to modernism and her refusal to adjust her style to the demands of Soviet ideological machine, in December of 1934 Ermolaeva was arrested along with other members of the group of plastic realism, accused of "anti-Soviet activity" and "propaganda of anti-Soviet ideas." In March of that year she was found to be "socially dangerous" and sent to the camps for three years. She was shot to death on September 26, 1937 following an order of the Soviet secret police. In presenting Ermolaeva's oeuvre alongside Suetin's, the Russian Museum not only displayed the works of two talented pupils of Malevich, but also opened up a difficult page in the country's cultural history, where public recognition and demise of an artist depended on the degree of the artist's ideological acceptability to the status quo.. Ⓐ

Book Review

Continued from page 15

U.S. inflation into the double digits, a Second American Empire came to the fore. The U.S. Federal Reserve cut the money supply, and interest rates soared. In 1982, Mexico declared that it would be unable to service its $82 billion debt, and a financial meltdown appeared imminent. The Federal Reserve bailed out the banks, but killed the possibility of ISI succeeding. Third World countries could stave off default — by continuing payment on the interest on their debts — but only if they accepted neoliberal policies, policies that starved infant industries of needed capital, removed protection from foreign competition, and opened up national economies to foreign direct investment.

With the end of ISI and the introduction of neoliberal policies, economic growth virtually ended. Per capita income in Latin America increased by only ten percent from 1980 to 2005. Growth rates in the Middle East dropped from eight to two percent. The IMF and World Bank practically ran most African economies in the 1980s and 1990s, and there living standards fell across the board. In Asia, where neoliberalism never took hold to the same extent, economies grew at high rates for almost the entire post-war period. The countries that survived the Second American Empire had acquired manufacturing experience before World War Two and used that expertise to enter export markets in the 1980s and 1990s. Mexico and Brazil instituted ISI policies in the 1930s; China and India, despite British colonial rule, had developed indigenous industries in the late 19th century, as did Indonesia under the Dutch; and Korea and Taiwan gained manufacturing prowess as part of Japan's preparation for war. In addition, they all engaged in state-led industrialization.

Amsden and Chang demonstrate that poor countries can develop, even against the interests of powerful empires. To pull themselves out of poverty, they had to buck what is now called the Washington Consensus and reject free trade until they could compete with world's most productive enterprises. They had to ignore what the powerful nations said and, instead, imitate what they did.

They have offered a powerful counter narrative to that touted by the epigones of free trade, and that, in itself, is a useful intellectual tool for those seeking global economic justice. Amsden and Chang analyze what nations do. They have little to say about what happens in those countries, though. They point out that Japan, Korea, and Taiwan had important land reform prior to taking off economically, but they drop that line of inquiry in the cases of India, China, and Brazil. Their attraction to state-led development leaves them mostly silent about the repressive policies that insured much of that growth — although Chang alludes to the stifling social control most South Koreans experienced during the long years of dictatorship following decolonization. They celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit of late industrializers but write as though no one works in the factories of the mid-tech firms.

South Korea and Brazil both had highly militant working classes. How did they affect their countries' ascent into the ranks of middle-income nations? A question of some interest in the case of China, the factory of the world and site of 100,000 strikes a year. These are important issues that cannot be ignored, but both volumes serve a valuable purpose in showing that "yes, Margaret, there is an alternative." Ⓐ

Redemption? The (D)evolution of Smalls

▶ Aaron Parks' *Invisible Cinema*
(Blue Note, August 2008)

MARK SCHIEBE

The rise, fall, and resurrection of a little jazz room on West 10th Street and 7th Avenue in Greenwich Village is one of the more remarkable stories in our corner of the contemporary jazz world. In 1994, a nightshift nurse named Mitch Borden mortgaged his New Jersey house, rented out rooms, and moved his family in with his parents in order to open *Smalls*, which he named after the legendary Harlem club *Smalls Paradise*. A contingent of veteran masters from the New York jazz scene such as Frank Hewitt, Lou Donaldson, and Jimmy Lovelace became regulars. Younger performers cut their teeth at the all-night jam sessions (lasting until 9am!) and the club quickly became a breeding ground for new talent, with some of the most significant new voices — players like Jason Linder, Omer Avital, and Kurt Rosenwinkel — getting their first regular headlining gigs because they were heard and booked by Borden. From its inception, *Smalls* was a place that provided the kind of "loose hang" atmosphere that has always fostered creative development in young aspiring musicians.

The famous *Village Gate* had closed its doors earlier that year and Borden envisioned his club as continuing the legacy of that club with the "feels like you're in your living room" vibe. "There needs to be a *Smalls*," he has said. "There was a *Smalls*. It was called the *Village Gate*." In its original version (10 youthful years) *Smalls* featured a ten dollar cover and a bar that wasn't a bar. There was no bartender and instead patrons would sit on barstools on the "employee" side. (Mitch was the only employee: owner and talent seeker, doorman and janitor; he was never behind the bar.) It was BYOB and audience members would show up with six packs from the bodega down the street or a bottle of wine from the local liquor store (hoping someone had a corkscrew); there was free tea and juice set up on a table in the back; there was a smattering of round tables, a random assortment of chairs, a bunch of candles, some on tables, some lined against the longer right wall of the room, where a cushioned bench snaked from stairs to stage. A Steinway grand piano, rented by Borden for $1300 a month, occupied the far left hand corner of the room. The low stage barely separated performer from audience, a distinction that disappeared entirely at "around midnight" when the all-night jam session would commence. A large framed photograph of Louis Armstrong in his youth, sitting Buddha-like, derby cap slightly askew, hung behind the musicians.


Aaron Parks at Jazz Alley in Seattle

Having (in my bright-eyed, pimply-skinned youth) heroically stayed until close for a handful of these sessions, I can personally attest to the "jazz spell" cast by the room, and will never forget the eerie visions when emerging from the club into the morning light to look with wonder and incomprehension at the throngs of rush hour commuters (moving at what seemed incredible speeds) toward the Christopher Street subway station, taxis hurtling down 7th Ave., and bums asleep against sidewalk curbs, *The New York Post* shielding their eyes from the light.

The visions fled and yielded to reality in May of 2004 when Smalls closed its doors. In the ensuing months, I heard a variety of stories: the neighbors complained, and then a deluge of calls and letters from government agencies and lawyers; failed health inspection (faulty smoke detectors in the bathroom or something of the sort); citations for underage drinking; Borden's failure to pay $7,000 in workers' comp. (To whom? Himself? The musicians whose careers he helped bring to life by providing a space to play and a young and enthusiastic audience?) There were the mounting bills and no way to meet them with only the measly ten dollar door cover charge (about fifteen dollars less than what you would have to pay to see comparable talent anywhere else in the city). No liquor was sold. The bottom line is that Smalls was not profitable enough for the famous Greenwich Village, which now largely trades on the immense cultural capital produced during its bohemian glory days while scoffing at any attempt to keep that cultural vibrancy alive in any type of non-profit-driven manifestation.

Later that year a Brazilian bar owner took over the lease and renovated, turning the space into a sleek, tourist trap with some lame-ass name (I think it was "Ipanema Bar" or something). The interior was completely done over, and a bigger stage was added. (Probably top-of-the-line smoke detectors in the bathrooms also). After about a year of lackluster business, Borden (who had started booking bands at the nearby pool hall *Fat Cat*) finally persuaded the owner that the Latin-themed club wasn't working. Borden was hired to book jazz talent again, only this time at a twenty dollar cover charge and with drink minimums. While many of the younger generations of musicians came back to play at the club, the clientele had shifted, and the unique atmosphere was long gone, as were the all-night jam sessions.

Encouraged by popular demand, the following year Borden partnered with musicians Spike Wilner and Leo Kostrinsky, re-purchased the club and opened *Smalls* again, attempting to restore the original pre-"Ipanema" vibe, but needing to make the place financially viable. The result: a retained twenty dollar cover and one drink minimum, one bartender, one waitress; a renovated look with the modern bar, hallway, and bathrooms intact; and a restoration of the older type small stage facing rows of used-furniture-store chairs.

In other words, patrons wishing to spend the night at *Smalls* will need about three times the cash they used to in order to soak in that bohemian living room vibe. But ironies aside, the saddest thing is that it prevents the music from getting heard by enough young people. Smalls used to be a place hip college students would come and just check the music out and hang out all night without worrying about having to spend too much; the club has retained its reputation among jazz enthusiasts and young students of the music, but it seems like now they are the only ones willing to pay the cover to see their favorites. The cover and drink minimum effectively prevent just "dropping by" on random nights.

Incredibly, despite all of this, *Smalls* (the new old version) is still one of the most affordable places to see the best players in the city, as the twenty dollar cover (good for the whole night) remains five to fifteen dollars cheaper than its more famous "competitors," *The Blue Note*, *Birdland*, *The Village Vanguard*, and *The Iridium*, three of the four of which have succeeded in turning the art form into a status symbol and tourist "destination." At *Smalls* there is no announcement over the PA about flash photography, no polite reminder about cell phone usage and "quiet time," and no tired looking waitress handing you your bill in the middle of the set. It's all about the music. And yes, the Buddha-like Armstrong photograph was restored to its proper place.

In contrast to the self-consciously experimental character of the jazz that used to happen at clubs like *The Knitting Factory* and *Tonic*, the original group of musicians drawn by Borden to *Smalls* played in a more "straight-ahead" vein, a phrase in jazz lingo that means a rough adherence to the shared, swing-based musical vocabulary as it has developed over the last fifty years from bebop to postbop. These days, for a post-Marsalis generation of younger players, the purview has widened again and the communal vocabulary is developing by incorporating elements from new generation x and y genres like alternative rock and indie pop. Brad Mehldau, who exemplifies the new turn, and Joshua Redman, a kind of bridge figure, have both used the club as a launching pad and gone on to become two of the most celebrated jazz musicians in the world.

Like other greats, Mehldau has created his own unmistakable idiom on his instrument (in this case the piano), and currently casts the largest shadow on newer players. The 24 year-old pianist Aaron Parks, who I had the pleasure of hearing last week at *Smalls*, seems to embrace the influence, working through it rather than around it. On this particular night, he was a sideman in the guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel's band, and he was consistently up to the daunting challenge of having to play a solo either before or after jazz's latest guitar hero. Parks mesmerized the *Smalls* crowd with an incredible blend of chops and melodic ideas, but it is his sense of musical narrative, of improvisational architecture, that already sets him above even many of his musical peers, and makes him an ideal partner for Rosenwinkel.

Parks, who grew up in Seattle, is the classic case of the musical prodigy, entering Washington University at age 14 to triple major in math, computer science, and music. Shortly thereafter he realized that he was "addicted" to improvisational music and moved to New York. He joined trumpeter Terence Blanchard's band and began a five year tenure which yielded numerous film soundtracks and three spacious, wide-ranging albums including 2005's *Flow*. Parks made his debut as a major label leader earlier this month with *Blue Note*'s release of *Invisible Cinema*, which features ten of the pianists' compositions played in a mostly quartet format with Mike Moreno on guitar, Matt Penman on bass, and Eric Harland (a member of Blanchard's band) on drums. Parks says that the title of the album has many meanings, and one of them is that music for him (and for many of us) is kind of like an invisible cinema: "You can't see it, but there's

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theater REVIEW

The Still Small and Alluring Voice of the Fringe

▶ New York International Fringe Festival (NYIFF)

FRANK EPISALE

Every August, a couple hundred theatre companies, some long established, others formed specifically for the event at hand, converge on lower Manhattan for the New York International Fringe Festival (NYIFF). Billed as the "the largest multi-arts festival in North America," the festival's organizers claim that it "generates an atmosphere of extreme excitement" and that their "energy is contagious!" Indeed, to be sure they were getting across just how excited they were — and how excited we should be — about about the festival, the homepage of the 2008 festival employed no fewer than seventeen exclamation points. Some sentences had so much excitement bursting out of them that one exclamation wasn't enough ("Subscribe to the FringeNYC Fans newsletter!!")

For the first few years of the Fringe — which has now been around for twelve years, more than long enough to make many of us feel old for remembering year one — it was almost possible to share in the excitement, manufactured or not. New York has a sprawling, chaotic, energetic, and vital scene of small, independent theatre companies. Many of these companies come and go in a year or two; most lose money; much of the work is dreadful. Despite, or perhaps even because of, these caveats, many consider this scene the heart of New York theatre. The high-priced, risk-averse, aesthetically conservative, middlebrow, blandly competent work generally produced by the commercial and institutional theatres of Broadway and, increasingly, off-Broadway, certainly doesn't seem representative of the anarchic energy that seems to fuel so much of the theatre in this city.

Countless theatre artists are referred to as "aspiring" despite the dozens of shows they've already been involved in; they bite their tongues when well-meaning aunts and uncles cheer them on by looking forward to seeing them on Broadway. This isn't entirely bad, of course: "alternative" movements need something to be alternative to. Still, it has long been a common complaint that this "alternative" theatre lacks a sense of community and a coherent identity. While the fragmented nature of the scene means there's room for everyone, it also means it's extraordinarily difficult to attract and maintain an audience, and to establish a reputation.

These difficulties are exacerbated by the inadequate terminology that is applied to such theatre. Terms like "off-off-Broadway" and "semi-professional" sound aspirational, as if all practitioners of small theatre in New York are trying to "make it big" but haven't made it yet. "Downtown theatre" is no longer geographically accurate, if it ever was, since many adventurous, non-commercial shows can be found in storefronts throughout the city, in transformed spaces in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx; and since a fair amount of toothless commercial fare has found its way into the long-since gentrified Village.

None of these objections are meant as assertions that "alternative" artists wouldn't welcome the paychecks and recognition that a Broadway contract can bring, but that these markers of mainstream success are not their primary goal. "Selling out" would be a welcome opportunity to many of those who consistently struggle to break even on their own shows, who finance their work with the generosity of their relatives, or with money made from day-jobs that demand far too much of their time and energy. The chance to "sell out," though, is rarely a random occurrence. Most often, you have to seek out and fight for that kind of "big break," something that practitioners who don't prioritize that kind of success are often unwilling to do.

The Fringe is, in large part, an attempt to package and market this fragmented scene, to energize downtown audiences, attract curious uptown audiences, and wrap it all up in a single, palatable term. It is also an assertion of New York's centrality in the theatre world: if countries around the globe — most famously Edinburgh, Scotland — have Fringe Festivals, why doesn't North America's most important theatre city?

The NYIFF has been an impressive success by a number of measures. Each year brings new venues, larger audiences, and more sold-out shows. Troupes from around the world come to spend a few days in New York and to take a shot at trying to attract a New York audience and garner a favorable review or two. Because of the festival's infrastructure, these shows can be produced for a lot less money than they might otherwise have been. The greatest cost in mounting a small show in this city is the rental of performance and rehearsal space; rehearsing out of town and moving into a provided theatre at the last minute, free of charge, has major advantages for cash-strapped companies.

More conventional measures of success have also been apparent. Despite the festival's ongoing financial struggles, a number of the shows it has produced have gone on to attract larger audiences and higher ticket prices, using the Fringe as a springboard into the mainstream. The most notable of these is *Urinetown*, the 1999 Fringe musical that transferred off-Broadway and then to Broadway in 2001, where it ran for two-and-a-half years. Touring and regional productions continue to draw audiences around the country.

While *Urinetown* is the only Broadway story out of the Fringe so far, there have been numerous off-Broadway runs, publications of plays, regional tours, and even a few film adaptations. All of this makes the Fringe a big draw for companies looking to make their first big splash in the continent's biggest theatre and media market.

There is a downside to this kind of success, however. *Urinetown* has spawned a seemingly endless series of provocatively titled and excruciatingly executed musicals hoping for commercial runs transfers. Rumors of producers and talent scouts roaming the streets south of Union Square have only exacerbated this trend. Despite some near-misses and modest successes (like 2003's *Slut!*), though, it's unlikely that we will be seeing this year's *Underwear: A Space Musical* or *Nudists in Love: A New Musical on the Great White Way* (though I've heard both shows are actually kind of fun.)

Similar copycat trends take up far too much of the annual NYIFF calendar. Burt Royal's clever *Dog Sees God*, a gritty coming-of-age spin on Charlie Brown and the *Peanuts* gang might reasonably be blamed for this year's *Gem! A Truly Outrageous Musical Parody*. 2002's *Matt and Ben* (as in Damon and Affleck), may be responsible in part for this year's inevitable *Becoming Britney*. Many shows apparently seek to combine a couple of Fringe success trends into a single package, like *Perez Hilton Saves the Universe (or at Least the Greater Los Angeles Area): The Musical* or *Tim Gun's Podcast (a reality chamber opera)*. These shows might very well be brilliant but, reading through the listings, it all starts to feel painfully predictable. Nothing is less fresh, provocative, and irreverent than someone grinning, tap-dancing, and poking your shoulder while yelling "Hey! Look how fresh(!) provocative(!) and irreverent(!) I am!"

This is particularly true in a year when some of the most interesting new musicals have, in fact, come out of the commercial and institutional theatres. *Passing Strange*, which began at the Public and transferred to Broadway, rocked harder than anything since *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (which, of course, never moved up town). *Adding Machine: A Musical*, which recently finished an award-winning run at the Minetta Lane Theatre, was the rare musical adaptation that outshone its source material (Elmer Rice's fascinating 1923 experiment in expressionism, *The Adding Machine*). Diane Paulus's new production of *Hair* has been widely praised as one of the most exciting productions ever to grace Central Park's Delacorte Theatre. (I'm seeing it several hours after I hand in this article, so I can't weigh in on it here.)

More fundamental a problem than the failure of individual shows, however, is the very idea of making fringe theatre as a means to a more commercial end. I find nothing ignoble in the desire for popular success, but I do object to the idea that shows playing in 49 seat and 99 seat theatres, at $18 a ticket, are inherently "failures," or that it's somehow obvious that those involved in such shows would rather be doing something bigger and "better." The best shows I have been involved in, and many of the best shows I have seen, have been in tiny little shoebox spaces, converted hallways, building courtyards, and parking lots, places where the audience can smell whether or not the costumes have been washed recently, where those in the front row might very well be spilled on, spit on, or sweat on.

Betsy Moore in *2 By Sinner* at the New York International Fringe Festival.

Of course, some of the worst theatre I've ever seen has been in those spaces too, but that's part of the excitement. An $18 ticket doesn't carry the same risk for an audience member as a $75 or $120 ticket. The possibility of seeing something extraordinary (or of seeing something go terribly but entertainingly wrong) balances out the likelihood of seeing something awful, bordering on incompetent. And the raw enthusiasm and joy of the performers in those tiny spaces can outweigh much of the practiced, professional, competence of full-time professionals.

All that being said, I'll keep checking in on the Fringe festival every August. I was only able to see five shows at this year's and, out of those five, one was terrible, one was boring, two were pretty good, and one was exceptional. Fringe or not, that's not such a bad ratio. Ⓐ

film REVIEW

Living Degree Zero

▶ *Frozen River*, written and directed by Courtney Hunt

TIM KRAUSE

If you're tired of the humectent summer blockbuster season, which this year dripped with ever-more perfect CGI monstrosities and was awash with ever-more soggily portentous superheroic significance, take a trip to Courtney Hunt's splendid, tough *Frozen River*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance 2008, and currently playing at the Angelika Film Center. Written and directed by Hunt, *Frozen River* tells the story of Ray Eddy (played with steely reserve by Melissa Leo), who, as the movie begins, is in a lot of trouble: her husband Troy, a gambling addict and substance abuser, has just run off with the money the couple had saved for their much-needed new trailer home; the money she makes at her dismal part-time job at the Yankee Dollar isn't enough to pay the bills; and her two sons, T. J. (Charlie McDermott) and Ricky (James Reilly), are becoming increasingly estranged from her. While looking for Troy, Ray soon meets Lila Littlewolf (played by newcomer Misty Upham), a Mohawk woman who steals Troy's car from the aptly-named Territorial High Stakes Bingo and who runs a high-stakes territorial game of chance on her own, smuggling illegal aliens from one Mohawk reservation in Canada across the frozen St. Lawrence River to another Mohawk reservation in Massena, New York. Ray soon becomes entangled in Lila's smuggling schemes, first because Troy's car has the kind of pop trunk that Lila requires for her jobs, and second for the money Lila shares with her.

Melissa Leo and Misty Upham in *Frozen River*

There's quite a lot to admire in *Frozen River*, not least the foreboding, desolate, haunted landscape of Massena, the reservation, and environs, a landscape of dilapidated homes, abandoned automobiles, and tiny, struggling businesses, a landscape of lowering gray skies, dead grass, and rust; like one of the nether bolgias of Dante's hell, a world of snow and ice and mud. Hunt's camera catalogs these details endlessly, pausing often on especially poignant moments — like the foot-powered merry-go-round in front of Ray's trailer, dilapidated and unusable, and which angry T. J. is always trying to fix; or a prospectus flyer from Ray's unscrupulous realtor that enjoins naïve customers to "LIVE THE DREAM" of owning their own home; or the look of weak winter evening light, dully yellow-orange, like a faded bruise on the aluminum siding of Ray's trailer — that underline the material and spiritual poverty of the film's characters. The acting is generally excellent, with only brief lapses into melodrama or overstatement: Hunt handles the largely new cast well, with only T. J. and Ricky sometimes failing to hit the necessary note of grim desperation or panicked fear. (That they bear an unfortunate characterological and physical resemblance to the fictional sons of Mary Louise Parker's Nancy Botwin, another single American mom-criminal, on Showtime's puerile comedy Weeds, doesn't help.)

Especially good is Michael O'Keefe as Trooper Finnerty, who repeatedly warns Ray about her relationship with Lila, but whose motives and emotions are inscrutable: is he merely an implacable agent of the law, or something more, a caring human being amid the snowy wastes? Frozen River's plot is also great, with Ray's repeated trips across the river acquiring mythic status as journeys into darkness and the unknown: on one trip, the dramatic and emotional climax of the film, Ray shepherds across a Pakistani couple with a baby; because the voyage happens on Christmas Eve, the Muslim family takes on the ironic roles of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus — one of the best, subtlest tweakings of American xenophobia and nativism I've seen in recent years, made all the better by Ray's frank dislike and fear, bordering on racism, of the couple. Ray is quite sanguine about ferrying Chinese and Mexicans across the St. Lawrence, but her difficulties with the Pakistani couple, and Hunt's courage for including this subplot in the narrative, allows Frozen River to articulate larger, more sweeping themes through the prism of Ray's crabbed, hard-scrabble life.

Finally, it's refreshing to see such an unpretentious, uncynical (i.e., free of Hollywood bullshit) portrayal of the realities of lower middle class and poor rural life in America. An upstate boy myself (though not so far as the snows of Massena!), I was incredibly pleased that Hunt nails both the precise visual look and the exact emotional register — stark and bleak but filled with a sharp, stripped-down beauty — of what upstaters like myself call the "North Country," a world completely unlike that of urban and suburban New York: a world of hardships and physical labor, of bankruptcy and forfeiture, of poverty and addiction and casual crime; but a world still filled with magic and wonder, with dark forests and deep snows and vast open spaces, alive with the thrills of danger, adventure, and transgression.

These archetypal, mythic qualities are embodied by the frozen river of the title, the St. Lawrence, which is as much a character in the film as the "strong brown god" of the Mississippi is in Twain's Huckleberry Finn, another classic American tale of transgression and escape. The river is an unstable, dangerous bridge over which Ray must repeatedly travel in her quest for financial security, and whose thin ice could crack at any time — a perfect, simple metaphor for the precariousness of the middle class, and, indeed, the American Dream, in the final burned-out days of the Bush administration and the failed Republican Revolution.

I'm writing this review some twenty-four hours after the full-scale detonation of "Housegate," the comic-pathetic revelation that Republican presidential candidate John McCain literally does not know how many houses that he and his billionaire heiress wife, Cindy, own. Here the blockbuster machine that is an election year in American politics merges eerily in my mind with Hunt's small, spare, quiet — and, at ninety-seven minutes, mercifully short — film.

Both are tales of homes lost or about to be lost: McCain's forgotten through the crass "let-them-eat-cake" noblesse oblige of a kept man and pathologically mercurial, self-destructive politician, a mental oblivion born of entitled carelessness and perhaps aided by a touch of senility or dementia; Ray's endangered from the political and social costs incurred when rich, out-of-touch hucksters like McCain get into office, sink the public treasury in the sands of Iraq and in the pockets of corporate goons, and run the economy — and people like Ray and Lila — into the ground. There's a lot of dark water under that river, and Hunt's film is at its best when it shows the cracks — facilis descensus Averno — through which ordinary folks like you and me can fall into the icy depths below. Ⓐ

Music Review

Continued from page 18

all this drama between the musicians, all these stories that can be told." This might sound like cliché, except that the music on the album is anything but.

The opening "Travelers" is reminiscent of Chick Corea's seminal *Blue Note* debut, *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* (1968), but garbed in a 21st century aesthetic. On the opening track, "Travelers," Parks' buttery, Corea-like piano lines sing, taking off in flight directly above the simmering techno-influenced rhythmic propulsion of Penman's bass and Harland's electronic snare drum. After a deceptively simple melody, Parks darts through sections of song which shift between meters of 15 and 4, creating a giddy, off-kilter feel. "Karma" uses another techno inspired groove, and a spacious landscape is set up, over which Parks and Moreno execute in unison a series of heavily chromatic melody lines which begin and end in surprising places; like twin sports cars, they speed around hairpin melodic turns, careening in and out of view at dangerous speeds. The open, "cinematic" sound of many of these tracks calls to mind recent albums by Parks' immediate predecessors Mehldau, Rosenwinkel, and Blanchard, but also the sense of space present in music of the artists grouped on the German ECM label during the 1970's, especially the work of Keith Jarrett's great "European" quartet.

Parks, Moreno and Harland can also sound like fusion players from the 70's, as on "Harvesting Dance," a Balkan-inspired groove with a snake-like melody, Moreno's tone calling to mind Larry Carlton's nasty lead guitar on the late Steely Dan albums, and Harland sounding like The Mahavishnu Orchestra's thunderous and machine-like Billy Cobham. On the meditative "Praise," Moreno and Parks and blend beautifully, with Moreno deftly using volume pedal swells to create amplified shadows behind the piano melody.

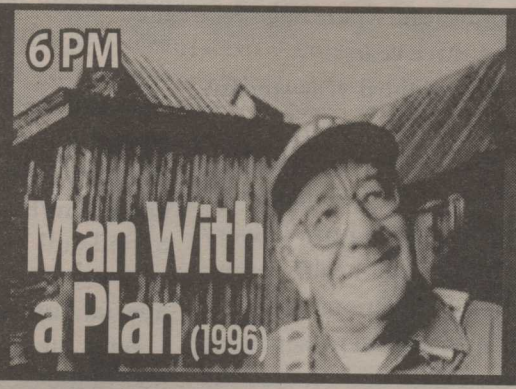
Parks is a young jazz musician with a gift for musical narrative and an ability to speak to the musical "here and now," absorbing a variety of influences past and present, and transmuting them with a prodigious talent and vision. *Invisible Cinema* is an exciting debut, an auspicious start for a promising composer and improviser who might just start casting some shadows of his own. Ⓐ

Thank You for Voting!

THE THIRD ANNUAL ADVOCATE FILM SERIES

SEPTEMBER 11

6 PM



Man With a Plan (1996)

Faced with his father's impending hip operation and his failing farm, Fred Tuttle needs to make a six-digit salary with a fourth-grade education. So he runs for U.S. Representative from Vermont with a markedly bizarre campaign. Will he triumph over incumbent Bill Blachly?

(Ben Guaraldi, IMDB)

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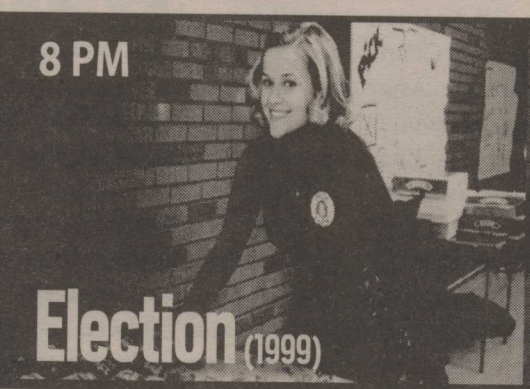

Election (1999)

Based on the novel by Jim Perotta, "Election", takes the scandal and mudslinging associated with presidential elections and transposes them to a high school election for student council president in Nebraska- with impossibly sharp, satirical results.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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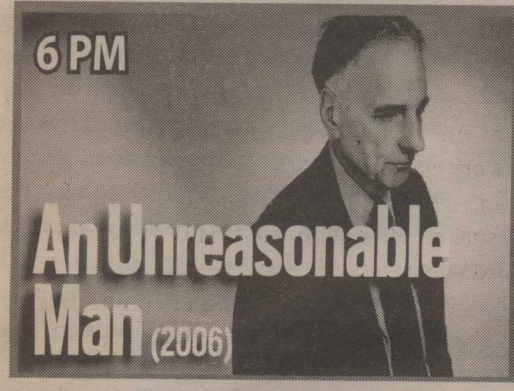

An Unreasonable Man (2006)

As quietly provocative as its thoughtful protagonist, Steve Skrovan and Henriette Mantel's galvanizing documentary, "An Unreasonable Man", examines how one of the 20th century's most admired and indefatigable social activists, Ralph Nader, became a pariah among the same progressive circles he helped champion.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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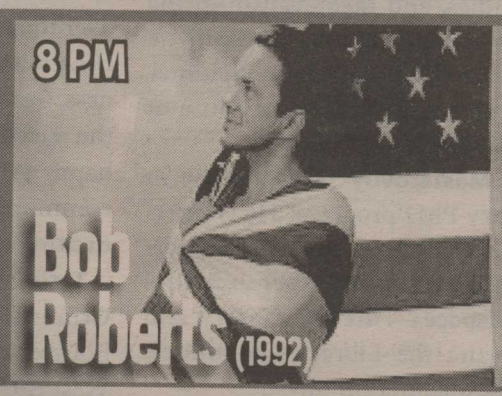

Bob Roberts (1992)

Tim Robbins stars in his directorial debut as right-wing folksinger Bob Roberts in this satirical mock documentary. Roberts is joined on the campaign trail by a British documentary filmmaker who offers insight into Roberts and his supporters. Roberts is the anti-Bob Dylan, with tunes such as "Times Are Changin' Back."

(rottentomatoes.com)

SEPTEMBER 25

OCTOBER 16

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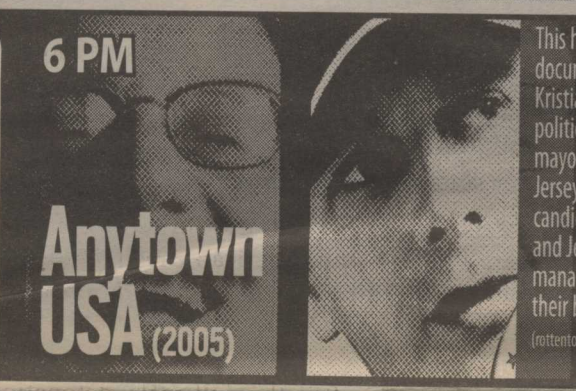

Anytown USA (2005)

This hilarious, insightful documentary from filmmaker Kristian Fraga examines the bizarre politics of a hotly-contested mayoral race in a small New Jersey town. Featuring two blind candidates, a rumored mobster, and Jesse Ventura's campaign manager, it's American politics at their best, worst, and weirdest.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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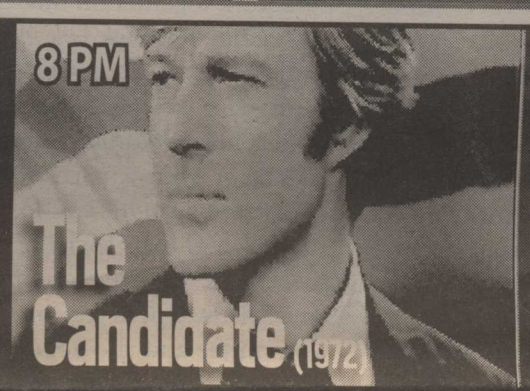

The Candidate (1972)

"The Candidate" is a scathing depiction of hypocrisy and complexity in the American political world. Bill McKay (Robert Redford), an idealistic young lawyer and son of a famous governor, allows himself to be manipulated as the polls slowly change and swing in his favor.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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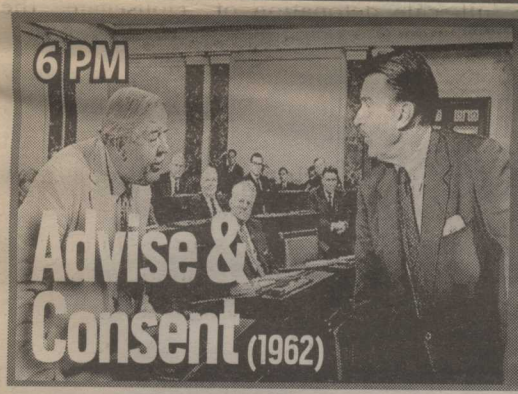

Advise & Consent (1962)

Preminger's political thriller examines the dark side of politics and its tragic personal repercussions for an essentially decent man. When a President nominates a controversial candidate for Secretary of State, the political dealing and infighting begins as dissident legislators are willing to stoop even to blackmail to stop his confirmation -- or assure it.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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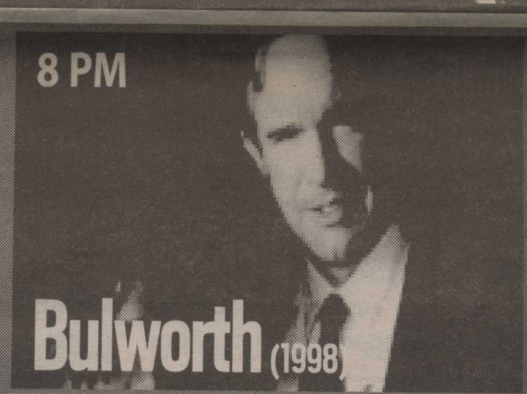


Bulworth (1998)

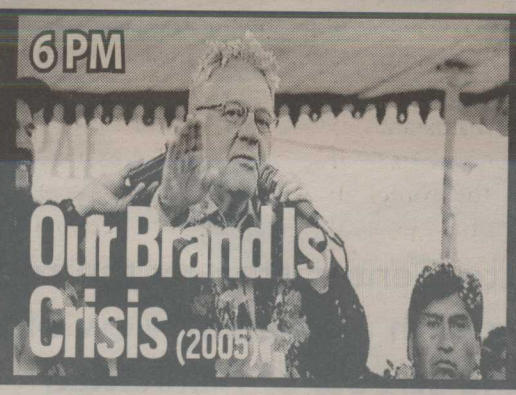
A surprisingly entertaining political comedy that features a funny and magnetic Beatty as the discouraged politician Bulworth, who has organized his own assassination but decides that he wants to live after all. He begins to tell the complete truth, not caring about the repercussions. Oh yes, and he starts rapping.

(rottentomatoes.com)

OCTOBER 30

NOVEMBER 13

6 PM



Our Brand Is Crisis (2005)

Rachel Boynton's excellent, probing documentary goes behind-the-scenes to show the manipulation involved in big-time political campaigning. "Our Brand is Crisis" follows members of the consulting firm of Greenberg Carville Shrum to Bolivia, where they have been hired to help a controversial candidate reclaim the presidency.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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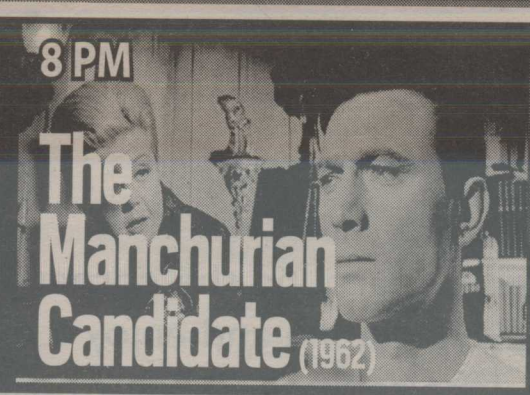

The Manchurian Candidate (1962)

John Frankenheimer's brilliant adaptation of Richard Condon's Cold-War satire, "The Manchurian Candidate" is the director's best film, both a coruscating thriller and a razor-sharp satire of political hysteria that captures the turbulent mood of the 1960s.

(rottentomatoes.com)

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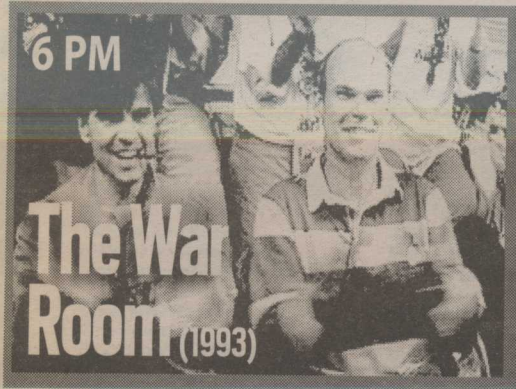

The War Room (1993)

"The War Room" takes us inside Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign and the exciting, topsy-turvy race that proved to be one of the most memorable in U.S. history and came to define American political discourse for the 1990s.

(rottentomatoes.com)

8 PM

Citizen Kane (1941)

"Citizen Kane" is Orson Welles's greatest achievement—and a landmark of cinema history. The story charts the rise and fall of a newspaper publisher whose wealth and power ultimately isolates him in his castle-like refuge. Every moment of the film, every shot, has been choreographed to perfection.

(rottentomatoes.com)

DECEMBER 4

THURSDAYS IN ROOM 5414

POPCORN AND REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

NEWS FROM THE **doctoral students' council**

Hello, 2008-09 DSC Steering Committee!

Jill Belli is in her 4th year at the GC, working towards a PhD in English as well as certificates in American Studies and Interactive Technology & Pedagogy. Her interests also center on Composition & Rhetoric and Utopian Studies, subjects she teaches as a Chancellor's Fellow at Queens College. After serving as a DSC At-Large representative last year, Jill is returning as an English program representative, member of the Steering Committee, member of the Tech Fee Committee, and co-chair of the Health Issues Committee. She looks forward to meeting many of you as the semester gets underway!

Gregory Donovan is the returning Co-Chair for Student Affairs of the Doctoral Students Council. He is beginning his fifth year as a PhD student in Environmental Psychology and is a certificate candidate in Interactive Technology & Pedagogy. Gregory also serves as a student representative on the Graduate Council's Information Technology Committee and the Interactive Technology & Pedagogy Doctoral Certificate Program's Executive Committee. He has previously served as an At-Large Representative for the DSC, as a Student Representative on the Graduate Center Technology Fee Committee and as the Environmental Psychology Student Officer for Academic Appeals. His writing and research concerns how cyberspace(s) shape young people's identity development, education, and political engagement within urban environments. These interests, particularly as they regard educational and participatory cyberspace(s), are what he would like to advocate for within and on behalf of the Doctoral Students Council.

Rob Faunce is a fifth year PhD student in English, with emphases on queer studies, 20th century world literature, and intersectional theses. As a third year Steering Committee member and in his second term as Co-Chair for Communications, he is eager to keep lines of communication open with the GC community — so please feel free to contact him directly at robfaunce@gmail.com whenever a question, comment, or concern strikes. Rob also sits on the Executive Committee of Graduate Council and is a full-time lecturer in the Program for Writing & Rhetoric at SUNY — Stony Brook.

Allyson Foster is a 5th year PhD student in the English program, with a specialization in medieval literature. Her research interests include late medieval women's literary culture, manuscript studies, and medievalism in the Victorian period. She is currently a Chancellor's Teaching Fellow at Hunter College, and also teaches literature at Barnard College.

Anton Masterovoy is a student in the History PhD program. He is interested in helping students with all matters related to our major research tool and workspace — the GC Library, and hence chairs the Library Committee. Let's work together on this!

Christine Pinnock is a 4th year doctoral student in the Anthropology program. Her research interests engage gender, immigration, kinship networks, and labor with a particular focus on Afro-Caribbean domestic workers in the U.S. and their social networks outside of the formal economy. This will be Christine's first-year on the Steering Committee and she hopes to work towards developing a mentoring program at the G C. Please feel free to contact her for any questions or comments at christinepinnock@gmail.com.

Chris Alen Sula is a doctoral candidate in philosophy and a member of the doctoral certificate program in Interactive Technology and Pedagogy. His research focuses on individuals' interactions with each other and the world, including topics in metaethics, intentionality, and cognitive science, as well empirical work in moral psychology and evolutionary biology and formal models of social behavior and decision making. He is currently a Writing Fellow at Lehman College, where he previously taught for three years.

Denise Torres is a third year student in the social welfare program. She is a former homeless healthcare administrator and clinician who remains actively involved in assuring the delivery of health and behavioral health services to vulnerable populations. She has served as her Program Representative, as Business Co-Chair, and on Steering over the last two years. As a social work clinician she has worked on the Wellness Center situation and has chaired the Health Issues Committee. She is happy to be returning to serve the GC community and looks forward to an exciting and productive year!

Tasha Youstin is a student in the Criminal Justice Doctoral Program housed out of John Jay College on West 59th street. She received her MA in Criminology from the University of Florida. This will be Tasha's first year serving on the Steering Committee, and she is enthusiastic about being a liaison to other students while helping to make policy improvement that will affect the GC community.

Tasha's main focus this year will be on raising the estimated cost of attendance at the G C in order to allow student to take out more money in federal student loans. Tasha is a published author in the field of Criminology and focuses on sex offenders, theory testing, and statistical methodology. Aside from school, Tasha is a musician and can often be found singing in pubs around New York on the weekends. She loves to travel and spend time with her 2 year old dog — a puggle named Odin.

Summer Lovin' Happened So Fast...

Summer at the GC was not dull. Health insurance is coming (we are told), a new Nurse Practitioner is actually in the building (make an appointment if you need one!), a new Provost has been announced and will be welcomed very soon, the Technology Fee was raised by 80th St (if you blinked, you missed it) at a July meeting. Tell your DSC rep how you feel — if you don't know him/her/them, visit cunydsc.org to find out!

Special Guest(s) at the DSC Plenary!

With all the action over the summer in the Graduate Center, we needed special guests to clarify and elucidate what's gone on. In that vein, we have enlisted many, many speakers to discuss the new Nurse Practitioner at the Wellness Center, the announcement of a new Provost, the Technology Fee increase that has surprised us all as we pay our bill this Fall, and much, much more: VP for Student Affairs Matthew Schoengood, Director of Student Affairs Sharon Lerner, Associate Director of Student Affairs and Director of Student Services Elise Perram, and Assistant VP for Information Technology Robert Campbell. All are welcome at a DSC Plenary: September 12, 6pm, room 5414 of the Graduate Center.

Important Dates

***DSC Plenary Meetings*:**
Sept. 12
Oct. 24 (Fall party to follow)
Nov. 21
Dec. 12 (holiday party to follow)

DSC Steering Committee Meetings:
Aug. 29
Oct. 3
Nov. 7
Dec. 5

DSO Media Board Meetings:
Sept. 19
Nov. 14 Ⓐ

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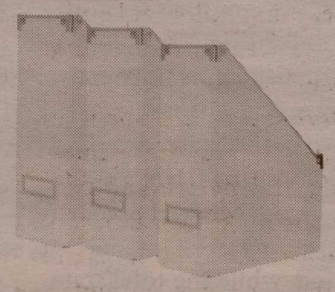

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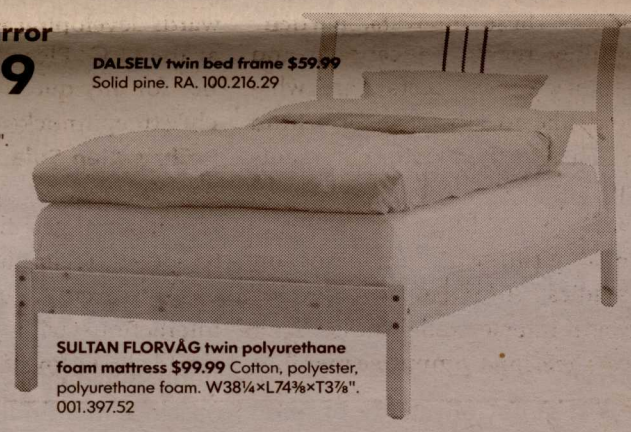

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Governor to Close CUNY, Open Sex-Addict Recovery Center

MATT LAU

Everyone knows how New York State has a budget deficit for the coming fiscal year. And everyone has heard the usual rhetoric from the political classes about belt tightening and sacrifices. Negro school children will dine on the carcasses of disabled vets; the mayor will eat less caviar.

But few could have anticipated the devastating bravery that Governor Patterson has displayed with his latest proposal. According to outsider sources, the governor plans to close the entire CUNY system in order to close the budget gap.

"We're not thinking of it as a 'closing'; we're thinking of it more as a euthanasia," said the governor's unofficial spokesperson, Mark Schiebe. "The CUNY system is a lot like Terri Schiavo. For a while it was a normal, healthy university, then one day anemic state funding caused a massive brain aneurism.

"Since about 1990, CUNY has been lingering in a vegetative state, drooling lackluster graduates from the mouth. The state is tired of visiting CUNY at the hospice, pretending like it isn't physically repellant to us. As Michael Schiavo said of Terri, 'It's time.'"

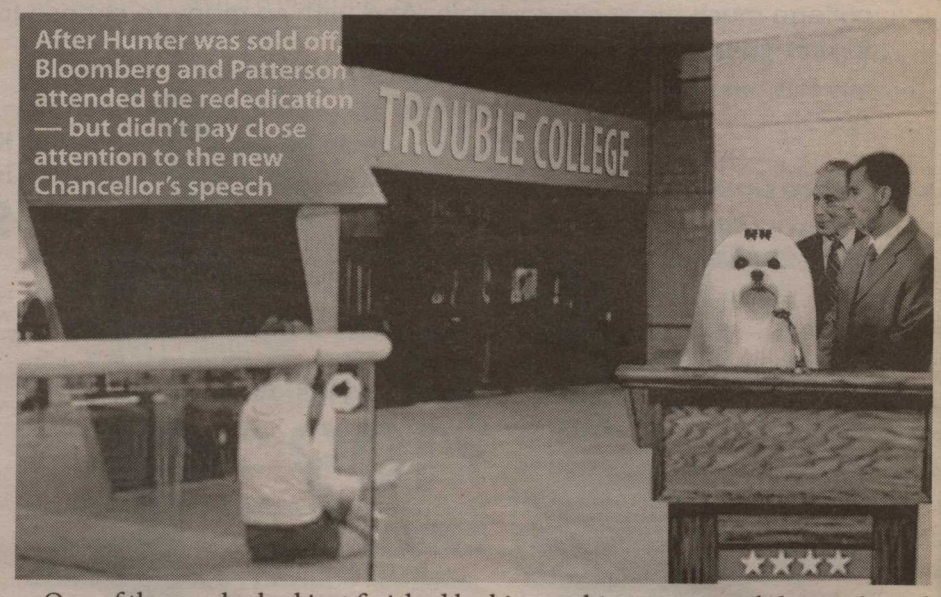
But since CUNY's operating budget is only $1.4 billion, while the total state deficit is whopping $6.4 billion, the governor has had to take even more extreme measures. "Of course, closing CUNY won't solve the problem alone," continued Schiebe, from his offices on the L train. "That's why the governor plans to liquidate all of CUNY's assets, including its real estate holdings, as well.

"We are already in negotiations with Columbia University about purchasing what used to be The City College campus. And we think we'll be able to sell Hunter to Leona Helmsley's dog, Trouble."

But if state officials think that CUNY students, faculty, and staff are going to take this kind of despotic policy lying down, they're pretty much right.

As the news spread, CUNY faculty quickly began to express their outrage, by writing long, boring, sanctimonious emails to obscure listserv discussions, which led to the creation of a new listserv devoted exclusively to this problem.

Petitions were gathered, mostly electronic. A few Facebook groups were created, while the governor's page lost a not insignificant number of fans. After consulting with their sages, Neil Smith and David Harvey, some radical anthropology students even went so far as to mention their discontent in their Facebook status updates.



After Hunter was sold off, Bloomberg and Patterson attended the rededication — but didn't pay close attention to the new Chancellor's speech

One of them, who had just finished locking up his messenger-bike, explained it best, "We just want to do whatever it takes to feel like we're doing something." He then asked me if I was a registered socialist. By the end of that first day, at least 17,000 separate protests and direct actions had been organized.

Over in the English department, the professors were busyily thinking of clever word play to describe their fate. "The governor is *blind* to the suffering he's causing," chimed in Prof Reid-Pharr during a wine-and-cheese mixer. He thought his joke was hilarious.

"This is what is so beautiful about America," commented unofficial spokesperson Schiebe. "People with no power can complain all they want about decisions they have no part in. In exchange for us not arresting them, they agree that nothing will change.

"The governor hopes that as the real estate market improves, the liquidation sale will eventually result in a small budget surplus. With this extra money, he plans to open a recovery center for politicians who are admitted sex addicts." At press time the contentious issue of whether the new center will be named for former President Clinton, former Governor Spitzer, or Senator Larry Craig had not yet been resolved. Ⓐ

ask harriet
BY HARRIET ZANZIBAR

Jackal and Hyde

Dear Harriet,

What is it about boys? My bf and I love each other, but politics leaves him cold. I care about whether they're drilling in the Arctic, but he just cares about drilling me. And yeah, holla for getting drilled, but how do you get them to think with their brains?

— Happy Obama Likes the Environment

Okay, HOLE, before I get to your question I just want to give a shout-out to my Mom, Esther, who took time out from her busy schedule making those big blue embroidered porch banners — THE ZANZIBARS! THE CATHETERS! THE HELMSES! — to cover my column in the May issue in honor of Mother's Day. She really nailed that question, even though it was about — what was it about? — oh, right, *fisting*. Of all things. Which is not exactly something my Mom has done postdoctoral research in.

Did I hold back that column just for her, out of a little personal sense of matri-sadism? Uh, no. Listen, do you really think I want to look at my Mom over the Thanksgiving dinner table, see her sweet little smile swell up across her plump, doughy face, and have my subconscious mind roll up the word FISTING right across her face in big thick letters, like some sort of political smear ad designed to make you think of unpleasant bodily functions the moment you grab the voting booth lever? Gah! I have enough problems looking at my mother. Geez, there are enough bad image associations there to max out all the servers at Flickr. The face my mother made when she walked in on me experimenting with Nancy Hollister from my ninth grade class makes the milk in my fridge curdle even *today*, if I think about it while I'm standing there with the door open wondering why I even *buy* milk, because I don't drink it, and my cat just spits it up.

Where was I? Right, drilling for oil.

Anyway, HOLE, I'm going to share with you what I call the Dave Mattress Rule. It's named after this old boyfriend of mine. His last name was really Matthias, but we all called him Dave Mattress because whenever people phoned me to try to get me to do stuff with them, like, you know, my boss — that's where he and I would be: the mattress. His apartment was like one big mattress storage unit. There wasn't anything in it but an empty refrigerator, an empty VCR cupboard, an empty toilet paper dispenser (phrase yelled most often from Dave's bathroom: "Damn it!"), and the big M. He had a phonograph in the bedroom, though, and played old jazz LPs while we fucked, which at the time I thought was romantic. Okay, I admit it; I still think it's romantic. Hey, every girl has a pink-hearts-and-flowers side, even if it's tattooed in a place your Mom doesn't want to know about. (Yikes, how'd we get back to my Mom?)

Anyway, my point is, Dave Mattress was a really bright guy. If we were at Denny's after a movie with the gang, talking politics, you'd realize before long he was the one driving the conversation, making sharp observations, shooting down random comments that didn't make any real sense, and making you want to conjure up some really incisive point to throw at him just to see what he'd do with it. But then everyone would drift off with hugs and waves and the slamming of old Chevy doors, and Dave and I would be alone, and over the course of a minute you could watch his consciousness ooze out of his skull, down his thorax, and into his gonads. It was *Night of the Horny Living Dead* every time. (Hey, did they ever make that? I think I saw it on Cinemax once.)

I made a big mistake, which was to try to withhold sex in order to make him act like a regular, walking, talking, functioning, *conversant* human being more of the time. I mean, the sex was great — really great — it was just maxing me out, and we never talked when we were alone apart from me asking where the condoms were, and him promising to buy toilet paper in the morning. But without the sex he got pissed off and started giving me the silent treatment, which was pretty much same as before, only without the panting and sweating and tweaking and so on. It was the biggest lose-lose scenario since Bush/Cheney.

So I formulated the Dave Mattress Rule, which is: Since guys have only enough blood for one head at a time, make sure you get him out of the house with your friends so that at least some of the time the red stuff is between his ears, not his nuts. As long as he's getting regular mattress time, he won't mind the respite. Most guys love demonstrating their prowess, and not all of that has to be done with the kickstand down. Ⓐ