CUNY GRADUATE CENTER
Advocate
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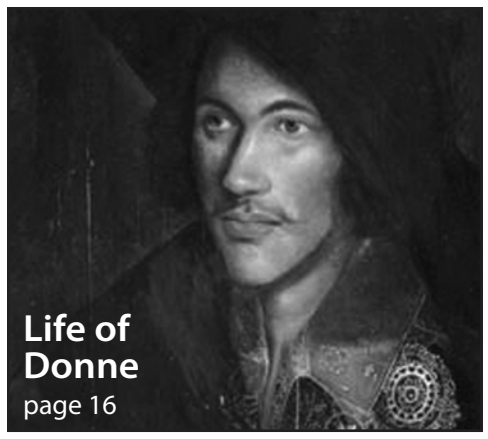

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GAZA FORUM :
Punishment and Frustration

By Adel Safty, Ammiel Alcalay, and Naji Ali

ALSO INSIDE

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FROM THE **editor's desk**

Putting Away Childish Things

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

—Corinthians 13:11

"In the epoch in which we now live, civilization is not an ideal or an aspiration, it is a video game."

—Benjamin R. Barber

I am not one to gush, especially when it comes to American presidents and their speech writers, but there is something about Barack Obama's inaugural invocation of St. Paul's call to "set aside childish things," that demands comment. Although he may not have intended it, Obama's obligatory nod to scripture actually offered a surprisingly subtle and much needed critique of the sorry state of our American culture. "We remain a young nation," said Obama, "but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history," adding

> In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted — for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things — some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

Clearly, Obama's speech was meant to instill hope, not shame, in the hearts of his record-breaking audience that day, but his words seem to have offered a kind of indictment as well, for in calling out the lazy slackers, the pleasure seekers, the leisure enthusiasts (think John Kerry wind-sailing), the greedy and the fame obsessed ("Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire?"), the president seemed to be saying in the gentlest and most indirect way possible: "knock it off and grow up already!"

While it's hard not to agree with the spirit of Obama's inaugural address, I'm afraid I am far less optimistic than our new president that the nation is actually capable of changing its ways. Although the metaphorical path described in Obama's speech is not really any more rugged, steep, or treacherous than it's ever been (it seems unlikely, at least for the short term, that our current recession will reach depression-era levels of poverty and unemployment), the stuffed and complacent consumers that comprise the mass of the American polity hardly seem up to the challenge. Like the fools that make up so much of our reality television we too seem destined not for greatness and fame but petty unhappiness, humiliation, and self pity.

Over the last four decades American culture has grown increasingly irresponsible and childish and it is amazing that our entire civilization, if we can call it that, hasn't collapsed under the weight of its own collective stupidity. Like F. Scott Fitzgerald's Benjamin Button, we seem to be growing younger and more immature every day, even as the negative effects of our immaturity become increasingly more burdensome for the other cultures with whom we share the globe. The saddest part of this however, is that our cultural youthfulness is actually devoid of any truly youthful virtues. Instead of the healthy open-mindedness and kind-heartedness of a normal child; instead of the spirited and creative rebellion of a healthy and independent adolescent, our culture seems to have embraced only the negative aspects of youth and its selfish desire for quick and easy satisfactions, devoid of complexity, challenge, or struggle.

Indeed, our cultural immaturity has become so prodigious and all consuming that none of us, including me, seem to be immune to its narcotic effects. As Benjamin Barber, the prescient author of *Jihad vs. McWorld*, describes in his latest book *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*:

> This infantilist ethos is as potent in shaping the ideology and behaviors of our radical consumerist society today as what Max Weber called the "Protestant ethic" was in shaping the entrepreneurial culture of what was then a productivist early capitalist society. Affiliated with an ideology of privatization, the marketing of brands, and a homogenization of taste, this ethos of infantilization has worked to sustain consumer capitalism, but at the expense of both civility and civilization and at a growing risk to capitalism itself. Although we use the term democratic capitalism in a manner that suggests a certain redundancy, the reality is that the two words describe different systems often in tension with one another. Consumerism has set the two entirely asunder.

In our post-industrial consumer society, Barber suggests, the distance between what we want and what we need has become so drastically contracted that our entire economy seems to depend upon and demand immaturity and consumer allegiance to the useless and increasingly unsatisfying products that surround us, few of which serve any purpose beyond offering an enchanting and temporary sense of novelty. Consider, for instance, the number of grown New Yorkers who pass their commutes, not reading or conversing with their friends or family, but playing video games, watching television programs on their phones, or listening to puerile pop music. Just like a child we seem to need constant stimulation and so we fill in all the otherwise thoughtful spaces of our lives with these kinds of media. Because healthy humans are not naturally inclined to such acts of stupidity, and because our consumer economy has become too big to fail, as it were, we therefore find ourselves deluged with a never-ending and increasingly conspicuous barrage of advertising that plays to our most base and, as Freud well knew, consequently our most childish desires in an effort to keep us in a permanent state of distraction. Like the child who sucks his thumb and cannot seem to move beyond the comforts of oral satisfaction (the increasing presence of sites like *thumbsuckingadults.com* seem to indicate the number of adult thumb suckers may also be on the rise), we seem to be stuck in our own consumerist stage of capitalist development, unable to mature beyond our most infantile and base desires. The feedback loop of advertising and desire, consumption and dissatisfaction has left us with little in our daily lives that is real or meaningful and so, like a child who doesn't know any better (or an alcoholic or drug addict), we fill that emptiness with more of the same, eventually taking comfort in the very thing that we are trying to put behind us.

Obama's call for service then, his call for "a new era of responsibility," although a noble gesture, may very well be falling on deaf ears, for it is hard to believe that a people used to such easy distractions and insipid amusements as "Jackass" and "Nanny 911," easy listening and smooth jazz, or the special effects train wrecks that pass for most Hollywood blockbusters, are intellectually capable of anything as profound as public service and personal sacrifice. As Barber makes clear, our post modern consumer culture, which promises total liberty and narcissistic individualism through the cathartic ritual of constant shopping, is a threat to more than just our happiness; it is a threat to democracy itself. We are so habitualized to the rituals of evening television and weekend shopping, the thought of spending an afternoon at a city council meeting, or a weekend volunteering for the parks department seems practically un-American.

As long as our economy continues to rise or fall based on the number of plasma screens or Nintendo *Wii*s that we collectively purchase, there is little hope that we will find either the time or the penchant for true democratic participation. John Dewey's dream of a great community where every individual would have "a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which [he or she] belong[ed]" now finds its greatest expression in the Mall of America, where every individual is obliged to do his share of shopping according to the capacity of his wallet.

If there is a way out of this dilemma it won't be easy and it probably won't be something that we choose for ourselves. No economy can sustain itself exclusively through merger, speculation, acquisition, and reckless consumption. If we do not, as President Obama suggests, actually begin to make things again, it is clear that the system of capitalism as we know it is destined to reach a point of crisis from which we will not be able to return. This "tipping point," as Malcolm Gladwell might call it, is possibly the best hope we have of actually recovering some sense of dignity and meaning in sacrifice and the challenges of a strenuous life. Until then we seem destined to a life of "quiet desperation," cloying comforts, easy satisfactions, and hollow victories. Ⓐ

An Open Letter to President Jennifer Raab
Hunter College, CUNY

January 25, 2009

Dear President Raab,

Your email of January 15 asked our community to join you in proclaiming "hooray for Hunter," after the college was recently ranked number eight on Princeton Review's list of Best Value Public Colleges for 2009. But unfortunately the bargain that Hunter offers its students is produced in part by contingent faculty earning less than a living wage, so many of us cannot join you in this celebration.

More than 55% of all classes at CUNY are taught by contingent workers—adjuncts and graduate teaching fellows. For the 2007-08 academic year, the Middle States accreditation report reflected 641 tenured and tenure track faculty and 876 contingent instructors at Hunter. Although the expectation has been that graduate student life is a period of temporary impoverishment on the way to a tenure track job, this does not explain Hunter's predicament. Of the more than 10,000 contingent faculty in the CUNY system, fewer than 2,000 are graduate students. And this is, of course, is part of the nationwide disinvestment in public higher education over the past several decades where less than 40% of university faculty are in traditional tenure track jobs.

In most public universities, graduate students serve as teaching assistants for years before being entrusted—and burdened—with their own courses. Not so at CUNY, where graduate students regularly teach overcrowded classes in their first or second year of schooling. Sure, that's a good value, but does it reflect the quality education, for either the undergraduate or graduate student, that *The Princeton Review* purports it to be?

As you know, tenured and tenure track professors in the arts and sciences at Hunter teach three courses per semester, making them far better off than many of their CUNY colleagues, who are burdened with 3-4 and even 5-4 schedules. Adjuncts who teach three classes per term, as many at Hunter do, earn less than $20,000 per year. Most adjuncts cannot live on what they make teaching the equivalent of a full-time course load at Hunter and have to take another job—meaning that many of us are spending our time away from the college working to subsidize it. It is our labor, both on and off campus, that helps make the university a good value.

Adjuncts and fellows are not provided adequate office space to meet with students, or reliable access to computers and printers to prepare for classes. They do not enjoy the protections of academic freedom. They do not have the same benefits and health insurance that comes with what's deemed a full time position. They do not have job security and can be fired without cause. And the greater the reliance on contingent faculty, the more strain is put on tenured and tenure track faculty to run their departments.

We shouldn't be celebrating this award when it's earned in part by paying poverty wages to half of our teaching force. College presidents at CUNY sometimes respond that labor and contract issues are beyond their control. But the head of a college has a bully pulpit from which to take a stand on an issue that is central to the health and success of the college if they choose to do so. When steps are taken to address these shameful conditions, we will proudly join you in cheering "hooray for Hunter."

Sincerely,
Jennifer Gaboury
Adjunct Lecturer, Hunter College, Political Science and Women and Gender Studies
Member, CUNY Contingents Unite

cc: Jeanne Krier, The Princeton Review
Matthew Goldstein, CUNY Chancellor

Joined by:

1. Daniel Skinner, Adjunct Lecturer, Hunter College, Political Science
2. James Hoff, Adjunct Lecturer, Center for Worker Education
3. William Mangold, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Hunter College
4. Douglas A. Medina, Adjunct Lecturer, BMCC
5. Michael Busch, Adjunct Lecturer, City College, Political Science
6. Rosalind Petchesky, Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Hunter College and The Graduate Center
7. Shirley Frank, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor, NYCCT and York College
8. Jill M. Humphries, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor, Queens College
9. Arto Artinian, Adjunct Lecturer, Lehman College, Political Science
10. Antonia Levy, Ph.D. student, Graduate Center, Adjunct Lecturer, Queens College
11. Doug Singsen, Ph.D. candidate, Art History, Graduate Center; Writing Fellow, Kingsborough Community College, member of CUNY Contingents Unite and CUNY Student Union
12. Joan C. Tronto, Professor, Political Science, Hunter College and The Graduate Center
13. Crystal Torres, Brooklyn College
14. Emelyn Tapaoan, Adjunct Lecturer, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Member, CUNY Contingents Unite
15. Nathan Wallace, Adjunct Lecturer, Hunter College, Political Science
16. Jesse Goldstein, Adjunct Lecturer, Baruch College, Sociology
17. Cristina Dragomir, Adjunct Lecturer, Political Science Department, Hunter College
18. Stephen Hager, Staff, Hunter College Music Dept.
19. Walter Dufresne, Adjunct Assistant Professor, NYC College of Technology
20. Steven Pludwin, Graduate Teaching Fellow, Brooklyn College, Political Science
21. Wendy Scribner, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor, BMCC and NYCCT
22. Sofya Petrukhin, alumna, Hunter College
23. Stanley Wine, Adjunct Lecturer, Computer Science Department, Hunter College
24. Monique Whitaker, Graduate student, CUNY Graduate Center, Adjunct, Hunter College
25. Lorna L. Mason, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor, Brooklyn College
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27. Jennifer Sloan, CUNY Graduate Center & Queens College
28. Kim Nguyen, College Assistant, English, Hunter College
29. Mark A. Torres, Member of the People Power Coalition, City College Alumni, Lehman College Graduate Student
30. Karim Dib, Student, Hunter College
31. Milena Abrahamyan, Student, Hunter College
32. Heather Cottin, Adjunct Lecturer, History, Social Science Department, LaGuardia Community College
33. Jamie Hagen, Hunter College alumna, Brooklyn College graduate student
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35. Michael Philip Fisher, Adjunct Lecturer, Hunter College
36. Diana Bowstead, Adjunct Assistant Professor (retired), Department of English, Hunter College
37. Stuart Ewen, Distinguished Professor, Department of Film & Media Studies, Hunter College and Departments of History and Sociology, The Graduate Center
38. Morgan Horowitz, Adjunct Lecturer, Philosophy Department
39. Soniya Munshi, The Graduate Center
40. Karen Miller, Associate Professor, LaGuardia Community College
41. Howard Pflanzer, Adjunct Associate Professor, John Jay College
42. Vanessa Lorenzo, Student, Hunter College
43. Daisy Deomampo, Graduate Teaching Fellow, Hunter College, Anthropology
44. Diana Colbert, Graduate Teaching Fellow, John Jay College of Criminal Justice
45. Binh Pok, Adjunct Lecturer, Sociology, Hunter College

If you would like to sign this petition, please send your name and college affiliation to Jen Gaboury at jgaboury@earthlink.net

IN memoriam

John Patrick Diggins (1935-2009)

BILL KELLY

In the days since Jack Diggins' death, I've been struck by how many times I've heard and read that Jack was beyond category: a contrarian, a maverick, a relentlessly independent thinker. To some extent, Jack cultivated that perception. His own assessment of himself as "to the right of the Left and to the left of the Right" might well serve as an epitaph for his remarkably productive career.

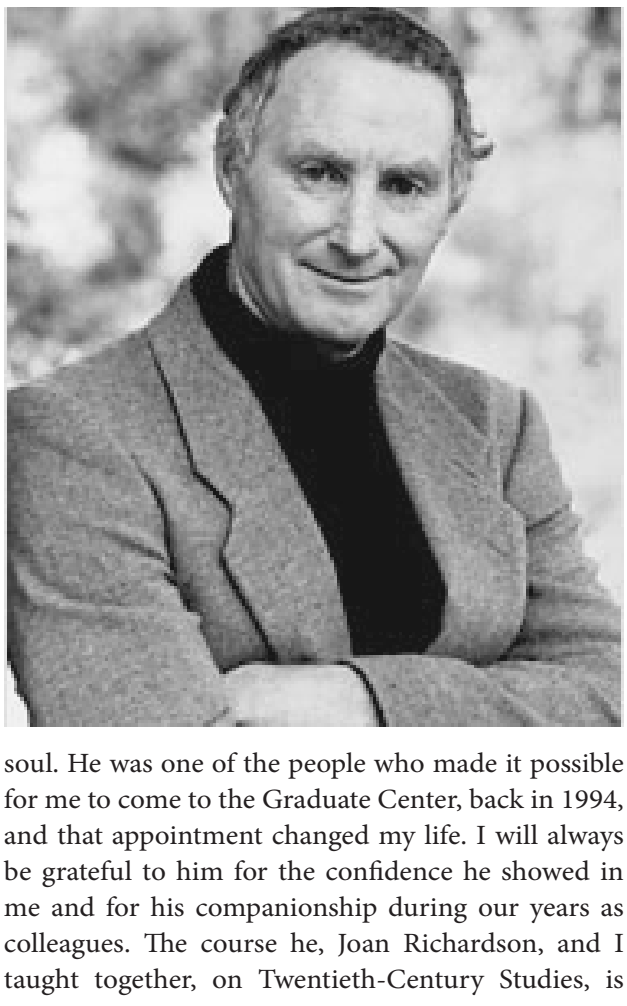
In many ways, Jack was sui generis. Funny, sharp, tough: a man whose appetites and expertise knew no bounds. But to insist that Jack was one of a kind is to risk casting him as an eccentric, a thinker who courted difference for its own sake. Worse still, it is to ignore his organic bonds with the American tradition he so brilliantly described. Jack's affinity with the men and women whose lives and thought he chronicled was absolute. That is not to suggest that Jack confused criticism with autobiography; rather it is to say that Jack's interest in the Founders, in Lincoln, in O'Neill, in Reagan, in Veblen and Weber, in the Old and New Left was grounded on their – and his – passionate engagement with the promise and the disappointments of American life.

Jack spent a good deal of time pondering the faultline that separated the Declaration from the Constitution; his books and essays probe the consequences of that divide with a degree of eloquence and incision that placed him in the first-rank of intellectual historians. But, for me, Jack's strongest affiliation was with the American pragmatists. Like Emerson, Jack regarded foolish consistency as the hobgoblin of little minds; but more important, he understood truth as a process rather than a destination. He knew in his bones that all views are contingent, subject to debate and revision. If that position made Jack a contrarian, the same can be said of most of the writers whose work he embraced.

Jack was angry when Gordon Wood described him as a cultural critic rather than an historian. I think that was so not simply because Wood's wrongheaded remark insulted Jack's professionalism, but because it assumed a divide Jack had devoted his life to bridging. Jack knew that ideology and experience were inextricably bound, that thought had consequence. He devoted his professional life to illuminating that nexus. Here too Jack stood squarely in the mainstream of American intellectual life.

I last saw Jack in late November when we attended a performance of The Grand inquisitor. Jack wasn't well, but he had spent the morning before the matinee re-reading The Brothers Karamazov. As I rambled on about the place of the production in Peter Brook's canon, Jack returned to Dostoevsky. Ivan's parable, he maintained, was directed not against his brother Alyosha's faith, but against the rationale established order always invokes to protect its privilege. Dostoevsky led Jack to Athens and from there to the Continental Congress and from there to Obama with stop-over's at Reagan and Niebuhr. What had been, for me, a disappointing play began to glow and oscillate.

On the day we learned of Jack's passing, Luke Menand emailed to ask, "What is the Irish word for mensch?" Mensch Jack was, and more than that, he was a man of letters. I can think of no higher accolade or one more fitting.



LOUIS MENAND

If there is an Irish word for *mensch*, Jack was it. As he did with many younger writers whose work caught his attention before they had achieved much of anything in the world's eyes, he befriended me, took an interest in my career, argued with me about politics and ideas, and was a warm and generous and reliable soul. He was one of the people who made it possible for me to come to the Graduate Center, back in 1994, and that appointment changed my life. I will always be grateful to him for the confidence he showed in me and for his companionship during our years as colleagues. The course he, Joan Richardson, and I taught together, on Twentieth-Century Studies, is one of the most memorable in my teaching career—a real, and fruitful, experiment in interdisciplinarity. Jack's work as an intellectual historian was more fearless, productive, and wide-ranging than mine will ever be, but some of our interests did overlap, and we had disagreements.

Those disagreements never, for a moment, eclipsed the feeling that we each wished each other well. This was, in fact, the most valuable lesson Jack taught all of us, and certainly me: that people who can argue about (say) the need for foundationalism in a democratic polity already have more in common with each other than they do with most other human beings on the planet. People who like to debate stuff like that need each other, and they ought to look out for each other. Jack's whole way of being in the world was a refutation of the narcissism of small differences. He took ideas seriously because he took friendship and pleasure and life itself seriously, and he never made it seem as though the pursuit of any of these had to be at the expense of the others. He was a man it was very easy to love, and I miss him.

Harvard University

MARYJANE SHIMSKY

As scholars, we are expected to come up with the novel idea—the as-yet unthought thought, the observa-

cuny news IN BRIEF

Enrollment at Record High

With the economy spiraling into a nose dive of recession, the number of New Yorkers returning to school has spiked in the past recent academic year. Enrollment has surged to record highs since September 2008, as the total CUNY-wide student body has reached nearly a quarter of a million students.

But the crappy economy cannot claim full responsibility for the high demand for a CUNY education. With their majority adjunct faculties leading the way, four of the systems colleges—Hunter, City, Queens and Baruch Colleges—were recently ranked by USA Today and Princeton Review as among the fifty "top value" educations in the United States. Many of CUNY's other campuses have also been recently recognized for their continued improvements and academic excellence.

Not surprisingly, then, classrooms across CUNY's various campuses have swelled to capacity. Demand has been felt most pressingly at the Community College level, where CUNY brass, led by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, have called for the creation of a seventh community college to meet increasing demand.

New Community College

Always mindful to promote his commitment to excellence, prestige, and the best interests of CUNY's student body, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein pushed ahead recently with his plan to inaugurate a seventh community college into the City University family within two years time.

Citing increased economic pressures on New York City's working class, and the bloated student rosters at the six existing community colleges, Chancellor Goldstein lobbied the State Assembly's Committee on Higher Education by emphasizing the need for increased access to a quality community college education. "Our students will face increasingly competitive pressures in an unforgiving economy," Goldstein argued, "and getting a degree matters. It is therefore in their interest to attend community colleges where the focus is on high standards and degree completion."

How will he ensure a focus on "high standards and degree completion"? Unfortunately not by hiring a fully tenured faculty of committed professors, it seems. According to Chancellor Goldstein's public comments thus far, what will single out his "honors" community college from its forebears will be a restricted menu of course offerings, full-time enrollment demands, and a tighter admissions criteria, including face-to-face interviews of all applicants (which the CUNY honchos insist is not a weeding-out selection mechanism).

If the notion of expanding CUNY spending at the moment when Governor Paterson has waged his own shock and awe campaign against the state's public education budget strikes you as strange, have no fear: our Chancellor is no dummy. According to sources, Goldstein has only wasted some of his time with city and state officials tasked with funding higher public education. Instead, his energies have been spent approaching a number of private foundations to fund his pet initiative, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has indicated an eagerness to get involved.

No Cuts at Comm. Colleges

Social activism pays off. In a heartening victory for New York's working class at the start of February, Governor David Paterson's attempt to balance the state's budget by slashing monies for community colleges was roundly rejected by state legislators. Had the budget bills passed, community college students would have been asked to shoulder the burden of $4.3 million in cuts to pay for the state's fiscal irresponsibility.

According to the Professional Staff Congress, over 9,000 New Yorkers took the time to write to their representatives demanding that they slam the door in the face of Paterson's proposals. Moreover, hundreds of activists organized demonstrations across CUNY campuses in opposition to the Governor's projected cuts, the PSC itself marched on Albany to protect our schools, and they were met there by New York State United Teachers groups in a show of solidarity.

If CUNY—including all its students and teachers—is to weather the storm of future attempts to hijack the public education budget, this sort of unity will be of the greatest importance.

tion illuminating dark corners never before seen. It is hard to believe that Jack Diggins ever had a problem doing that. The thoroughness of his rebellion against conventional thinking can be fully appreciated only by reading some of his intellectual history. Forget the analysis, the structure of the argument—even his sentence structure seems somehow different.

Just as he followed his own intellectual path, he wanted his students to follow theirs. He enjoyed sharing his opinions in class, but had a profound respect for those who didn't agree. The result could be an intellectual free for all. I'll never forget leaving a seminar on John Adams shaking my head and wondering out loud to some classmates, "is Professor Diggins a monarchist?"

I can only imagine what he would have thought about my question. He took great joy out of disregarding ideological categories, because he was determined not to look at the world through the eyes of conventional wisdom. His interpretation of Ronald Reagan must have made some heads turn. I'm sure he meant every word of his praise for the conservative icon, but his book is no polemic: it is, I believe, the product of his intellect trying to make sense of his Irish American roots.

In a profession in which high intelligence is pretty much a prerequisite, he was frightfully smart. No matter how long, how detailed, how foreign the subject matter might have been to him, his few lines of critique at the end of a paper invariably would zero in on the fundamental strengths and weaknesses in the author's thinking. In his own work, he was always in command of his information.

He enjoyed history tremendously. In class, or during office hours, an idea would sometimes seem to catch him by surprise. The nodding, the chuckle and the hand to the chin appeared straight out of central casting, but the way he shook his head, and the twinkle in his eyes—a combination of wonder and amusement—suggested that he was not teaching: he was having fun with the material and with those who were there to share the joke.

There was a unique quality to his relationship with his students. I never really could bring myself to call him Jack, as did some of my contemporaries, but there was always a sense—in his classes, in office hours, at his parties—that whatever authority he had (and I'm not sure he wanted much) did not come from rank. Whenever he critiqued my work, there was such an effort at earnest persuasion that it sometimes felt like a student to student discussion, just with more intellectual candlepower.

Professor Diggins created an extraordinary body of work; left his students far better for having known him; and led a full and, all told, happy life. Our existence would be charmed indeed, if the same is said of us by those we leave behind.

MITCHELL ROCKLIN

I had the distinct privilege of having Prof. Diggins as a teacher and advisor for the past two and a half years. I was on my way to meet him in his office when I learned he had passed away. With Prof. Diggins, there was never a need for an appointment. One could usually just drop by and find him there, hard at work. His dedication to his work and students was self-evident. Many of us in the history department knew he was ill, but the news came as a shock, both because we did not expect it so soon, and because it seemed impossible that Prof. Diggins could be missing. A professor expressed a common feeling: "Somehow I thought Jack would just get better."

This kind man seemed above pettiness and rivalries, getting along with just about everyone around him, regardless of differing views. If you wandered by his office, you might just find yourself in a long, interesting conversation with him, covering everything from family to philosophy. He cared for his students as if they were close relatives.

Professor Diggins had a personality that included both dour realism and jolly humor. Laughter and irony allowed him to gracefully accept an imperfect world—one that, he never tired of telling us, while flawed, might be carefully and gradually improved with knowledge. "For with much wisdom there is much vexation," wrote Ecclesiastes. Professor Diggins understood these words, ever aware of the tragedies of life and the difficulties involved in the acquisition and enjoyment of wisdom in our troubled existence. Along with this pointed realism, however, he was able to transcend the tragic. His happiest moments in class were when he could relate a humorous anecdote to explain a concept. He relished the opportunity to lighten the atmosphere. One of the Professor's favorite lines was from Leo Strauss's analysis of John Locke: "Life is the joyless quest for joy." He certainly succeeded in giving his students much of it.

"Jack," as his colleagues affectionately called him, was as humble as he was wise, and as soft-spoken as he was opinionated. In four classes and many conversations with him, I never witnessed him raise his voice save on one occasion—when a student argued for the relative nature of all knowledge. This was too much—wisdom exists and must be found. Within this quest, which he saw, in the philosophical tradition, as a joint venture between teacher and student, he displayed prudence and care. He doubted his own views along with those of others, and considered opposing opinions fairly and humbly. Maimonides considered anger and arrogance to be the worst possible measures of character, since they cloud judgment. This man knew neither. It showed in his speech, which was always soft-spoken. Ecclesiastes wrote that "The words of the wise spoken in quiet are more acceptable than the cry of a ruler among fools." The wise, measured, and soft words of Dr. Diggins were certainly in keeping with this advice.

Finally, Prof. Diggins was never one to march in lockstep. He particularly enjoyed telling us an anecdote about his high school life, often repeating his claim that he "wasn't a very good student in high school." Upon seeing him staring out the window, his high school teacher yelled: "Diggins, stop staring out the window! Class, Diggins isn't going to be anything but a truck driver!" Ironically, this is a fine description of what the young student became—an intellectual truck driver, endlessly seeking his own route to knowledge. Sadly, however, we are now the ones staring through a window, looking at the dark pane of glass by his office, wishing we could again see light inside, illuminating the face of the good professor at work.

Framing Shame: War Crimes and Paralysis

ALAN KOENIG

"I admire President Nixon's courage. It is difficult for me to understand . . . why people are still criticizing his foreign policy — for example, the bombing in Cambodia." — Lt. John McCain, 1973

"Collective guilt is . . . partly constituted by individual shame." — Peter Forrest

In the aftermath of Barack Obama's exhilarating victory, many on the Left are wondering how much of their agenda he'll fight for, and as the early exaltations cool, progressives and militant liberals are staking positions, mustering arguments, and searching for the pressure points necessary to impel President Obama to hold war crimes trials for the Bush administration's most appalling deeds. How far President Obama is willing to go in battling the inertia of a political culture that never seems willing to confront the sins done in its name is not yet clear, but the early signs don't look promising. As *Newsweek* recently reported, "Despite the hopes of many human-rights advocates, the new Obama Justice Department is not likely to launch major new criminal probes of harsh interrogations and other alleged abuses by the Bush administration."

As far back as July, Cass Sunstein, an informal Obama advisor, set off progressive alarms by warning *The Nation* magazine that war crimes prosecutions against the Bush administration might set off a "cycle" of criminalizing public service, and that only the most "egregious" crimes should be pursued. Faced with such early hedging, those dedicated to pursuing war crimes against American officials must fight a two-front war: the first against those timid moderates within the center-left who shy away from the political costs of war crimes prosecutions, and the second against the reactionary nationalism of the American right, which still needs to be persuaded as to the moral necessity of such a campaign.

Integral to both fronts will be a task requiring unusual imagination and finesse, framing the issues surrounding war crimes in such a way that a majority of the American public feels a collective sense of responsibility to redress them. Developing a narrative to inspire the American public to hold war crimes for its own elected officials treads on some exceedingly difficult ideological terrain, for there are no readily accessible frames to incorporate such a dark history of America into a positive sense of contemporary patriotism. An effort to introduce the public to the repressed regions of its historical consciousness all at once would shut down discussion. What, for instance, is the worst atrocity America has perpetrated since World War II? The question doesn't inspire easy conversation; even asking can invite reproach for being rude, jarring, perhaps challenging to one's patriotism. There's no polite way to ease into those vile parts of American historical memory that most citizens don't dwell on as they go about their days. Many people, however, on some level of consciousness, are aware and that might be the place to start.

Henry Kissinger at the White House.

Students from the seventies onward have graduated from liberal arts colleges having learned the whole Leftist litany of American war crimes and atrocities, and that horrific history is extremely depressing to ponder: coups, assassinations, massive bombing campaigns against neutral South East Asian countries, Central American death squads, *ad nauseum*. What is one to do with this knowledge? Or, more importantly, what is one to do with it upon realizing that the public doesn't want to hear about—and our politicians don't want to deal with—our shameful history of atrocities?

In puzzling through this dilemma, the genocide scholar Ernesto Verdeja uses an important distinction between public *knowledge* and *acknowledgment* first made by NYU's Thomas Nagel. While the raw information about official complicity and culpability is readily available in a robust historical record, Verdeja sees the difficulty of pursuing higher justice less in the dissemination of that knowledge than the moral awareness that follows. "The problem," he told me in a recent interview, is not public ignorance, rather it is

> "the assumption by many human rights activists and critics of the administration that knowledge equals acknowledgement; in other words, that when people know how bad things are, they will 'do something' about it, or demand that something be done. Acknowledgement implies moral awareness, a willingness to reflect on the moral consequences of actions and behavior and take responsibility—or demand accountability—for the commission of violations."

Until that connection is developed on an explicitly moral basis, all sorts of crimes can fall through the cracks—and already have.

Back in December of 2000, while the Supreme Court was still deliberating over who would be our next president, Bill Clinton took a farewell tour through South East Asia. As a diplomatic gesture, Clinton released previously classified Air Force data to the Cambodian government about the true extent and targets of the so-called "secret" bombing campaign conducted by the Johnson and Nixon administrations. According to an article written by two members of the Yale Genocide Studies program for *The Walrus*, the tonnage of bombs dropped on neutral Cambodia was five times greater than previously realized, and exceeded the combined tonnage of bombs dropped on *both* Germany and Japan during World War II—including the two atomic bombs: "Previously, it was estimated that between 50,000 and 150,000 Cambodian civilians were killed by the bombing. Given the fivefold increase in tonnage revealed by the database, the number of casualties is surely higher."

Though Clinton's revelatory report was briefly covered, no major news media or watchdog group paid sustained attention to the new bombing figures or what the moral implications might be. What does it mean that massacres on an industrial scale can be committed by American democracy and the perpetrators go…unpunished? Or, like Henry Kissinger, are feted as the wise old men of America's foreign policy establishment? There's a certain futility in posing these questions. Since Vietnam, there has been no place to go with a politics that seeks justice for American war crimes at the highest levels of the government. To broach these topics is to touch upon larger questions of democratic culpability and national shame, and avoiding such themes has been a political no-brainer. Shame does not sell in American politics.

Indeed, in America, the cachet of war crimes can even provide fleeting glamour. Against the wishes of much of the Army brass, President Nixon pardoned Lt. William Calley, the officer convicted in a military tribunal of the command responsibility for mass rape and slaughter of hundreds of defenseless old men, women and children in Vietnam's My Lai massacre. Calley, while awaiting trial, appeared in an issue of

Esquire; the cover shot showed him in dress uniform, grinning like a demonic chipmunk while holding a lapful of Asian children. According to *Time* magazine, after details emerged about the atrocity during his trial—and his own soldiers testified that he personally shot a child attempting to crawl out of a trench of corpses—Calley was flooded with thousands of letters of support, personal checks, and flowers. Though controversial, the President's decision to commute his sentence proved popular, as an overwhelming 79 percent of Americans polled disapproved of Calley's conviction. Upon being partially pardoned, Calley enjoyed a brief stint as a minor celebrity, a far right rallying figure and lecturer, before slipping into wealthy obscurity.

The journalist and polemicist Christopher Hitchens notes a somewhat similar phenomenon in the career of Henry Kissinger, in that the hints of shamelessness and past atrocities adds a bit of bad boy swagger or frisson to Kissinger's persona. It's the kind of buzz that's good for both cocktail parties and TV appearances with Jay Leno, and the ancient guru's reputation remains exalted enough that this year's first presidential debate showed both candidates' efforts to claim his ideas as closer to their own brand of foreign policy. Even Hitchens's endeavors to popularize Kissinger's crimes have run afoul of this bizarre resiliency, providing another cautionary tale of thwarted accountability. Hitchens's *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, a concise and scathing indictment of the former Secretary of State, was released in May of 2001 and was soon followed by a by-the-book BBC documentary. The charges range widely: sabotaging President Johnson's peace negotiations in Vietnam; cynically leading the Nixon administration's escalation of bombings throughout Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; plotting the overthrow of a democratically-elected government in Chile; complicity with the Greek Colonel's regime and their nefarious machinations in Cyprus; tacitly backing Pakistan's genocidal civil war against Bangladesh; and giving the go-ahead to Suharto's atrocity-ridden invasion of East Timor. Written to inflame moral outrage, Hitchens's slim book portended a long campaign, but 9/11 ripped apart American politics and Hitchens broke with his narrow vision of the American Left in order to embrace the Bush administration and its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. After five years of praising various "Pentagon intellectuals" (and somehow missing the presence of Kissingerians like L. Paul Bremer and John Negroponte throughout the administration), Hitchens was devastated to discover in late 2006 that Bush still took advice from the old monster himself. Kissinger still had the ear of the president. "Will we never be free of the malign effect of this little gargoyle?" Hitchens wailed in a *Slate* column.

Aside from the relatively rare Hitchensian amputation of Leftist sentiment and sense, and those limp moderates fearing a cycle of prosecutions for unspecified future crimes, Leftists concerned about American war crimes must trim another untidy feather of their own right wing; a Left interventionism that grew up in Bosnia and Kosovo and flew on to Iraq. Not all Left interventionists took this bellicose flight path, but a predominate form of Liberal hawkishness arising in the '90s focused on the exigency of foreign atrocities at the price of forgetting the dark side of American military might, and too many ended up supporting the crusades of the Bush administration with too few caveats. The Canadian parliamentarian Michael Ignatieff, a prototypical Liberal Hawk, wrote in *The Warrior's Honor,* that for the interventionist the mid-90s NATO incursions into Bosnia were:

> "a theater of displacement, in which political energies that might otherwise have been expended in defending multiethnic society at home were directed instead at defending mythic multiculturalism far away. Bosnia became the latest *bel espoir* of a generation that had tried ecology, socialism, and civil rights only to watch all these lose their romantic momentum."

Many of those Left hawks, like Ignatieff, who joined forces with neocon intellectuals over the "*bel espoir*" of Bosnia, rode that "romantic momentum" all the way to the Iraq War—only to later recant. (Ignatieff finally retracted his own support in 2007). Some of these Left hawks, in the first years of the Iraq War, got flirtatiously close to supporting the efficacy of torture as a means to combat a greater evil. In 2005, Hitchens praised *Terrorism in the Grip of Justice,* a ghoulish Iraqi TV-reality show featuring the renunciations of various battered insurgents and terrorists—some of whom, as the journalist Peter Maas has reported, turned up dead after their confessions were broadcast. Hitchens, while acknowledging in *Slate* that "the possibility exists that other confessions are either staged or coerced," and that "[the] United States could not have put any of these people on television, because the Geneva Conventions forbid the exhibiting of prisoners," nevertheless boldly concluded: "[in] my opinion, at any rate, the elected Iraqi authorities are well within their rights in using this means of propaganda." Evidently snuff films are wrong for America, but some exceptions can be made for allied countries on the battlefront. For his part, Ignatieff wondered in *The New York Times* in early 2004 to what degree "[to] defeat evil, we may have to traffic in evils: indefinite detention of suspects, coercive interrogations, targeted assassinations, even pre-emptive war," before disavowing torture much more forcefully in *The Prospect* in 2006. Regeneration of liberal energies and policies starts at home and has a lot of housecleaning to do before it can confidently travel abroad. While the lesson may be learned, that doesn't mean it won't have to be repeated.

> What if the Left were to encourage President Obama to just pull the trigger: institute war crimes tribunals for past officials through constitutional means and just eat the backlash as the price of higher justice?

Aware of such fissures, how can the Left cultivate the moral awareness necessary to bring more attention to war crimes and call their perpetrators to justice? When it comes to questions of collective shame, the American media environment has always been awful, and since the rise of right-wing radio, FOX News and the trogosphere, the Left must contend with an even more amplified caricature of the shrieking liberal. Condemned by the Right for an apparent lack of sound bite patriotism, and for only harping on the ugly side of American politics that no one wants to see, the Left lacks a compelling frame to raise such dire issues, and it has been a surefire recipe for political disaster when it comes to electoral politics. John Kerry touched this third rail when the Bush campaign merely reminded voters of Kerry's youthful participation in the Winter Soldier Project, a protest group in which the young Lieutenant acted as a spokesman for veterans who publicly admitted to atrocities in Vietnam. Attacked in the Swift Boat ads, Kerry could never construct a convincing narrative that bridged his youthful anti-war activism and his evolution into a bland US Senator, and his campaign sunk between those contradictions. Indeed, Kerry appeared so spooked by attacks on his past denunciations of American atrocities that he never made Abu Ghraib a major campaign issue.

Clearly then, American queasiness over confronting war crimes doesn't have to emerge solely from the unhealed scars of the '60s and '70s in order to be politically perilous. In June of this year, Major General Anthony Taguba, the officer tasked with investigating the Bush administration's culpability in the Abu Ghraib horror, publicly accused the sitting president of war crimes in a preface to a Physicians for Human Rights report. Taguba's bold, declarative statement of guilt once more pointed to the gap between knowledge and acknowledgement:

> "After years of disclosures by government investigations, media accounts, and reports from human rights organizations, there is no longer any doubt as to whether the current administration has committed war crimes. The only question that remains to be answered is whether those who ordered the use of torture will be held to account."

Now, if you were a foreign journalist covering American politics you might think this political bombshell would searingly seal the gap between knowledge and acknowledgement and become a major issue dividing the nation in the 2008 election. No such luck. Taguba's report received little sustained attention, and though candidate Obama critiqued Bush for his torture policies and vowed to end them, he was protected on his right flank by John McCain's rhetorically similar position, and Obama never combined the words war crimes and prosecution in the same sentence. After all, he wanted to win. Having won, his administration will have to decide whether Taguba's unequivocal statement rises to the standard of what Sunstein labeled "egregious" enough for prosecution.

A potential frame that is truly interested in "change" may reside not in the standard repertoire of Leftist tactics, but deeper in America's Christian heritage—if moral awareness is to breach the stultifying cloud of cheap patriotism. Some genocide scholars, like Verdeja, remain cynical about the ability of the Left to strengthen its own resolve *and* win over the American public as to the necessity of pursuing war crimes. "The Left can't touch these people [perpetrators]," he asserts. "The Right will have to do it, for only Nixon can go to China. It will take a rising, younger generation of conservatives. This has to be a self-critique within the Right, has to be a movement from the Right and this can only happen after a schism." If there is to be a schism, and that looks tantalizingly apparent, there must be some way for the Left to win over the schismatics, the whole gamut from anti-war libertarians like Justin Raimondo to social conservatives truly concerned with moral values—perhaps like the conservative intellectuals Rod Dreher and Ross Douthat.

The renowned Christian political theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society,* recognized the value of patriotism but cautioned that American Christians must put their first allegiance above any worldly nation bounded by geography and time and dedicate themselves to the community of Christ. Niebuhr preached the necessity of using power to confront evil, but the wielder of that power must be constantly aware, as if through spiritual exercise, of how easily power corrupts and how badly it is perceived by those it is used against, no matter the moral claims. Christians must fight against the profound selfishness and delusion that accompany patriotism, and guard constantly against the imperial impulse that so easily flows from national self-righteousness. Obviously, this is not Sarah Palin's Christianity, but the potential tools to bridge the gap between public knowledge and acknowledgement could reside in the broadly ecumenical Christian theology practiced by the majority of Americans. Leftists interested in advancing the moral imperative of bringing war crimes trials home would be negligent to overlook these opportunities. Conceptions of shame and redemption are present all throughout most Christian denominations, and a first step to utilizing them would be familiarity, while a second lays in making such appeals to audiences that claim to hold them. Successful examples of progressive moral movements run all throughout American history from the abolitionists to Martin Luther King Jr. and shouldn't be forgotten in a more secular age.

If this really is a bridge too far, a rearguard strategy would be a prophylactic one of simply ending criminal policies such as torture, even if their perpetrators go unpunished. Verdeja notes that Americans

> "have no history or stomach to put our leaders on trial for this sort of behavior, and clearly there will never be an international tribunal to hold them accountable. Nevertheless, it is important that we don't simply assume that nothing can be done: we need to continue

Continued next page

adjuncting

Free Choice and Adjunct Equity

RENEE MCGARRY

In a news conference on Friday, January 30, Mayor Bloomberg announced what many are referring to as his doomsday budget. This included one billion dollars in budget cuts, the core of which calls for laying off over 23,000 city workers. According to Bloomberg, the majority of these workers will be New York City public school teachers—as many as 15,000 of them may lose their jobs as the city faces an ongoing budget crunch with little to no help from the state. In addition to these lay-offs, Bloomberg expects to dramatically increase sales tax in the city and also to ask property owners to return their $400 tax rebates.

Not surprisingly, the city (and state) is again looking to balance their budget on the back of workers, explicitly stating that they need givebacks from municipal unions in order to prevent these layoffs. If municipal unions agree, workers will at the very least be expected to pay more for their health care, and it isn't difficult to imagine what else they will be asked to do. Not only are we faced with the possibility of these givebacks, and an increase in sales tax, but we will also suffer a dramatic increase in MTA fares, and whatever else the city and its agencies throws in our direction.

In times like these anti-union rhetoric looms large. In its article about the proposed budget cuts and layoffs on January 30, the *New York Daily News* mildly referred to a lack of cooperation from "stubborn unions" throughout the city. The *New York Post* wasn't far behind. But union-bashing doesn't just exist in these conservative venues. In fact, we can see it in the comments sections of the *New York Times* website, on *Gothamist*, and in practically every other news source. Public employees are regularly referred to as "freeloaders," "overpaid," and "lazy": these are among the tamest of insults.

Unfortunately, these feelings about unions, unionization, and union members are not limited to the local stage, nor are they limited to some abstract internet personalities hurling insults in our direction. The Employee Free Choice Act, supported by President Obama while he was in the Senate but notably absent from his economic stimulus package, is at the center of many of these anti-union arguments. Supporters of the bill herald it as one of the greatest changes to labor legislation since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935 and argue that it would make it much easier for workers to unionize, ostensibly eliminating a multi-tiered and possibly years-long certifications process by eliminating the need for secret ballots.

Critics of the act argue that by eliminating secret ballots, unions will be more likely to bully workers into signing on. (It is important to note that the act does not eliminate the possibility of complicated secret ballot voting but allows for the additional option of certifying a union after a majority of employees sign union authorization cards.) The rhetoric surrounding this act has escalated beyond that of stubbornness and free-loading. On a conference call with other CEOS, the CEO of the notoriously anti-labor Home Depot referred to the act as "the end of civilization as we know it." In an interview on the Fox News Network on Saturday, January 31, a top editor at *Forbes* magazine called the bill "pro-slavery." The scope and outlandishness of these claims can seem shocking but it's not at all surprising.

Of course this bill makes CEOs nervous. Studies show that union members have 14% higher pay than those who aren't unionized and are 28% more likely to have employer-paid health care. The Employee Free Choice Act will cost companies a great deal of money if it passes. But what's troubling is when we hear similar arguments in our day-to-day lives.

As adjuncts and fellows, we have the opportunity to do something about this. We can sign union cards and become vocal and active members in a large municipal union. If you haven't yet signed a union card, now is the time to do it.

Living in times of economic insecurity, with our fates in the hands of union leadership, we need to let them know what we are and aren't willing to do. Are we willing to pay more for the same health care, especially having just won access to it in January? Are we willing to teach fewer classes of more students? Are we willing to see our friends get laid off and their students added to our sections?

Signing a union card and voting in union elections is not the only way to be active in this fight; we also have the opportunity to be vocal and pro-union in our everyday lives. From March 30 – April 3, the Adjunct Project is sponsoring CUNY Equity Week, a university-wide event that offers the opportunity for all faculty members to discuss the plight of contingent workers in the CUNY system. During this week we are asking faculty to make a coordinated effort to incorporate information on adjunct teaching conditions and the impact these have on our students.

There are a lot of ways you can incorporate this information into your classroom. You may have a class discussion, a persuasive letter-writing exercise, a statistical analysis of adjunct and full-time wages for the same workload, or an extra-credit assignment to find a link between course materials and adjunct labor. Adjuncts teach nearly 60% of all classes at CUNY, and oftentimes students are unaware of this, or that the position of an adjunct is radically different than that of full-time faculty members.

Talk to you students about what it means: how does it impact your relationships with them? Your ability to teach your courses to the best of your ability? Your working conditions? If you can't have office hours because they are unpaid or there is no location for you to do so, let your students know. Alerting students to these situations makes them more aware of how the ways in which adjuncts are treated unequally impacts their education.

Set aside a class session or two, or less time if you like, to talk about these inequalities in your classroom. Attend one of our training sessions and learn what you can say and how to say it. Allow someone else to come into your classroom to discuss the role of contingent workers in the CUNY system. Just starting a conversation can make a world of difference and can call attention to just how different a university we would have with more full-time faculty members and greater opportunities.

Most importantly, CUNY Equity Week is *your* week. Do what you want to do in your classrooms and beyond. Be creative, and let us know your ideas so we can share them.

If adding just one more thing to your schedule is making your mind spin, we also invite you to join us for a special session on yoga for students and adjuncts on Friday, February 20 at 6pm (suggested donation $5). A certified yoga teacher will help us create a toolbox of coping mechanisms for when our back hurts from writing our dissertation all day, our head hurts from teaching, and whatever else hurts from whatever else we do. We look forward to seeing you there!

War Crimes

Continued from page 7

> forcefully discussing and criticizing these policies, with the aim of putting an end to them under the new administration."

By this logic, bruiting about the sins of war crimes, even if we never hold actual trials, could focus moral awareness to a degree that future crimes can be prevented at conception. A public campaign of shaming would be needed, and while it would require a new cultivation of moral awareness, it's the least we could do.

If, however, the bridge between knowledge and acknowledgement is never built on Christian ethics, and waiting for a new generation on the Right willing to countenance criminal prosecution is futile, and promises of future abstention are not preventative enough, then maybe a thought experiment is in order. What if the Left were to encourage President Obama to just pull the trigger: institute war crimes tribunals for past officials through constitutional means and just eat the backlash as the price of higher justice? After all, if "we are the change we've be waiting for," then who are the reactionary politicians—or what really are the political considerations—to say otherwise? As Niebuhr himself noted:

> "Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises. The democratic method of resolving social conflict, which some romanticists hail as a triumph of the ethical over the coercive factor, is really much more coercive than at first seems apparent."

There are many forms of coercion. Coercion wielded through democratically attained political power, constitutionally undertaken and with a full Niebuhrian awareness of its dangers—though never an unalloyed good—may be a necessary one. Arrest and prosecution are forms of legal coercion, and if the longstanding critique is that the Left never knows how to wield power to protect or enact what it holds dear, then demanding the exercise of *our* political power on an issue of such import and moral clarity would be a strong proclamation of political arrival. It might even provide "change we can believe in," as other progressive causes could be weighed in relation to the shame not solely of war crimes, but of poverty, inequality, or that of our vast and reprehensible prison-industrial complex. The precursor to this legal and political clash between conscience and power is that the moral exigency of prosecuting war crimes rises to the level of social conflict. The payoffs for such a mobilization and contestation might not be all bad. After all, nothing helps to advance previously resistant conceptions of shame quite like a conviction.

Maybe. While tempting, such an optimistic scenario cannot account for the shock waves sure to follow from the psychic detonation of seeing a former President of the United States in the dock. Or looking bewildered in a prison jumpsuit. This would be so startling, so previously unimaginable, that there's no telling how the public would react or what the political reverberations might be. While a great precedent in terms of the power of the constitution, many Americans would view it as an assault on patriotism, on the pervasive view that America is fundamentally good. Would such an astonishing event be seen by the majority as a great cleansing, a release from past sins, or an egregious national humiliation enforced by a puritanical few?

It would be the emotional equivalent of regicide, and while our political ancestors, the British, beheaded their king only once in their history, they've been pretty uptight about it ever since. If we successfully pressed for war crimes trials for America's former leaders, we'd have to accept the consequences that go along with a brand of justice for which the public is not yet prepared. Perhaps then, the best way to prepare would be start small, a few degrees of distance from the present regime. Henry Kissinger still breathes in freedom and that could be corrected.

Afghanistan: The Use and Abuse of a Buffer State (Part 2)

A Soviet soldier in Afghanistan in 1988.

CHRISTIAN PARENTI

*In Part One of Christian Parenti's in-depth examination of Afghanistan (*The Advocate*, December 2008), the author argues that the country was used as a trampoline for the George W. Bush administration to jump into Iraq. In the process, Parenti asserts, Afghanistan was made to serve as an ideological "buffer state," or the "seemingly 'legitimate' defensive war that politically buffers the illegitimate, clearly illegal one in Iraq."*

In Part Two of Parenti's analysis, which follows below, he traces the contours of Afghanistan's tortured modern history, and asks where the country may be headed as the first decade of a new century comes to a close.

If there is a rural-urban cleavage in Afghan society (Dupree's "mud curtain"), there is also an ethnic divide, the main axis of which separates the north from the south. In the north, the dominant groups are the Persian-speaking Tajiks and Hazaras and the Turkic-speaking Uzbeks. Afghanistan's "majority minority" are the Pashtun, who constitute 40% of the population and speak Pashto, or Pashtun. They dominate the south of the country and form the social base of the Taliban. The Taliban are as much an ethnic movement as a religious movement, pitting the Pashtun against the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and others.

In Afghanistan, Pashtuns have always been the largest ethnic group and they have ruled the country ever since its creation in 1749. President Karzai is but the latest in a long unbroken line of ruling Pashtuns, though most Pashtun see his government as Tajik-dominated.

There are also about 26 million Pashtun people living in Pakistan, and this Pakistani link fuels the ethnic conflicts in Afghanistan. The Pashtun nation is essentially divided between the two states. The groundwork for trouble was laid in 1893, when Afghanistan was separated from British India by the Durand Line, drawn up by Mortimer Durand and forced upon Abdur Rahman Khan, the otherwise "Iron Emir" of Afghanistan. The Durand Line's main political impact was to divide "Pashtunistan" and thus give it an imaginary life in the minds of the Pashtun nationalists.

While the Afghan Pashtun have always been the ruling ethnicity, in Pakistan they are a large, poor, restive minority, making up about 16% of the population. Herein lies the problem: the last thing Pakistan wants is for the Pashtun minority within its borders to link up with, or become the tool of, a strong neighboring Afghanistan ruled by Pashtuns.

Pakistan also wants Afghanistan to remain weak so as to provide "strategic depth," or fall-back room, in case of a major land war with India. Pakistan also dominates Afghan consumer markets; it receives water from the undammed Kabul and Kunar rivers; and Pakistan wants a compliant Afghanistan so that Pakistani business interests can use it as a transit corridor into Central Asia.

Since the early 1970s Pakistan has funded Pashtun insurgents in Afghanistan, including Hekmatyar, head of Hezb-i-Islami, which has recently been allied with the resurgent Taliban. With the Afghan communist coup of 1978 and the Soviet invasion of 1979, Pakistan's Pashtun problem became Kabul's jihad problem. When the Taliban eventually evicted the warring mujahideen factions from Kabul in 1996, Pakistan backed the Taliban.

With the attacks of 9/11, many observers assumed that General Pervez Musharraf would be forced to turn against the Taliban and support the United States against them. And that's just what Musharraf has pretended to do. The benefits Musharraf has received as a close US ally include: an end to the sanctions that had been imposed by President Clinton after Islamabad's 1998 nuclear tests; relief from some of Pakistan's $38 billion international debt; more loans from international financial agencies; a legitimation of his putsch-ist government; and a closer relationship with Washington to balance against.

But why give up the traditional agenda of destabilizing and controlling Afghanistan just to cozy up to Washington? Why not do both at once? That's just what Musharraf has done: he plays both roles. Pakistan is America's indispensable ally, the local broker, while at the same time continuing to fund proxy forces to destroy Afghanistan. This two-horse strategy has caused President Karzai to complain openly about Musharraf's lackluster anti-terror efforts.

When I met Taliban fighters in a canyon in Zabul province in February 2006, they made no pretense about the support they receive from Pakistan. Likewise, Sebastian Junger interviewed a former Taliban commander who had switched sides and who had available the cell phone and address of his ISI handler, a major, based in Quetta.

Pakistan cloaks its continued support for the Taliban by occasionally turning over low-level Talib commanders to US forces. This serves two purposes at once: it is a way to dispose of problematic, reprobate local leaders who the ISI dislikes and it pleases the unwitting foreign master, who can now busy itself with abusing these politically meaningless battlefield trophies. The fact is, for many Guantanamo-based interrogators, locked away as they are in the compartmentalized bowels of America's huge war bureaucracy, one bearded Pashtun gunman is a good as the next. Thus Pakistan tries to have it both ways: full US support, while keeping Afghanistan weak by means of Pashtun proxy forces.

VI

Now let us move back again and look at some increasingly forgotten history. How and why did the Soviets go into Afghanistan? Here again, one finds similarities to the current moment. And also because that history is almost totally ignored in books like Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars* or the other various histories of al

NOT THIS TIME

Dear President Obama,

We congratulate you and wish you the very best of fortune in your great undertaking. As writers, we admire your eloquence and your engagement with ideas. But we are worried because a new beginning will not be possible as long as we continue to spill the blood of the men, women and children of Afghanistan. The Taliban is not a direct military threat to the United States nor are the people of Afghanistan. There is no victory for those who attempt to occupy Afghanistan, as the Soviets and the British discovered. There will be no progress at home while such an all-consuming war is being waged. If we stay, the situation will get worse, not better, and the toll in American lives and American prestige, as well as the damage to our standing in the Middle East and to the American budget will be staggering and tragic. Wartime Presidents accomplish little else. We urge you to negotiate with the Taliban, withdraw all troops from Afghanistan, and begin the moral and physical rebuilding of Afghanistan, as well as that of the United States.

Laila Al-Arian
Russell Banks
Christian Bauman
John Berger
Kate Bernheimer
Jeff Biggers
Max Blumenthal
Magda Bogin
Landruni R. Bolling
Wesley Brown
Carmen Buollosa
Bell Chevigny
Maryse Condé
James Cone
Martha Cooley
Tom Cornell
Edwidge Danticat
Lauren Davis
Junot Díaz
Bernard Diederich
Deborah E. Eisenberg
Daniel Ellsberg
Martin Espada
Norman Finkelstein
Stona Fitch
Naomi Foner
Charles W. Freeman Jr.
Aaron Glantz
Barry Goldensohn
Vivian Gornick
Alison Granucci
John Guare
Bruce Guernsey
Chris Hedges
Adam Hochschild
Israel Horovitz
Robert Jensen
Linton Kwesi Johnson
Edmund Keeley
Garret Keizer
Brad Kessler
Maxine Kingston
Marilyn D. Krysl
Mark Kurlansky
Laila Lalami
Margot Livesey
Barry Lopez
Danny Lyon
Elizabeth Macklin
Emily Mann
Fred Marchant
Jeffrey and Leila Masson
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Rick Moody
Sigrid Nuñez
Nell Painter
Jay Parini
Jeremy Pikser
Milbry Polk
Francine Prose
Barbara Reilly
Michael Ratner
F.D. Reeve
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Not This Time / Summit Study
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Qaeda or even in Ahmed Rashid's very fine book *Taliban*.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan (then a constitutional monarchy) shared increasingly close relations. Starting in the 1950s, Afghanistan became one of the top four recipients of Soviet aid and stayed that way through the 1980s. During the 1950s and 1960s, under King Zahir Shah and his prime minister, Daud Khan, Afghanistan managed to play the West and the East off against each other in a battle that used aid flows rather than bullets.

For example, the Kabul airport was built by the Russians, but all the communications equipment was supplied by Americans. Afghanistan's highways were jointly produced by the rival superpowers. Military officers would go study in Russia; engineers and agronomists would go study in the United States. Both superpowers used their economic might to win hearts and minds in Afghanistan, but the Soviet Union spent vastly more than the United States.

The Soviet Union's primary concern was to create a stable neighbor, so as to ensure calm within its own heavily Muslim Central Asian republics—terrain sometimes referred to as the Soviet Union's "soft underbelly." Remember that throughout the 1930s the USSR was actually fighting Muslim guerillas in these areas. These were the anti-communist, traditionalist Basmachi. An unfriendly or unstable government in Afghanistan could easily mean a return of instability to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. (And, in fact, when Afghanistan did fall apart in the late 1990s there was war in these republics.)

So, the USSR poured enormous amounts of money into the project of modernizing Afghanistan; it wasn't altruism so much as a rational security strategy. The Soviet goal in Afghanistan was not to build socialism right away; Soviet advisors frequently chided Afghan communists who wished to rush in that direction. Soviet social scientists considered Afghan society to be too rural, religious, underdeveloped, and backward for socialism to work. Russian communists encouraged their Afghan comrades to cooperate with nationalist and developmentalist political leaders in the style of an Afghan popular front.

In 1973, the king's long-time prime minister, Daud Khan, staged a coup against his relative Zahir Shah. Daud ended the monarchy and created a republic with himself as the president. He relied for part of his support on the more moderate wing of the Afghan Communist Party, the Parcham. The party was in reality two parties: the Kalq (the masses) and the Parcham (the flag). The two factions were held together by Soviet aid and insistence on unity.

But in 1978, Daud started cracking down on the Parcham. In response, the Kalq—which was excluded from Daud's government altogether—staged a bloody *coup d'état*, in which Daud and his family were massacred. The Soviets did not support the coup but backed the Kalq government anyway. The PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) rule was marked by zealous overreaction and internecine repression. Worst of all they rode roughshod over the countryside. (That "mud curtain," the rural–urban split, rears its head again.) The new state failed to use the jirga system, the tradition of meetings for decision-making at the local level (these gatherings, though sexist in their exclusion of women, also have some quite democratic features, typically all men have equal say regardless of their property qualifications). Land reform was rushed through without proper preparations—like creation of an alternative credit system or proper supplies of inputs for farmers—so the earliest effects of the reform were actually to hurt the economic well-being of poor farmers. Soon tenant farmers were ready to side with the landlord class, with whom they already shared many clan and tribal connections. The rush to educate women and abolish the dowry system also infuriated the mullahs, landlords, and patriarchs of the countryside.

But it was Kalq moves to purge suspect officers

from the Afghan military—or rumors that they were about to do so—that triggered the first full-scale revolt within the army. In March 1979, the main Afghan city on the Iranian border, Herat, rose in rebellion, led by an Islamist officer, Ishmael Kahn. Kahn became a famous mujahideen leader, was governor of Herat, and was said to run the province well. He is now in Kabul as Karzai's minister of energy and mining.

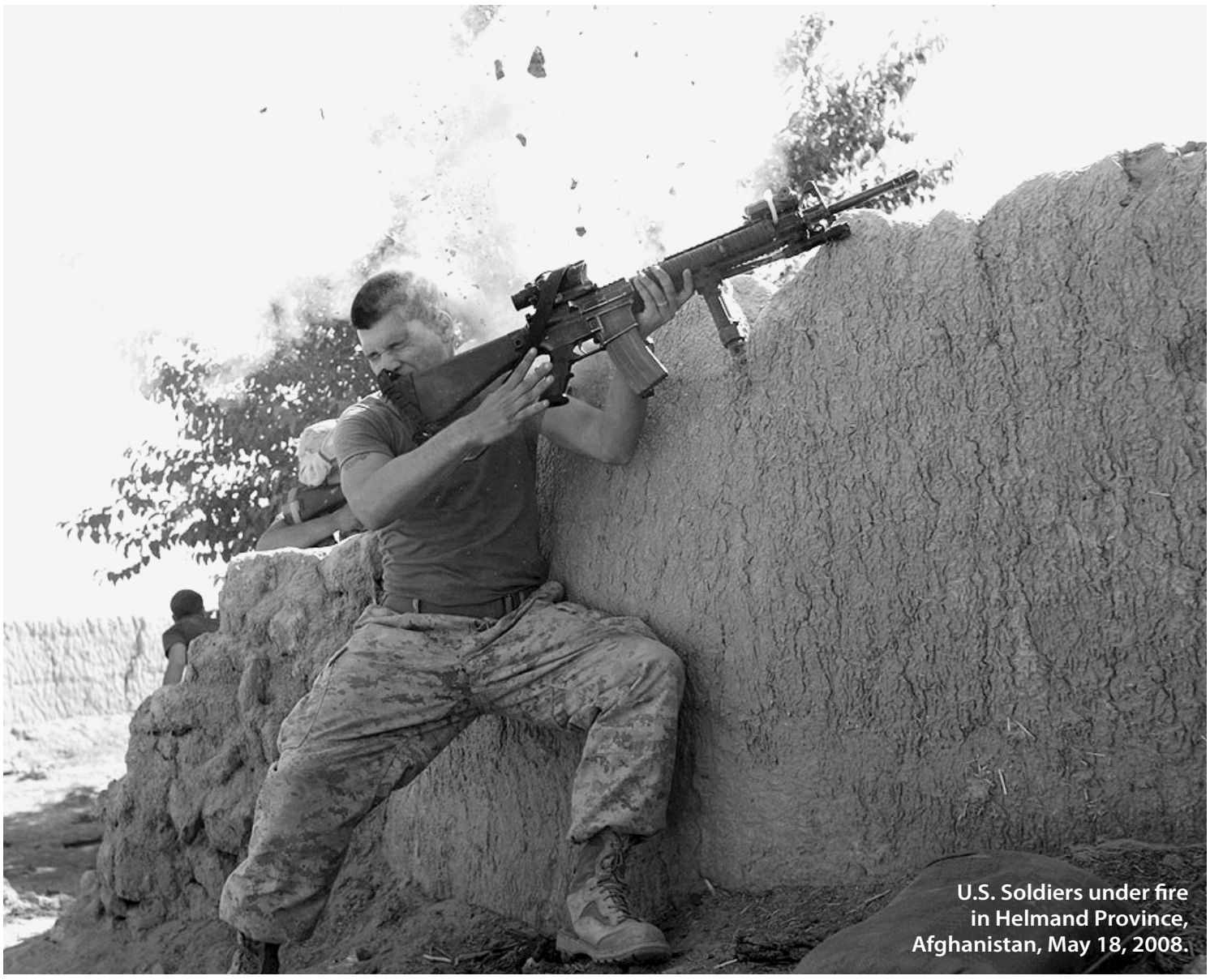
The rebellion was also inspired by the Islamic revolution in Iran. The Shah had fallen just next door only a month earlier. Herat was home to a huge Soviet-supported airbase, and the rebels killed hundreds of Soviet advisors and their families. The Afghan government, with Soviet advisors, bombed the city in retaliation. At news of the uprising, President Carter—prodded by National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski—decided to send support to the rebels. That support did not cause the uprising but did prolong and intensify it. From Herat, the rebellion spread all over the country.

By the autumn of 1979 the Afghan army—which was largely the product of five decades of Soviet training and subsidies—had essentially fallen apart. Whole garrisons were in revolt against the Communists in Kabul. It was in the face of this total meltdown of a long-cultivated client state that the USSR—aware of all the risks and rather reluctantly—invaded. It was a gamble they felt compelled to take. Nothing about Afghanistan's mountains, tribes, religiosity, xenophobia, long history of warfare, and deep cultural pride was particularly inviting.

The forebodingly bleak and obligatory nature of the Soviet invasion makes it in many ways similar to the US intervention. After all, who really thought that the United States or anyone else could remake Afghanistan?

Once in Kabul, the first thing the Soviets did was kill the Kalq president, the thuggish Amin, and replaced him with Babrak Karmal and then eventually with Dr. Najibullah. The government became Parcham-dominated.

Once engaged in the Afghan civil war, the Soviets tried to dress up their disastrous war with high-flying rhetoric about socialist revolution and solidarity. But for most of the war, they knew they were losing. Today, the United States papers-over the growing chaos in Afghanistan with talk of nation-building and human rights. But let's face it: we all know it's lost.



U.S. Soldiers under fire in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, May 18, 2008.

VII

Where is Afghanistan headed? Perhaps a defeat in Iraq will cause the United States to tack back around the Afghan buoy and, in the face of gathering crisis there, attempt to make the reconstruction work, pour in more money and more troops.

But I doubt it. More likely, Afghanistan will be kept on life support until the Western political classes tire of the effort. Then it will be cut loose to sink once more into chaos.

Only this time, when it's "abandoned" it will be part of a much broader geography of social breakdown that stretches across North and Central Africa, up in the Horn, over to Iraq, then jumps to Afghanistan and into Pakistan. The Pentagon theorists call this the "non integrated gap"—that belt of failed states that stretches across much of the global South.

In thinking about the possible outcome of these two Bush era wars, let us consider the political evolution of the man who was Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

In 1998, in an interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Brzezinski dismissed the risks of "blow back" and defended his support of the mujahideen in the following terms: "What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet Empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?" These days, Brzezinski appears to take "stirred-up Moslems" more seriously.

In February 2007, he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that President Bush's description of a "decisive ideological struggle" against radical Islam was "simplistic and demagogic." He called it a "mythical historical narrative" employed to justify a "protracted and potentially expanding war." "To argue that America is already at war in the region with a wider Islamic threat, of which Iran is the epicenter, is to promote a self-fulfilling prophecy."

More disturbing was Brzezinski's description of "a plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran." After all, Iran is now sandwiched between two US military occupations. The United States has been building its bases in Afghanistan; one of the largest is the Shindand Airfield, situated in the western province of Herat (where the anti-Communist uprising began in 1979), a mere 100 kilometers from the border with Iran. There are reports that Shindand is being fitted into an anti-missile defense system that would be used to shoot down any outgoing missiles from Iran. This emerging system serves to shore up Israeli security, but it would also be of great assistance during an air war against Iran.

Brzezinski described the worst-case scenario as follows:

> "Iraqi failure to meet the benchmarks, followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure, then by some provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the US blamed on Iran, culminating in a "defensive" US military action against Iran that plunges a lonely America into a spreading and deepening quagmire eventually ranging across Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan."

This is the worst-case scenario. A ground war in Iran seems impossible; the United States doesn't have the troops. An air war is more likely. But even without deeper direct US involvement, the region is in the grips of spreading social breakdown fueled by massive refugee flows, cheap plentiful weaponry, drug money, and illicit oil lucre, all of which is intellectually tied together with desperate millenarian religious politics. The future looks bad.

VIII

But an alternative scenario is not impossible: the United States could use its power to launch a new diplomacy aimed at de-escalating all these interconnected crises. This would require a concatenate series of regional peace conferences involving all the great powers as well as each set of regional powers. The central task of such collaborative diplomacy would have to be staving off social breakdown, which is already taking hold like a cancer and threatens to spread.

In the imaginations of the Muslim people of the region, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the minds of the Pakistani agents who support the Taliban, the war in Afghanistan is linked to the stand-off between Pakistan and India. A peace process attempting regional de-escalation would have to include China, Russia, and India.

As regards Afghanistan, one central issue would be Pakistan's security, thus the question of Kashmir. Settle the security issue between India and Pakistan, and then Pakistan can be credibly pressured to stop subverting Afghanistan.

Such a process would have to take years; it would have to be on the scale of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference in which the allies redrew the map of the world. But the new diplomacy would have to follow a progressive logic—not the 1919 post-war imperial logic of winners dividing spoils. It would have to accept the limits of US power; it would have to recognize that the United States has neither the right nor the ability to run the world.

And such an approach would have to address the economic transformations that are imperative due to climate change. For example, Afghanistan has just emerged from an eight-year drought, but it needs five years worth of regular snowfall just to replenish its aquifers. As snow packs in the Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges continue to recede, the rivers flowing from them will diminish and the economic situation in all of Central Asia will deteriorate badly.

Unfortunately, the American political class has not come to terms with the two great threats of this century: climate change and social breakdown. Nor is it in the immediate interest of US economic elites to think and act in such ways. Thus, a radical transformation of American foreign policy seems utopian. But at a technical level, such a transformation is not impossible. Ⓐ

ADEL SAFTY

The War of Punishment and Frustration

The Israeli assault on the Palestinians pitted one of the most powerful armies in the world against a political movement with a crude military organization, using home-made rockets.

Yet Israeli leaders have discovered that wiping out Hamas is not an easy task if only because Hamas's significance lies in what it symbolises—the resistance to occupation and dispossession.

Indeed, Israeli leaders have already admitted after eighteen days of punishing assault that they had not been able to wipe out Hamas. This is perhaps because the assault was not really a war against an army, but was a war of punishment directly aimed at the Palestinian people. Angry about the 2006 election of Hamas, Israel is frustrated that the Palestinians have refused to give up their struggle for independence, and has chosen to punish them for their resistance. Consider the massive use of force against a vastly inferior enemy, and the killing of innocent civilians which Israeli leaders claim it is not deliberate but which they ought to have known would be the inevitable result of their massive violence. This military punishment comes on top of a siege which amounts to a campaign of starvation and the imprisonment of 1.5 million people. Richard Falk, UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the occupied territories, called for protective action for the Palestinians against "the persisting and wide-ranging violations of the fundamental human right to life."

Christopher Gunness, the spokesperson for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, told the public radio program *Democracy Now*, that the situation in Gaza was "absolutely horrifying. The people of Gaza are terrorized. They're traumatized. And they are trapped."

Then there is the number of people killed from both sides, reflecting the gross inequality of the confrontation and attesting to its punishing nature: 1300 Palestinians were killed, many of them civilians, compared to thirteen Israelis, most of whom were soldiers.

The ferocity of the assault on Gaza was compounded by its sheer inhumanity. Amnesty International, citing "indisputable evidence" collected by its fact-finding team that visited Gaza, reported on January 19 that "The Israeli army used white phosphorus, a weapon with a highly incendiary effect, in densely populated civilian and residential areas of Gaza City."

The scale of punishment and destruction inflicted on the people of Gaza was captured by two Israeli writers (Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff) who concluded in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz that: "Gaza has been hurled back into the 1940s." Punishment as the goal of the Gaza assault was in fact openly admitted by Israeli officials who were reported by the New York Times as saying that "an offensive that caused average people to suffer put pressure on Hamas in real and specific ways."

Historically, the encounter of Zionism with the Palestinians was written in blood. It could not have been otherwise given the Zionist goal of colonizing Palestine; for the Palestinians could not have been expected to submissively acquiesce in the loss of their country.

Zionist leaders were well-aware of this fact, but considered violently displacing the Palestinians from their country necessary to make way for the European Jews.

Theodore Hertz, the father of political Zionism, candidly stated that for Zionism to succeed in Palestine "might takes precedence over right." Vladimir Jabotinsky, one of the extreme right wing Zionist leaders whose direct disciples formed the Likud party and came to power in Israel in the 1970s, recognized that: "Zionism is a colonizing adventure and therefore it stands or falls by the question of armed force."

Therein, of course, lies the principle contradiction of Israeli policy which continues to occupy and dispossess the Palestinians while simultaneously proclaiming a desire for peace.

Israeli leaders could have stopped all rockets from Gaza by ending the occupation, or even by ending the siege of Gaza and the collective punishment of the Palestinians. But the issue is not really about rockets from Gaza; the real issue is more fundamental: it is about whether the Zionist project of using force to displace and dispossess the Palestinians is compatible with peace. Are Israeli leaders ready to declare the end of the colonizing project and be satisfied with 78 percent of Palestine? Judging by the continued expansion of Israeli settlements, which violates the obligation to freeze all settlement activities stipulated in the roadmap "peace process" (which was accepted by the parties, the USA, Russia, the EU, and the UN),

Gaza

(after Mahmoud Darwish & Yehezkel Kedmi)

Skin can be torn to shreds and melted anywhere, houses dissolve and earth ripped apart below your very feet. But can the sea itself sustain a wound?

The name of these talks cannot be Madrid or Oslo but only Gaza because politics are politics and Washington and Tel Aviv propose velocity can drown out consciousness, extinguish the memory of life and the meaning of home.

Home is where the sea goes but there is no sea in Gaza.

How long can the fishermen mend their nets?

How many nets are even left when walls descend from a sky with no horizon and the beach is only one more part of the prison yard?

How many trees are left in the minds of the wise and caring elders, how many intricate hems left in the battered fingers of loving mothers, searching for water day after day, or another cup of flour or rice to keep their meager tables grand and sate the groaning chasm in the bellies of their beloved? How many more unborn can suffocate waiting to get across an imaginary line the earth still refuses to recognize? Why do madmen keep sending boys to do the job they thought they'd done for generations, extinguishing the very breath of their souls as they keep the great illusion alive, the great illusion that this is war and not just slaughter, plain and simple?

There is no sea in Gaza and the only waves left signal a final light, the flash of burning flesh in white phosphorus. Once I saw some men in Gaza waiting patiently by the side of the road, waiting and hoping. Waiting to work, hoping to feed their children. Some still wait and others don't. But the olive trees and orange groves and fishing nets grow upside down in an endless sea of blood about the sky above our heads and on some truly clear nights you can hear them flow within the veins behind your eyes.

Ammiel Alcalay
January, 2009

Israeli leaders are not ready yet to end Zionism's colonial nature. Peace with the Palestinians would bring colonization to an end; a state of belligerency serves as a cover for its continuation.

The absence of real Israeli interest in a just and lasting peace with the Palestinians has been candidly admitted by Dov Weissglas a senior aid to Israeli Prime Minister Sharon. Weissglass told *Haaretz* that the goal of the withdrawal from Gaza was "the freezing of the political process. And when you freeze that process you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state and you prevent a discussion about the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem." This whole package of the roadmap "has been removed from our agenda indefinitely."

The punishing assault on Gaza is also an expression of the frustrations of Israeli leaders whose consistent use of force has failed to completely subjugate the Palestinians. Despite the expulsion in 1948, and the loss of Palestine; despite the massacres from Deir Yassein in 1948 to Sabra and Shatilla in 1982, despite the oppression of the occupation since 1967; despite the repeated assaults on the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinians refuse to be defeated.

The irony is that by launching a massive, punishing war against Hamas, the Israelis may be legitimizing them in the eyes of many and at the expense of Fatah, as the symbol of that refusal to be defeated.

The future of Gaza will depend on whether or not the two-state solution of the conflict is still a viable option. A settlement could rehabilitate the Fatah faction and put an end to the need for resistance, thus diminishing the appeal of Hamas. A reunited Palestinian entity—geographically and politically—will then be faced with the task of reconstruction of the shattered Palestinian society. In the absence of peace, the continued punishment inflicted by Israel, and the growing poverty and despair are likely to further radicalise Palestinian society in Gaza and estrange it from the West Bank.

Adel Safty's new book, *Might Over Right: How the Zionist Took Over Palestine*, is endorsed by Noam Chomsky, and published by Garnet (England). 2009

NAJI ALI

The Dark Days: Fortress Israel's Final Stand

I am a product of South African apartheid. Born to a Black South African father and African American mother, I lived the first eight years of my life under one of the most racist governments in the world.

I witnessed firsthand how the White South African government—through mass arrests, dispossession, denial of freedom of movement, and targeted assassinations—tried to break the will of the people. I saw how Black South Africans and their supporters would cry out, "this is nothing short of racism and ethnic cleansing." But the standard refrain from the government was always the same: "We are fighting against communism and terror. What we are trying to do is keep the country safe from chaos." This was code for wanting to keep the country safe for all its white citizens. But it wasn't merely the government that co-opted this stance. The recruitment of academics and the media also helped perpetuate the myth that the state's majority Black population would one day try rise up and kill all the good white folks.

So for me, watching the carnage that Israel rained down upon the 1.5 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, creates an eerie sense of déjà vu.

As images from Israel's assault began to beam across the world and millions took to the streets in protest, the Israeli propaganda machine began to mobilize. The state, through its media and with the help of its academics, broadcasted one unanimous voice. Israel is engulfed once more by righteous indignation that translates into destructive policies in the Gaza Strip.

Through its own media Israel broadcasted daily that the suffering of those who died from rocket attacks, those whose skin was burning from white phosphorus , those who sought shelter in hospitals and UN schools, only to have them bombed by the Israeli military, were merely an unfortunate side effect of Israeli's righteous self defense. The state—much like the apartheid government of South Africa—presents itself as the victim of unrelenting rocket attacks by Hamas militants, and even the academic world is recruited to explain how warped and crazed the people of Gaza are for supporting such a group of terrorists.

In essence, this state with the fourth largest army in the world, which faces no serious threat from any of its neighboring countries, and which is generously supplied with the latest F-16's, Apache helicopters and nearly $6 billion each year by the United States—is actually the victim in all of this.

And with this attitude comes the unfathomable reasoning that what occurred in Gaza does not need to be apologized for. There is no remorse from the state and its leaders, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, or Defense Minister Ehud Barrack. In his well researched and meticulously documented work *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Israeli historian Ilan Pappe wrote:

> "the aim of the Zionist project has always been to construct and then defend a 'white' (Western) fortress in a 'black' (Arab) world. At the heart of the refusal to allow Palestinians the Right of Return is the fear of Jewish Israelis that they will eventually be outnumbered by Arabs. The prospect this calls up—that their fortress may be under threat—arouses such strong feelings that Israelis no longer seem to care that their actions might be condemned by the whole world."

Indeed, throughout the 22-day siege Livni, Olmert, and Barrack all reiterated that the use of F-16s, Apache helicopters, and phosphorus weapons—even if civilians were killed in the process—were all legitimate in the fight against "so called" terror in Gaza and to secure the safety of Israel's citizens.

This is a constant theme that Israel and its apologists use to explain the actions of the state against its Arab neighbors in general and the Palestinians in particular. The roots of this are found in Zionist ideology. Every response by Israel, no matter if it is occupation of the West bank and Gaza, the Jenin massacre of 2002, the Lebanon war of 2006, home demolitions, or the killing of journalists, activists, children, women and old men, has always been portrayed as a righteous event that is justified self-defense and done with a heavy heart by a nation that solely wishes to live in peace with its Arab neighbors.

But there is a funny thing about this sort of self-righteousness—it can come back to bite you.

While the siege raged on millions of people all over the world took to the streets to express their outrage at what Israel was doing. In Indonesia 1.5 million marched; on the second day of the offensive hundreds of thousands took to the streets in Beirut; Venezuela recalled their ambassador from Tel Aviv and sent the Israeli counterpart home and Bolivia followed suit; Mauritania and Qatar severed political ties with Israel, and Turkey lambasted Israel at the World Economic Forum as Israeli President Shimon Peres sat and fumed. In unusually strong terms The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which very rarely issues public comments, said it believed Israel had breached international humanitarian law. The ICRC accused Israel of delaying ambulance access to a house where relief workers found four starving children sitting next to their dead mothers and other corpses in a house in a part of Gaza City bombed by Israeli forces. It took four days before the Israeli army granted the ICRC access to the children.

In South Africa, parliamentary ministers gave the Israeli ambassador to South Africa, Dov Segev-Steinberg, a severe tongue-lashing, accusing his government of perpetrating "racist" abuses against the Palestinian people "that make apartheid look like a Sunday school picnic".

The aim of this horrible conflict was to stop Hamas resistance fighters from firing rockets into southern Israel and to remove the government from power. In both attempts it is clear that Israel failed.

Israel's attempt to justify the bombing of a UN school, from which they claimed fighters fired upon their troops, turned out to be a lie. Tens of women and children were murdered in the assault.

Israel claims to be the only democracy in the Middle East yet by a margin of 26-3, the Israeli Central Elections Committee decided to ban the Balad Party from running in the upcoming election. By a margin of 21-8, they also banned the United Arab List-Ta'al (UAL-T).

The Arab parties earned the ire of the most hawkish elements in the Israeli government by publicly opposing the war in the Gaza Strip.

The fortress that Israel had long set up to 'protect its citizens' is cracking.

No more can the world sit by as it did in South Africa and let the slaughter of innocents continue. No more can the narrative of any conflict begin with the ridiculously one sided statement that "Israel has a right to defend itself." Zionist lobbies must be countered in the United States; boycott and divestment must commence; mainstream media must be challenged; and political and military leaders in Israel who have committed war crimes must be brought to justice.

We are now in the darkest days of this conflict. Israel no longer seems to care what the world thinks of its actions. Mass slaughter of innocents is seen as a justifiable means to combat terror, and Israeli leaders make no apologies for the hell that the region's 1.5 million residents have endured. These are the same dark days, the darkest hours that I remember going through in South Africa just before the light showed through and a new dawn arose. Just like in South Africa, where Blacks can now vote, hold public office and live and go where they choose, the dawn will break for the Palestinians too. They will emerge from these dark hours.

The only question we need ask ourselves now is how long will the dark days remain? Ⓐ

Naji Ali is the producer and host of Crossing The Line: Life in Occupied Palestine (http://ctl.ibsyn.com). He was born to activist parents and spent the first 8 years of his life in South Africa. He returned from 1990-1995 and was detained and tortured for nearly two years. He also has lived and worked in Palestine in the Old City of Hebron from 2002-2004

book REVIEW

The Crisis of Labor

CARL LINDSKOOG

- Kim Moody, ***U.S. Labor in Trouble and Transition: The Failure of Reform from Above, the Promise of Revival from Below***. Verso, 2007, 320 pages.
- Bill Fletcher Jr. and Fernando Gapasin, ***Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path Toward Social Justice.*** University of California Press, 2008, 324 pages.

As the global economic crisis deepens, the attack on working people escalates. In New York, as in many places in the country, unemployment is shooting up while public services are raising rates and cutting back. The statewide budget crisis has reinvigorated the gospel of austerity, which is being used by management and its political allies to pressure public employees and their unions to accept layoffs and consider wage freezes and contract concessions. At the same time Americans are being forced to pick up the tab for those who have gone bust after many years of gambling on Wall Street. Even the casual observer can see that the crisis facing American workers is extraordinary.

However, as new books by both Kim Moody and Bill Fletcher Jr. and Fernando Gapasin demonstrate, this crisis facing working people is not new but is part of a decades-long assault on workers. Moody's *U.S. Labor in Trouble and Transition* and Fletcher and Gapasin's *Solidarity Divided* both make it their purpose to explain the current crisis facing American workers, to analyze the response by the leaders of the American labor movement, and to offer an alternative plan to rebuild labor and restore working class power. Each of these books adds to our understanding of the American worker's position in the current economic meltdown. Together these books can help organized labor shape an approach that will defend union members and advance the whole working class.

Both books begin by reviewing recent labor history in order to understand how American workers reached the current crisis point. According to Kim Moody, the collapse of American labor began in the mid-1970s, triggered by the repeated global economic crises of the decade. Citing the economic downturn of the 1970s as the origin of labor's decline is hardly new. However, Moody challenges the traditional narrative that claims deindustrialization and loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States were to blame for declining union density. Instead, Moody argues that the attack on labor and the resulting disappearance of union jobs must be understood as the product of new strategies by capital to increase profitability and competitiveness in the world economy. Beginning in the mid-1970s employers began to implement strategies, such as a reorganization of production and the introduction of new technologies. This drive to reduce labor costs and increase profitability included reducing wages, increasing hours, cutting health care and pension coverage, and fighting unionization. Taken together, this new campaign was responsible for a massive "transfer of income and wealth from the working class to capital and its owners." This employer assault, Moody contends, rather than the disappearance of American industry was the cause of labor's decline.

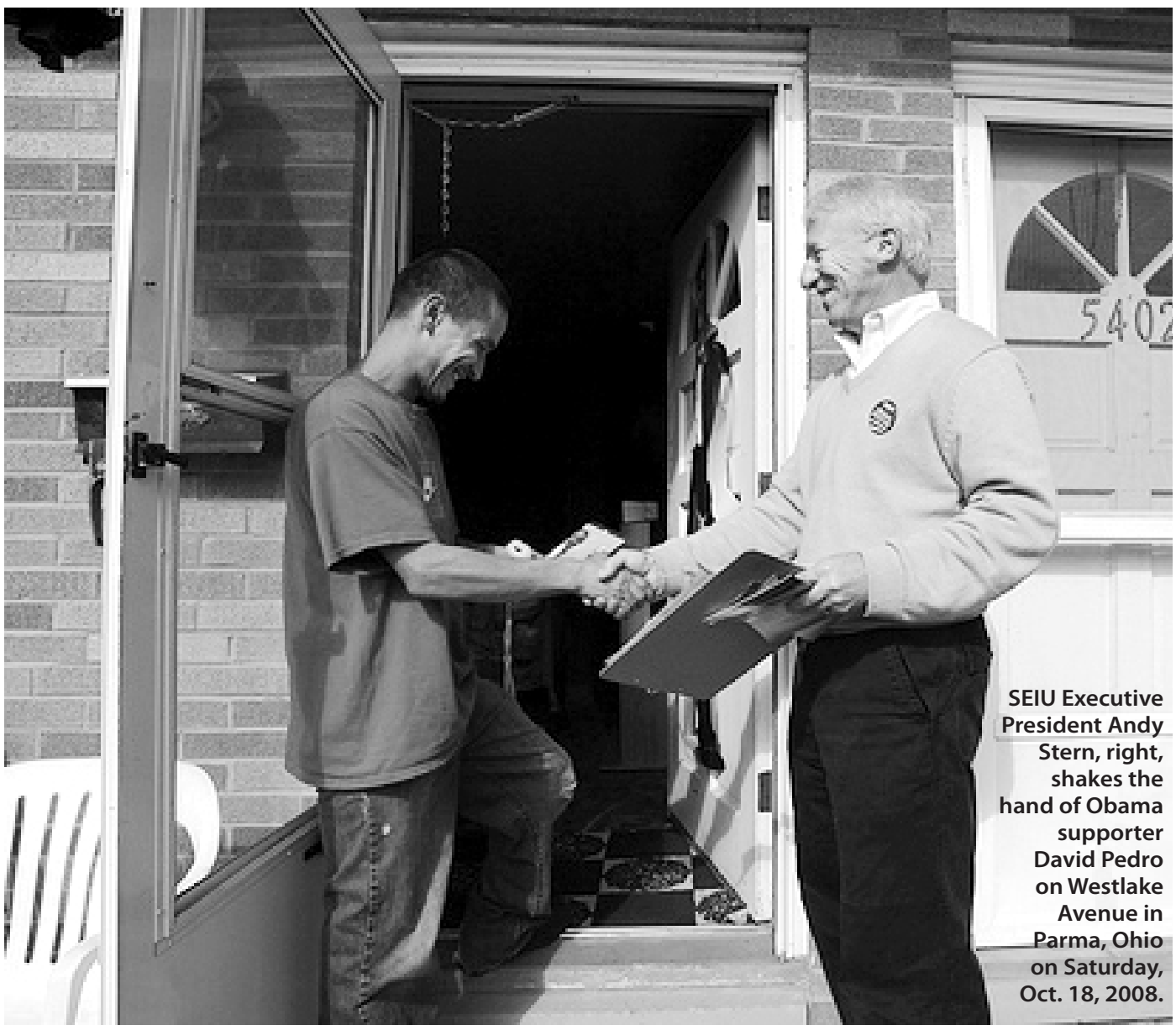
If Moody is correct in his diagnosis of labor's problems, then he is also correct that "there are strong implications for labor's response." The leadership of the American labor movement, the author shows, failed to respond to management's offensive. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s employers began an extensive process of industrial restructuring, one element of which was shifting production from the industrial Northeast and Great Lakes regions to the politically conservative and mostly union-free Great Plains, southern, and southwestern states. Instead of following this geographic shift and attempting to organize these new regions, labor leaders accepted declining union density, claiming that unionized industrial jobs had been permanently lost overseas.

Failing to fight job loss was symptomatic of a larger failing of union leadership: their widespread acceptance of business unionism. This philosophy, which downplays class struggle and highlights the common interest of labor and capital, found a welcome home among labor leaders puzzling over how to respond to the movement's decline. Moody shows that business unionism led labor to accommodate employers' demands, granting greater and greater concessions through the 1980s. But rather than serving to placate profit-hungry capital, these givebacks only increased employers' appetite for more concessions. And when the rank-and-file pushed against concessions and business unionism, leaders suppressed their resistance, weakening labor's base that would have been critical to any approach other than retreat. By curbing rank-and-file militancy and by surrendering the workplace to employers, Moody argues, leaders of the American labor movement are largely responsible for the current crisis facing working people.

In *Solidarity Divided*, Bill Fletcher Jr. and Fernando Gapasin also argue that business unionism is a major cause of labor's current crisis, but they come to this conclusion from a different angle. Rather than focusing on employers' drive for increased profits and labor's failed response, Fletcher and Gapasin review the labor movement from the perspective of the struggle between those calling for an inclusive movement and those in favor of a more exclusive movement.

Viewing twentieth-century labor history from the perspective of inclusion versus exclusion is an interesting approach that yields useful insights. In the early-1900s the chief advocate for an exclusive movement was AFL President Samuel Gompers. Believing that the labor movement existed primarily to serve the interests of skilled craft workers and that labor should limit its goals to workplace demands (to be achieved through an amicable relationship with employers), Gompers was, in the authors' analysis, the original business unionist. Another labor leader in the same period, Eugene V. Debs, challenged Gompers' exclusive vision for labor by calling for a more inclusive movement based on industrial unionism and ultimately for the creation of a new socialist order in the United States.

Having established Gompers and Debs as the symbols of exclusion and inclusion in the early labor movement, Fletcher and Gapasin briskly take the reader through the rest of the century. The period between the two World Wars was a time when the movement shifted in the direction of inclusion, incorporating unskilled industrial workers in the newly-formed CIO and drawing greater strength from radicals and left-wing unions. This inclusive stance was not to last, however, as the close of World War II ushered in Cold War unionism and labor leaders collaborated with both employers and anti-Communist politicians to crush the leftist unions and purge radicals from the movement. With the expulsion of the Left, the way was clear for traditionalist labor leaders once again to narrow the scope and boundaries of American unionism. Though the vision of a more inclusive and radical movement was kept alive throughout the 1960s and 1970s by black trade unionists, union reformers, and members of the radical caucus movement, American labor retained the narrow, conservative shape it took during the Cold War. While for Moody labor's decline came when labor leaders surrendered to employers in the 1970s and 1980s, for Fletcher and Gapasin the descent began in the earlier post-World War II period when leaders purged the Left and aban-



SEIU Executive President Andy Stern, right, shakes the hand of Obama supporter David Pedro on Westlake Avenue in Parma, Ohio on Saturday, Oct. 18, 2008.

doned the broader goals that had been embraced by many in the 1930s and early-1940s.

Fletcher and Gapasin and Moody agree that any successful campaign to rejuvenate the American labor movement must abandon narrow business unionism and rebuild the movement from below by empowering rank-and-file union members. A critique of labor leaders' failure to move away from business unionism and their inability to empower the movement base is the second focus of each book.

By the late-1980s and early-1990s the declining rate of union membership was the main concern of many union leaders. The solution that emerged was the "organizing model," a critique of past union practices that purportedly favored organizing the unorganized and mobilizing rank-and-file union members. The problem, Fletcher and Gapasin argue, was that what appeared to be a new approach was still a top-down affair. Staff-driven organizing campaigns did not lead to meaningful rank-and-file involvement, and most elements of business unionism remained, despite the apparent inclusivity of the "organizing model." So when John Sweeney successfully challenged the Old Guard leadership for the Presidency of the AFL-CIO in 1995 and promised to rebuild the movement through organizing, he implemented this flawed system. As a result, the Sweeney administration failed to reverse the downward slide of the movement.

Fletcher and Gapasin demonstrate the Sweeney administration's failure in a number of areas. The AFL-CIO under Sweeney could have utilized Central Labor Councils (CLCs) as a key tool to build local political and economic power. But the federation failed to harness the power of local bodies like CLCs within a larger nationwide program. In addition, national labor leaders missed numerous chances to support local movements, like that of the Los Angeles Manufacturing Action Project and the cause of the Charleston 5. These missed opportunities kept labor from promoting rank-and-file empowerment and encouraging stronger ties between the traditional labor movement and social movements rooted in workers' centers and community organizations. When labor leaders obediently fell in line behind President Bush and supported his "War on Terror" following 9/11, they further weakened the movement, since unconditional support for Bush's foreign policy meant remaining mostly silent on the economic elements of that foreign policy.

Kim Moody presents a similar critique of the Sweeney years. He agrees that bypassing rank-and-file organizers for "corporate-style campus recruitment" was one of many consequences of Sweeney's top-down approach. And even this organizing message, lacking in so many ways, was not being carried out by most unions. In fact, the Sweeney administration never strayed far from the old business unionism that "embraced not only capitalism in general but the American system in particular: meaning the belief in persistent growth, the well-being of American business, the belief that high wages are in the interest of U.S. capital and . . . that labor and business should 'remain partners.'" This philosophy led labor to fail once more when it effectively halted organizing in 2000 to mobilize voters in support of the Democratic Party. Although labor's setback with the 2000 election of George W. Bush was greater than it would have been if Al Gore had been elected, Moody argues that the Democrats, like business union leaders, cannot be true supporters of working people. Because it receives funding from business and is a steadfast supporter of the capitalist system, the Democratic Party cannot deliver a political program that would effect real change for American workers. The Democrats, like business union leaders, will remain fearful of the one thing workers must turn to: class conflict and mass rank-and-file mobilization.

According to Moody, criticism of the Sweeney administration was reaching a climax by 2003. A new coalition of five unions calling itself the New Unity Partnership called for reorganizing the movement into a series of "mega-unions" that would have jurisdiction over core economic sectors. This drive for consolidation continued when in 2005 the New Unity Partnership morphed into the Change to Win Coalition, led by the country's largest union, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and its president, Andrew Stern. To address the labor movement's dwindling numbers, SEIU and the other Change to Win (CTW) unions called for an even more sweeping program that would consolidate membership and power into fewer unions. CTW also declared that labor should seek increased "political flexibility" that aimed to remove labor as a reliable Democratic supporter and make both parties work to gain labor's support.

Fletcher and Gapasin demonstrate that the program put forward by Change to Win was, like the plan implemented by the Sweeney team, utterly incapable of dealing with the crisis facing labor. The authors criticize CTW's "elevating consolidation to a principle" as "inconsistent and strategically shortsighted" since such an approach obfuscates diverse balances of power and pressure points within different industries. The idea of "political flexibility" was also problematic for the movement because, by accepting the limits of the two-party system and moving labor closer to the Republican Party, this form of flexibility would further cement labor's role as the "junior partner of capital" rather than have the liberatory outcome the CTW leadership foresaw. Despite all the fanfare surrounding Change to Win's formation and its proposals for a new movement, Kim Moody believes CTW's maneuvering was simply one more attempt at "reform from above" which, he argues, is the only sort of reform Andy Stern and the SEIU's "corporate unionism" could offer.

The Democratic Party cannot deliver a political program that would effect real change for American workers.

When the SEIU led the Change to Win coalition to break with the AFL-CIO in 2005, it did so without a program that had any more hope to transform the movement than the one Sweeney had overseen. But an even greater problem with the CTW departure was that the vast majority of union members played no part in the decision to split from the AFL-CIO. Both Moody and Fletcher and Gapasin present a powerful case that rank-and-file union members were excluded from the debate that eventually produced the split, a disaster for rank-and-file members who had no input about the future of the movement. It was particularly damaging for women and people of color, who not only were outside of the high-level negotiations amongst white, male union leaders but whose particular concern with ongoing racial and gender discrimination at the workplace was completely ignored in the debate.

There is little doubt that the efforts to restore labor to power in the last decades have failed. The works of Kim Moody and Bill Fletcher and Fernando Gapasin both offer compelling evidence that the reform movements of John Sweeney and subsequently of Andy Stern and Change to Win failed to address the crisis facing American labor. Furthermore, a key reason these efforts failed was because they neglected to involve rank-and-file union members in a meaningful way. One question remains: in the wake of these failures and the ongoing crisis facing labor, what is to be done?

First, Fletcher and Gapasin argue, the labor movement must be reoriented around social justice unionism. Social justice unionism acknowledges the inevitability of class struggle, eschewing narrow business unionism that has so long limited the scope and the potential of the movement. This new social justice framework would broaden the labor movement beyond the workplace, promoting labor-community alliances like those between unions and the North Carolina Black Workers for Justice. Expanding what labor has traditionally considered a "legitimate domain of struggle" stems from the understanding that "class struggle is not restricted to the workplace" and "neither should unions be"; a labor movement (not just a trade union movement) must organize cities rather than just workplaces within cities. Social justice unionism would also prioritize antiracist and antisexist practices, not only because racial and gender discrimination intertwine with class oppression but also because attacking racial and gender oppression is one of the best ways to promote consistent democracy within the movement. Finally, social justice unionism would require American workers to engage in a new kind of solidarity with workers internationally, one that recognizes that "working people engaged in class struggle around the world have both strategic and tactical interests in common."

Fletcher and Gapasin see this reorientation as an urgent project for a "conscious Left force" that would seek to build a "mandate for social justice unionism" among union members. The other implement to carry out this change, the authors argue, should be Central Labor Councils and other local workers' bodies, without which the rank-and-file can play no significant role in their own movement.

Kim Moody's proposals for labor's way forward often complement and even overlap with those offered by Fletcher and Gapasin. Since workers cannot expect meaningful change from above, they must look to themselves and movements at the base for paths forward. The good news, according to Moody, is that we can always count on this resistance at the base; capital's never-ending drive for greater profits "necessarily compels resistance and struggle in one place after another." We saw this in the West Coast grocery workers' strike in 2003, in the New York City Transit Workers Union strike of 2005, and in the nationwide immigrant protests, work stoppages, and student walkouts in 2006. Resistance and struggle at the base will also inevitably spring up whenever union leaders fail to defend the membership from employer attacks or when leaders attempt to exclude the rank-and-file and stifle dissent.

The movement then, needs to fashion strategies that will direct this willingness to struggle in constructive ways. Like Fletcher and Gapasin, Moody calls for a more inclusive movement that would work closely with workers' centers and "non-majority" and "pre-majority" unions. Since, as Moody has demonstrated, a significant industrial base remains in the United States, labor must once again target industrial workplaces and no longer settle for service industries. This will require organizing the South, which will force labor to draw upon "pockets of unionism," workers' centers, and other resources that already exist. Furthermore, if the movement is ever able to harness the capacity of rank-and-file workers to engage in creative struggle, it cannot ignore union democracy. When unions are run by their members, they will reflect the interests of the rank-and-file. An active and empowered base is the only way labor will be capable of exercising power. The broad goal, according to Moody, should be "social movement unionism" which would require a radical reorientation of the way unions function both internally and externally.

What, then, should union members do with these insights? The answer depends on one's position within the labor movement. Rank-and-file members should remember that without radical union democracy in which they run their own union, they will never see the change they are seeking. Union leaders need to discard business unionism, accept the inevitability of class struggle, and construct an inclusive movement that is led from the base. Both union leaders and rank-and-file members must reorient the movement around social justice unionism, seeking to bring together a mass convergence of workers' organizations (both traditional and non-traditional.)

The way forward for working people depends on a mass mobilization at the very base of the movement. As Moody and Fletcher and Gapasin have shown, organized labor can play a crucial role in this process. Ⓐ

Every Man Alone, a Phoenix

ALISON POWELL

▶ *John Donne: The Reformed Soul*, a Biography by John Stubbs. W W Norton & Co., 2008. 592 pages.

> For every man alone thinks he hath got
> To be a phoenix, and that there can be
> None of that kind, of which he is, but he.
>
> —*John Donne, An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary*

Psychologically, it seems (despite all evidence to the contrary) that we live in the Age of Reconciliation. Unity and balance are central to our ideals. Lovers stay together, or split only to rejoin; children spend their lives with therapists who reconcile them to their parents' mistakes; we try to reconcile our passions with the reality of our day jobs and our illicit desires with our values. This spirit is not new, or all-encompassing. Still, there have been times when individuals were defined by the strained conversation between chasms in conscience and community, art and patron, lusts and prayers; a time when psychic conflict was understood as a potentially productive, rather than destructive, energy. Arguably, no poet—perhaps no person—in the history of Western literature embodies the creative and vital nature of personal contradiction more than John Donne. In *John Donne: The Reformed Soul*, John Stubbs confidently lays out the biographical details (or, as Donne might say, an anatomy) of his life. More to the point, Stubbs offers a convincing psychological portrait, and the effect is a book that is deeply moving and startling in its scope.

In the course of his life, Donne metamorphosed from a libidinous and love-struck poet to the intimidating dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, making it difficult to create a cohesive narrative. He was a poet and priest, but he was also a sailor and captain of a fleet ensnarled in the ongoing diplomatic tiffs between England and Spain, off and on from 1596-1598. He then was appointed the secretary to the Lord Keeper of the Seal, Sir Thomas Egerton. Before both of those occupations, he became well-versed in the law as a scholar at the Inns of Court. Suffice to say, his life was complex enough to deter even the most ambitious biographer. Stubbs wisely resists the urge to offer conjecture as to the biographical intent of those poems for which it would be especially precarious, and the bulk of the biography appropriately hinges on the hundreds of letters Donne sent to various friends and patrons.

Here is what those letters tell us, more or less: his life, which spanned from 1572-1631, was hardly less intricate than a fugue, and remarkable to the point of disbelief. He was forced to leave Oxford some time before he was sixteen, unwilling to sign the requisite Oath of Allegiance to the Queen and the Reformed Church. The son of an ironmonger, he spent much of his life pursuing two related goals: a higher social position than that of his birth, and protection against the martyrdom his family had experienced repeatedly as Catholics in an intolerant Protestant England. Donne came from a long line of Papists; Sir Thomas More was his maternal great-great-grandfather. More, as Chancellor to Henry VIII, had been responsible for the deaths of many Protestants via public burning; he was rewarded for his "protection" of Henry VIII with a beheading. One imagines that it was in part this legacy that made Donne's mother refuse to relinquish Catholicism, even to the point of exile. Donne's brother Henry died after being tortured and thrown in prison for harboring a Catholic priest. To give us a sense of the nature of punishments for being a Papist sympathizer, Stubbs relates this gruesome tale: while Henry languished in prison, the priest was condemned to death; upon being brought to the scaffold, one of the men responsible for his sentence cried out "thou didst say the Queen was a tyrant!" To which the priest, using some of his last breaths, shouted back that he had never done so, "but I say you are a tyrant and a bloodsucker." He was unsuccessfully hanged and then publicly disemboweled and his intestines set on fire while the dying man watched. Decades later Donne would write, as one of the only important men in his time to decry torture as unchristian, "I haue seene at some Executions of Trayterous Priests, some bystanders pray to him whose body lay there dead"; it is not impossible that Donne would have been there to witness the gruesome death of his brother's friend.

Painful as it may be, the anecdote is useful in understanding the context for Donne's conversion. He began to waver in his conviction that the Catholic Church was worth dying for, and began to question those who would martyr themselves for (what increasingly seemed) superficial differences in worship. After his brother died, destitute and miserable in London's oldest and most plague-prone prison, Donne didn't dig in his heels and retaliate bravely against Protestant England. Instead, he began building a life that would in some ways be defined by an exhausting balance of watchfulness, hard work and capitulation.

His submissiveness to his patrons and the state was exacerbated by what his first biographer would describe as the one "remarkable error of his life": he married for love. While serving as secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, he met and fell deeply in love with the 16-year-old daughter of his boss. Stubbs writes: "At times [Donne] saw their love as beginning with a gradual coalescence of feeling: at others it stemmed from one decisive moment, their 'first strange and fatall interview.' Either way, it was undoable." They eloped, violating both canon and civil law. Demonstrating how lasting (and widespread) the controversy over their marriage was, Stubbs cites from *A Choice Banquet of Witty Jests, Rare Fancies, and Pleasant Novels* (1665): "decades later a joke about the furtive couple's situation was still in circulation. According to one version, it began with Donne himself, at a moment of high exertion or anxiety: 'Doctor Donne after he was married to a Maid, whose name was Anne, in a frolick (on his Wedding day) chalkt this on the back-side of his Kitchin-door, John Donne, Anne Donne, Undone." Donne's anxiety was no paranoia; Ann's father was influential and furious, and had Donne briefly imprisoned. Donne (not the hearty sort, it seems) soon became ill and was released.

The young amorist and the old dean

It would take him the rest of his life to pacify Ann's father, and redeem his reputation with the elite employers of London. In the meantime, he and Ann did much lovemaking—she spent virtually the rest of her own life pregnant, bearing twelve children. Five of these children died, however (three of them in one year, so that Donne, devastated, laments to his friend that he has no money for a proper funeral, but hasn't it in him to bury them himself). Ann herself died in childbirth at the age of thirty-three. Of the children who lived, Stubbs focuses on three: Constance, who was companion to her father until her marriage; George, the eldest and brightest son, was a solider (and tragically, a hostage in a prison in Spain when Donne died, after unsuccessful attempts to get his son released). Last there is infamous young John Donne, who would become his first and unfortunate editor. Though himself a type of clergyman, the young John seems to have been an "atheistical buffoon," and cruel: he beat a child who ran in front of his horse so severely that the child died two weeks later. Barely escaping imprisonment, he went on to collect and publish his father's work, with varying degrees of responsibility, for his own monetary benefit. Lost in this process was a series of essays and commentaries on some 1500 authors.

The relationship between Ann and John seems to be the one relatively comfortable and happy aspect of Donne's life. Donne's letters to his best friend and confidante Goodyer seem to indicate that, other than general exhaustion, he and Ann were unusually devoted to each other, a fact made all the more unusual when you consider that marriages at the time were rarely more than financial affairs. In many ways, his sermons after her death seem to be conversations with God intended to replace his conversations and devotion to Ann. As young parents, they scraped by in a number of ways; Donne wrote epithalamions (wedding poems), elegies and occasional commendations

for various patrons. It is difficult to understand how a man of his talent could want for work, particularly because London encompassed a virtual constellation of literary greats. Donne was an avid playgoer as a young man, and it is unlikely he was not an acquaintance of Shakespeare; his daughter Constance would eventually marry the actor most favored by Christopher Marlowe, the first man to play Tamburlaine. He worked with philosopher Francis Bacon (a friend married Bacon's niece); a close friend, Magdalen, was the mother of young poet George Herbert, who would decades later be joined with Donne as one of the so-called Metaphysical poets. He was in an informal literary-drinking-and-merriment club with playwright Ben Jonson, who memorialized the friendship with characteristic snarkiness years later: "Done's (poetry, in part) was profane and full of blasphemies...(and) for not keeping of accent, (he) deserved hanging." He was, Jonson conceded, "the first poet in the world in some things" but his work steadily declined in quality after the age of twenty-five. Finally, that "Done himself, for not being understood, would perish."

Unfortunately, then (as now), the life of a poet didn't pay so well. As his family grew, they went deeper into poverty. Personally, Donne was a man of infinite insecurities, in constant flux, so much so that he likened this aspect of his psyche to the torture method *du jour*. In a late sermon he wrote:

> It were a strange ambitious patience in any man, to be content to be racked every day, in hope to be an inch or two taller at last: so is it for me, to think to be a dram or two wiser, by hearkening all jealousies, and doubts, and distractions, and perplexities, that arise in my Bosom, or in my Family; which is the rack and torture of the soul. A spirit of contradiction may be of use in the greatest Counsels... But a spirit of contradiction in mine own Bosome, to be able to conclude nothing, determine nothing, not in my Religion, not in my Manners, but occasionally, and upon Emergencies; this is a sickly complexion... a shrew and ill-presaging Crisis.

A man like this needed a few steady things in his life; one of them was consistent employment.

Donne as he expected to appear when he rose from the grave at the Apocalypse.

It was a stubborn (and in some ways inconvenient) admirer, King James, who elicited Donne's eventual ordination by effectively blocking other employment until he acquiesced. Donne felt he had no right to a religious life. He was uneasy about everything—his past, his friendships, familial obligations, lust, ethics, God. It is no wonder: illness and schism shaped everything throughout Donne's life. London strained against two unceasing tempests in particular: the plague and religious controversy (generally, a widespread conviction that those holding onto their Catholic faith were necessarily traitors to the Court). Donne's preoccupation with death was not unduly morbid, but rather uncommonly apropos for his day. People were searching for divine explanations for the sickness, war, injustice, bewildering torture, public executions, all of which drenched the city in a stinking bath of infestation and blood. London swarmed with the antics of a grieving, frantic population convinced that any day they would awaken to bubonic sores that signaled their last earthly week.

Donne acknowledged the terror of annihilation, and offered a soothing (if stern) guide to God's favor. This is presumably what King James had seen in Donne as a potential priest, when he argued that no one would take him seriously as a religious man. He was known as the poet and fool who married for love, he said. This is partly true. His poems were heralded, and censured, as rhetorically virtuosic, wrenchingly romantic, coming from a man who flagrantly disregarded traditional poetic meter and had a spectacular sex life. Like so many, Donne had written to woo, and he really meant it. Consider this sly entreaty in "The Flea": "And in this flea our two bloods mingled be; / Thou know'st that this cannot be said / A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead, / Yet this enjoys before it woo, / And pampered swells with one blood made of two, / And this, alas, is more than we would do." More scholarly is "The Canonization": "We can die by it, if not live by love, / And if unfit for tombs and hearse / Our legend be, it will be fit for verse; / And if not piece of chronicle we prove, / We'll build

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art REVIEW

A Swooning We Will Go: On Pipilotti Rist's 'Pour Your Body Out'

CLAY MATLIN

▶ *Pour Your Body Out (7345 Cubic Meters)*, by Pipilotti Rist. At the Museum of Modern Art.

How do we approach Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist's video installation *Pour Your Body Out (7345 Cubic Meters)*? The criticism, if it can be called that, up to now says that one should be completely enamored with the visual spectacle of seeing MoMA's atrium transformed into a psychedelic video experience. The wall text encourages visitors to "feel as liberated as possible, and move as freely as you can or want to! Watch the videos and listen to the sound in any position or movement. Practice stretching: pour your body out of your hips or watch through your legs. Rolling around and singing is also allowed." So people lounge about, leaning against the walls, lying on the floor, sitting or lying on/in the massive round blue couch (modeled after the eye's iris) in the center of the atrium. In a video interview at moma.org, Rist explains that she is always concerned with the comfort of the viewers and how they are able to move. By providing pillows for one to sit or rest one's head on, the experience becomes focused on the viewer's comfort as the video is taken in.

And what of the video? There's no denying it as visual spectacle. Rist's sixteen-minute video loop is shown on three sides of the atrium, creating an almost completely immersive experience as ripe strawberries, a pot bellied pig, earthworms, red tulips moving in the wind and naked girls floating in water and crawling along the ground, are projected twenty-five feet high in color so rich and saturated that it becomes slightly overwhelming. One cannot help but be taken with the whole thing. Yet the fawning praise for *Pour Your Body Out* is odd and perhaps a little desperate.

Art critics seem always to want either to praise or condemn, not to take a balanced approach and measure the moment of their feeling. It is for this reason that we are now inundated with gushing about Rist. But how does it compare to her past work? Is it better than *Ever Is Over All* from 1997, an oddly moving meditation on the beauty in violence? Or worse than *Pickleporno* (1992)? The answer, in both cases, is no. There is a sweetness to Rist's work, a playfulness and whimsy that makes it compelling. She produces fantastical environments that have an inviting quality; they want to share themselves with the viewer. This is not mean-spirited art, not something that seeks to teach us of our own failings but is, as Peter Schjeldahl asserts in the *New Yorker*, "art and, also, in its sumptuously and modestly passing way, something other and better than art?" What does this mean? Could anyone possibly know this, and would knowing this make any difference? No, it is not better than art, it is simply art. That Schjeldahl would make such a declaration succeeds in placing on Rist a burden that is far too heavy to bear.

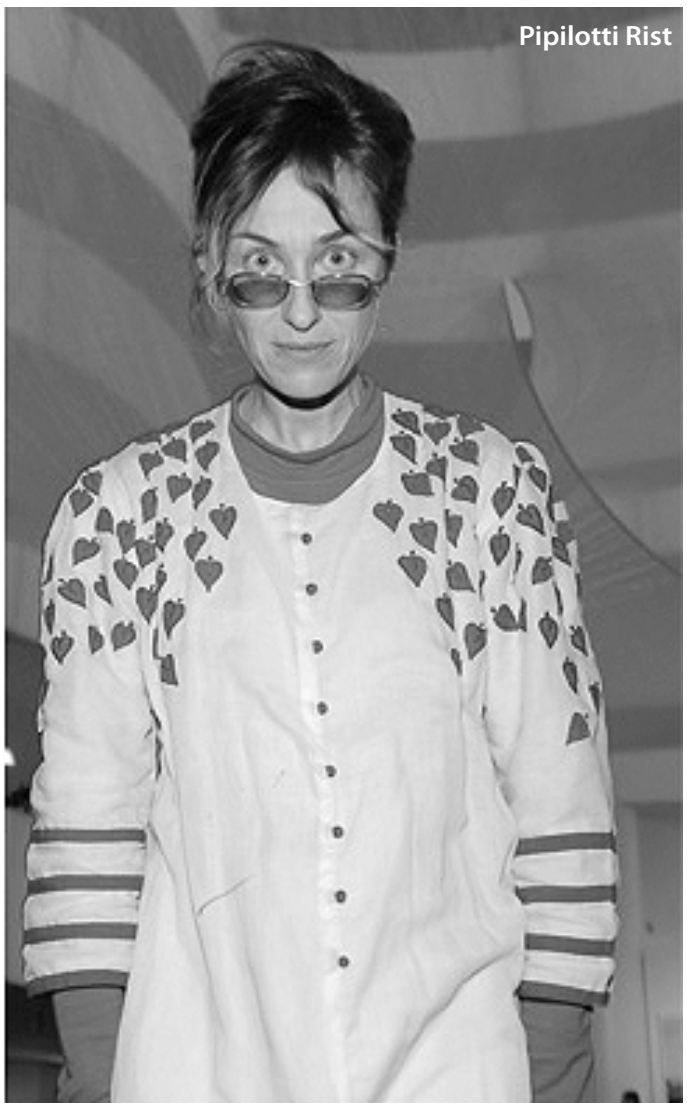
Pour Your Body Out is not the "best thing to happen so far in the Museum of Modern Art's space-splurging, pompous atrium," as Schjeldahl would have his readers believe. That honor goes to Martin Puryear and his 2007 retrospective, an exhibition so awe-inspiring and magical that it came much closer to the vaunted status of being "better than art" than Rist's installation does. Puryear's monumental sculptures succeeded in making the atrium seem even bigger than it is and by doing so made the viewer feel like a child again, returning to a world where enormous things regained the quality of the extraordinary. Nor is it an "exorcism," "impregnation," or "incantation" as Jerry Saltz argued in his *New York* magazine review. Yes, MoMA is a bastion to maleness, specifically the white kind that was born between 1903 and 1945, but *Pour Your Body Out* is not the first real assault on it and one cannot lump in Marlene Dumas' underwhelming and boringly dour survey into the conversation. Saltz would do well to remember the four Joan Mitchell paintings that hung in the atrium a couple of years ago. Those paintings, like most of Mitchell's work, possess real power that isn't limited by the confines of the picture plane. Nor do they need sound and movement to register that power to the viewer. If anything it was those paintings that put a serious dent in the masculine armor and signaled that the big boys are not the best artists in that most Faulknerian mausoleum of hope and desire.

That dark pink drapes hang on the wall or a woman is submerged in water and blood pours from her body shouldn't be a cause for excitement nor a testament to MoMA's coming of age, as Saltz declares. How can this be praiseworthy? Haven't we moved beyond this sort of blatant message sending? There is absolutely no question that MoMA should feature more women artists but the fault is as much the rest of the art world's as it is MoMA's. Critics should write about, and galleries should show, more women. Collectors should buy more art by women and curators should stop being enamored with clever men. But *Pour Your Body Out* is not the vehicle by which the art world is to be transformed.

Critics want it to be more, something institution altering, but really Rist could have put anything inoffensive up on the walls and the reaction would be the same (though if she had covered the walls in silver and

A view of MoMA's second-floor atrium with Pipilotti Rist's "Pour Your Body Out" installation.

made a video with sports cars and hardcore pornography she probably would have been condemned). It seems that at base critics like it for no good reason, or perhaps the better way of framing it is that they like its ease. One need only look at it and be entertained. If one is going to find fault with the atrium at least find fault with the fact that the installation fails because it is not truly immersive. Its three-wall projection is incapable of creating an environment deserving of the praise it has received. One never really gets lost in the experience, in direct contrast to the feeling one has in James Turrell's *Meeting* at P.S. 1, which completely consumes the viewer's sense of self and place. Instead, the experience of *Pour Your Body Out* is one of continually trying to find the right angle to take it all in.


Pipilotti Rist

I do not want, however, for the reader to feel that I am in some way indicting Rist. She has managed to make a work of video/installation art that has the wonderful feeling of shared experience. This is no easy task, for as by dint of the performative nature of this type of art the individual making the work is placed at the center of the experience, thereby putting the pressure on the viewers to figure out what it is they are witnessing. The experience is not one of sharing, the chance for connection hinges on the vagaries of the artist's intent. The art is still about, as Barnett Newman once said, the handling of chaos. But it seems that it is the handling of the chaos of the self, not the chaos of the problem of what it means to live in the world with others, which Newman maintained was central to the creation of art. Perhaps the best thing that I can say for Rist is that she manages not to position herself as the focal point for experience. Instead she allows her viewers to make of the piece what they will. Stand, sit in or on the circle, lie down, run around, fall asleep, daydream, talk to a friend. All of these are viable and necessary options in a work like *Pour Your Body Out.* There is, oddly enough, a sense of connection with the rest of the viewers and this resides in the experience of looking at the video. By allowing for myriad modes of watching, Rist fosters a community of viewers. We look together and we look at each other as we watch, and it is this that makes the work valuable. We experience those around us and are thereby released from the solitary act of looking that so often goes hand-in-hand with viewing art.

But is that enough? Sure, but unfortunately it has been made into so much more, and that more is why *Pour Your Body Out* collapses. It is a perfectly pleasurable way to while-away sixteen minutes, but the blind and overzealous praise is ill founded. Instead it's a place for the weary, somewhere to lounge, for tourists to take a break and relax. Usually one is not able to relax at a museum, the pace is a deliberate march towards specific things, but with *Pour Your Body Out* the viewers are allowed to take a moment to breathe, listen to the droning score by Anders Guggisberg, and sit. Students who don't care for art and tourists who are making all the stops will be delighted to see that big blue couch, but critics, always desperate for bigger and better things, are best served to keep looking. Or perhaps not look so hard. Let *Pour Your Body Out* be what it is: a typically pleasant experience in a typically pleasant institution. It succeeds because of its sweetness and charm and fails because of the desire to praise it. Though, perhaps the best way to look at it is a conversation between two teenagers who were sitting behind me:

Girl (hovering over the edge): My shoes are a struggle to take off.
Boy: Ah, take 'em off. That's the point of all this.

Yes, it certainly is. Ⓐ

John Donne

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in sonnets pretty rooms; / As well a well-wrought urn becomes / The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs, / And by these hymns, all shall approve / Us canonized for Love." The speaker here chastises his mistress for withholding sex in favor of "well-wrought" poetry and the "pretty rooms" of a sonnet. As death would later replace his obsessions with the sensual pleasures of the body, here the sensual pleasures are prioritized over the lyric.

Because the poems were lacerating to his conscience, he had always limited their distribution, circulating them only among friends. Contemporary readers like T.S. Eliot would celebrate his early poems as singularly frank and complex, but they cast a sinful shadow over his life. The one time he came close to publishing them it was decades later, and he divided them into three piles representing the Catholic model of the afterlife. His love poems, he wrote to his close friend Goodyer, would be burned , "condemned by me to Hell." Others—presumably the most explicitly sexual ones—were "virgins (save that they have been handled by many)' which would be sent to 'utter annihilation (a fate with which God does not threaten even the wickedest of sinners).'" By then, Donne had become increasingly fervent in his belief that sex equaled sin; Ann had died in childbirth (the infant girl lived barely minutes) and in his grief he radically dissociated from self-identity as a lover and husband. Around that unfortunate time, he was invited to speak at the wedding of a friend's daughter. He disconcertingly announced: "Mariage is but a continuall fornication sealed with an oath," later adding (as if that wasn't wet blanket enough): "There is not a more uncomely, a poorer thing, then to love a Wife like a Mistresse." He was reportedly a passionate and unusually vulnerable preacher, who one could find (as Walton reported) "weeping sometimes for his Auditory, sometimes with them: alwayes preaching to himself, like an Angel from a cloud, but in none..." At this stage Donne seems to have been a sort of Orpheus, trying to resist the urge to turn but failing, looking behind to his love and youth, thus eternally severing himself from his past. Eventually he would become more comfortable with his public life.

> "A man would almost be content to die... to hear of so much sorrow, and so much testimony from good men, as I...did upon the report of my death."

Due in part to a fear of how he would be remembered (suitor or priest), he prepared for posterity as adroitly as he composed his poems or sermons. His death was preceded by various false-starts and formal acknowledgments. During the heights of the plague, Donne left for the country, fearful of infection. The townspeople speculated that he had passed. When he got word of his own eulogies, he good-naturedly commented: "A man would almost be content to die... to hear of so much sorrow, and so much testimony from good men, as I...did upon the report of my death." His last sermon is widely regarded as his elegy for himself. Stubbs notes that "there is surely no other poet who orchestrated his death so meticulously" and it seems that the sermon was his last opportunity to define his legacy. Donne wrote in a letter, "...it hath been my desire that I might die in the Pulpit; if not, that I may take my death in the Pulpit; that is, die the sooner by occasion of my former labours." The sermon was austere and forlorn, rendering transparent his effort to reconcile two dove-tailing emotions: death was annihilation, or death was a joyous reconciliation with God and Ann. He hoped the latter was true, and he experienced a gnawing sense of guilt for his fear of the former.

Donne had an ambivalent relationship to solitude, which likely informed his confused feelings about death. As a brilliant and ambitious scholar working endlessly in a household full of children, he must have craved, even desperately at times, time alone. At the same time, his letters make clear his friendships were very dear to him. He also had a deeply religious conviction that it was sinful to hide from the world, famously writing "No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe...And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee." Donne suffered deeply for his inability to reconcile himself: those "jealousies, and doubts, and distractions, and perplexities," the vacillations about religion, his hedonistic past turning to a conviction that lust was sin, and finally, the artistic conundrum of wanting to disappear from the world and wanting to be squarely in it, with magnifying glass in hand. Yet it was his very susceptibility to doubt, his inability to unify himself, that made him what he was. Despite his early years as a swaggering suitor and innovative poet, one imagines Donne during his later life as a wincing dog, shrinking from the chaos of the streets and clashes between divinity and loyalty. In Holy Sonnet XIV he cries: "Batter my heart, three-personed God; for You / As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend; That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend / Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new." We must be forced to recognize truth, because try as we might, we will always be vacillating, hesitant, and circumspect with God.

Ultimately, Donne secured both a higher social standing and protection for him and his family through unimaginable caution, and by converting. As dean of St. Paul's, he made a few half-hearted attempts to massage the rift between the Catholic church of his youth and the Protestant one he adopted. But it was his flexibility that allowed him to survive. He reacted to danger not by going boldly forth into the fire of exploding violence and martyring allegiances that plagued the day; instead, Donne leaned a bit back, surveyed the scene, and his meditations on what he saw became his "fatal interview" with God. In the final weeks of his life, Stubbs tells us, he once more turned the chasm within himself into art. His doctor ominously suggested that Donne begin work on a monument of himself for St. Paul's. Donne responded in characteristically grandiose, yet profoundly self-abnegating fashion: he came up with a design that depicted him—and thus required him to pose as—a corpse wrapped in the traditional funeral shroud, framed within the silhouette of a funereal urn. It was completed before his death on March 31, 1631, and in the interim, he genially requested it be hung above his bed. Ⓐ

California Dreaming (at Juilliard)

NAOMI PERLEY

▶ FOCUS! Festival at Lincoln Center.

In trying to untie the many strands of classical music's storied history, one of the most common techniques is to proceed country-by-country: the Austro-German school with its musical superheroes (Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Brahms) ostensibly dominates, but there are equally fascinating stories to be told about the histories of the French, Italian, Russian, British, and of course, American musical traditions.

Juilliard's recent FOCUS! festival went one step further, focusing on the music of just one state: California. In his thoughtful introductory note to the FOCUS! programme booklet, the festival's director Joel Sachs asks: "Is there a 'California music' and, if so, what is it?" His reply: "Yes, and it is everything imaginable, and more." After attending five of the festival's six concerts, I have to agree wholeheartedly with this assessment. As I sat in the theatre, I experienced the auditory equivalent of strolling around a World's Fair. While California's most renowned composers, Henry Cowell and John Adams, featured prominently in the festival, the vast majority of the works performed each night were by relatively obscure composers. The festival presented an excellent opportunity to get to know some works that rarely travel across the country.

The most exciting performances were those that involved electronics, extended techniques, or unusual instruments. This is not simply because these works by necessity have a unique sound, quite distinctive from standard chamber music concert fare. Rather, I was continually amazed by both Juilliard's willingness to program such unconventional works, and by the extraordinarily high level of performance attained by the students involved in the festival. Finally, while the festival proved through sheer quantity that Californian music is "everything," these were the works that resonated most strongly with my preconception of what California music might be.

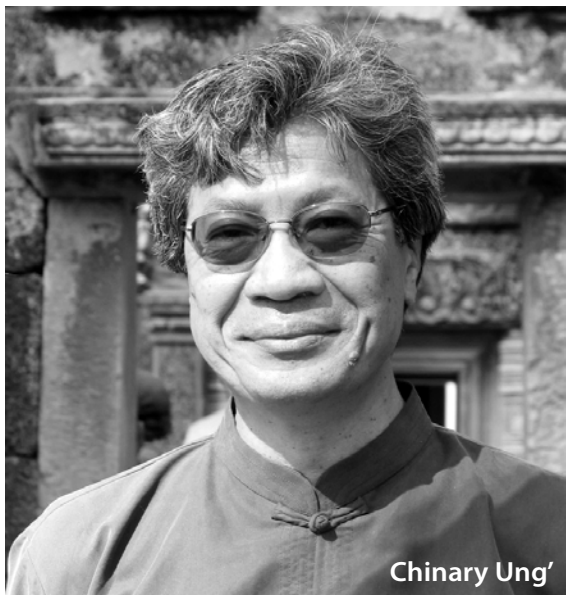
The finale of the January 26 concert, Chinary Ung's *Grand Alap—"A Window in the Sky"*—is a case in point. Ung, who was born in 1942, grew up in Cambodia and later came to the United States to continue his musical studies. In addition to his training as a classical composer, he has extensively researched traditional Cambodian music, and his compositions fuse Eastern and Western styles and instruments. This type of cultural fusion seems endemic to Californian music—it reaches back past the midcentury immigrants to America such as Ung, to California's earliest composers, such as American-born Henry Cowell, who grew up alongside Asian immigrants in the slums of San Francisco, and forward to California-born composers such as Gabriela Lena Frank, whose mother was of Peruvian-Chinese ancestry, and whose father was a Lithuanian Jew.

Grand Alap, for cello and percussion, derives its title from the opening, improvisatory passage of Indian Raga music, the *alap*. Ung merges this Indian concept with musical materials derived from the traditions of South and Southeast Asia, to create a work of great beauty and intense emotion. To say that this is merely a work for cello and percussion would be misleading; both the cellist and percussionist have extensive vocal parts as well. For instrumentalists, there are few concepts more daunting than singing alone in public. I think it has to do with not being able to mediate our voices through our instruments, as we are accustomed to doing. That being said, these two talented musicians rose to the task and performed beautifully. This was without a doubt my favourite performance in a night full of excellent performances.

There were a few other compositions in which the musicians were called on to use their voices instead of their instruments—only in these instances as speakers. At the January 26 concert, the pianist Evan Shinners performed Pauline Oliveros's *The Autobiography of Lady Steinway*. Oliveros describes her composition thus: "The performer imagines himself to be the invisible voice of the piano and tells the stories, relationships and feelings that may be resonating within the piano." The performer not only acts out the part of the Steinway, but in fact writes his own part. Shinners's monologue detailed the (often humorous) daily trials and tribulations of a Steinway, including an affair she once had with a Canadian pianist, Glenn Gould, who was considerate enough not to stamp all over her gold feet. I was surprised to learn that Shinner himself was a pianist; his delivery was so good, I assumed that he was an acting student.

One of my favourite works on the program was Paul Chihara's *Logs*, which could be performed by any number of double basses (at this performance, there were four). The work is part of a larger group of pieces dealing with trees, including *Branches, Redwood, Driftwood*, and *Forest Music*, to name a few. *Logs* consists of a main phrase and several contrasting phrases which are continuously repeated and varied by the bassists. The double-bass is a perfect choice for a piece about logs; the instrument, after all, is made out of wood, and is rather large. In addition to the traditional means of playing a bass, that is by bowing or plucking the strings, the bassists played on the instruments themselves, treating them almost as very delicate percussion instruments. The result was a work of naturalistic beauty that transported me out of the concert hall, out of a cold New York in January, and into one of California's redwood forests.

The earliest composer represented at the Focus! Festival was Henry Cowell, one of America's great modernist composers. Cowell gained widespread notoriety in the 1920s for his revolutionary approach to the piano. In his many compositions for the instrument, Cowell uses a variety of techniques that no one before him had dared to introduce, such as using a fist or the entire forearm to play a whole cluster of notes at once, or reaching inside the piano to play on the strings themselves. These advances in piano composition were important not just because of the unique sound that they imparted to his works, but because of the effect they had on later generations of composers. In the 1940s, John Cage (a student of Cowell's) began to "prepare" pianos by placing objects such as screws and erasers on the strings, creating a completely different timbre more akin to an Eastern percussion ensemble than a piano. Since the time of Cage and Cowell, many composers have begun to use extended techniques of all sorts on every instrument, including several of the composers featured at the Focus! Festival.



Chinary Ung'

Given this context, it was a wonderful treat to hear Euntaek Kim play some of Cowell's piano pieces on January 28. Particularly exciting was his performance of *The Harp of Life*. In Cowell's words, "According to Irish mythology, the god of life created a new living creature with each tone sounded on his great cosmic harp, a harp described as reaching from above heaven to beneath hell." The work consists basically of a simple melody, accompanied by tone clusters in the piano's lowest range; these clusters start off as rumbles in the depths of the instrument that gradually grow in intensity. Kim conveyed all the nuances of this work with great command, and in doing so, turned the focus away from the unusual techniques required of him by Cowell, and back to where it should be: on the music itself.

One aspect of Californian music that has gained recognition throughout the country is the pioneering work that has been done in the field of tape music, largely at the San Francisco Tape Music Center. Out of the many tape and electronic works presented at the festival, Ingram Marshall's *Fog Tropes*, scored for tape and brass, stood out as the most obviously Californian. The tape part consists of ambient noise from the San Francisco Bay, most notably the sound of foghorns, as well as some vocalisations and some sounds on the *gambuh*, a Balinese bamboo flute. The work's climax is especially striking: as the lowest-sounding foghorns get louder and become more and more prevalent in the work's texture, the brass sound a minor chord in unison above them.

Sachs admitted that since the point of FOCUS! is to provide performance opportunities for Juilliard's students, it had to "shortchange" California's performance-art scene. Most performance artists compose exclusively for themselves, often not writing down their music, thus making it nearly impossible for others to perform their works. However, the festival did include one work by San Francisco-based Pamela Z. For the most part, Pamela Z composes for her own voice and electronics. The work performed on January 28, *Four Movements for Cello and Delays*, is in fact the only solely instrumental work she has written. In each of the four movements, the cello and its delayed playback interact in a different way. In the first movement, the opening motive became an ostinato underlying the rest of the movement, In the second, by contrast, the cello's long, rich melodies were superimposed on one another, so that at first, only one line was heard, then two in counterpoint, then three, and so on. The sense of formal cohesion and motivic unity present in each movement, combined with Pamela Z's conception of the cello as an extension of the human voice, made this a work of incredible beauty, and possibly my favourite of the entire festival.

For the grand finale of the festival, John Adams led Juilliard's musicians (joined by the Concert Chorale of New York) in a moving performance of *Death of Klinghoffer*. Concert performances of operas (where the opera is not staged at all, merely played and sung through) can often be quite dull, not to mention confusing. However, this was easily the most exciting concert performance of an opera I have seen to date. To begin with, the opera lends itself well to this type of presentation. The opera is mostly reflective in character; the individual characters have their own arias, which are interspersed with choruses, but rarely do they interact in the way that they would in a play or in a more conventional opera. Most of the action takes place offstage, and the characters rarely enter into dialogue with each other; rather they sing at each other. Beyond the opera's natural capacity for this type of performance, this production tried to make the concert setting as realistic as possible. The characters were all in costume to some extent, and the cast did their best to act out the parts given the obvious constraints on their movements.

All told, *Death of Klinghoffer* provided the perfect end to a thrilling week of Californian music at the FOCUS! Festival, and left me filled with anticipation for next year's offerings. Ⓐ

theater REVIEW

'Shipment' Delivers Uncomfortable Laughs

FRANK EPISALE

▶ ***The Shipment.*** Produced by Young Jean Lee's Theater Company at The Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street.

A few days before Young Jean Lee's The Shipment opened at The Kitchen last month, the playwright/director's Facebook status read, "Young Jean needs to figure out how to get black audiences to The Shipment." Five days later, she wrote "Young Jean can comp you to The Shipment if you are black," and gave instructions on how to contact her. A few days after that, she updated, "Young Jean wants to put reserved signs that say 'Black Person' in prime locations in the theatre where we put critics and presenters. Too much?"

Before long, enthusiastic reviews appeared in The New York Times and The New Yorker, among others, and Lee's status updates became warnings to friends and fans that the show was quickly selling out, then that it had sold out, then that there was going to be a one-week extension, and finally that the extension had sold out as well. I attended the night before the show closed and it was clear that the buzz had spread. Lincoln Center Artistic Director Andre Bishop sat in the row in front of me; Stephen Sondheim sat in the row in front of Bishop. The rest of the audience was made up largely of the usual Kitchen hipsters (whites and Asians with geeky glasses, skinny jeans, artfully messy hair, and the occasional ironic facial hair), but sprinkled with some older Philharmonic types and even a few of the sought-after African Americans. (Reports from previous performances indicate that the The Shipment enjoyed varied and diverse audiences over the course of its run.)

Why this focus on audience demographics? As with her previous plays, Lee began by asking herself what was the least comfortable idea for a show she could think of. What sounded like a terrible idea? What did she absolutely not want to do? When she has asked herself these questions previously, the results have included Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven, an exploration of Asian-American identity politics, and Church, an on-stage Christian church service incorporating song, dance, and sermon while confronting issues of faith and doubt, individuality and community. When Lee asked herself what sounded like a terrible idea this time around, she decided that a play about African-American identity politics, written by a Korean-American woman, was probably a bad idea. So she started writing.

The result is angry, funny, probing, and deeply uncomfortable. This discomfort is very much the heart of The Shipment. In a recent interview with the New York Times, Lee observed that audiences began "laughing more enthusiastically [after] the positive reviews [were] published, and it's so painful sometimes. I know that's unfair of me because I wrote it to be funny, and the performers are funny, but I feel there is so much in there that people should not laugh at. Part of me would rather have them sit there in silent uneasiness." Indeed, on the night I attended, there seemed to be some disagreement in the audience as to which bits were funny, and where it was appropriate to laugh. Mr. Sondheim, for example, laughed more than anyone else in the audience, particularly at any moment that crossed the lines of political correctness to stage stereotypes of blacks and whites alike. Others never recovered from the slap they received early on when a comedian character veered from comedic confrontation to undisguised hurt and anger, to scatology, and back again. Parts of this scene were Def Comedy-like, and received Def Comedy-like laughs, but most of the audience was smart enough to know when the guy on stage was attacking them and meaning it. So they got quiet.

The Shipment opens with two wordless sequences that evoke minstrelsy and hip hop, respectively, and are stylized in such a way to indicate that the show will be about the performance of blackness, the representation of blackness, and the perception of blackness. These high-energy sequences also serve to set the stage for the comedian scene already mentioned.

The second half of the play is made up of two acts that could stand on their own as fully playable short pieces, though they would of course lose the context of the larger show, which provides much of the thematic and political complexity. First comes the story of a young black man who dreams of being a rap star but can't afford to enter a hip hop festival or contest so gets talked into dealing drugs by his nefarious friend. In prison, he discovers Islam and finds his rapping voice. Once he achieves fame and fortune, he finds them both hollow. That it is so easy to imagine this plot as a Hollywood film is the whole point of the sequence. The characters are played in an intentionally stilted, even wooden style that points to the creakiness of the stereotypes presented.

Young Jean Lee and cast members of *The Shipment* in discussion at the Wexner Center for the arts in Ohio

The final scene finds the all-black cast playing white characters, though this is not immediately evident. Pesceveganism, late twenties crises, parlor games, body-image issues, and cocaine are just a few of the elements that make up this eviscerating lampoon of the anxieties of middle-class, educated whites who are unable or unwilling to see the extent of their own privilege and self-indulgence. Several of the elements of this scene recall things that were said by the comedian as he made fun of white people.

No one moment in, or aspect of, The Shipment can be singled out as exemplary of the entire project. Lee is intent on confronting her audience, and herself, with aspects of themselves and their culture that make them uncomfortable, but she is also interested in exploring how these same tensions are interwoven into the material we consume for entertainment. Finally, she acknowledges that she and her audience also want to be entertained, and that this kind of material runs the risk of encouraging self-satisfaction from those who like to congratulate themselves for their liberalism, their open-mindedness, and their occasional feelings of guilt.

I have two quibbles with this production, though both might be considered frivolous. The first is that the cast, while listed in the program, are in no way linked to the roles that they play. In other words, unless you have access to press photos, there is no way to check your program for the name of an actor who made a particularly strong impression. There are reasons for this: the play is complex, and the actors play multiple characters, creating a logistical obstacle. Also, the show is an "ensemble piece," with no one actor foregrounded, the kind of show that often just lists the performers alphabetically in order to avoid placing them in any kind of hierarchy. (In this case, they seem to be listed in order of appearance, which might be useful if it were noted.)

My objection to this admittedly minor slight, is that this is very much a performer-driven play. It's clear that Lee is a major talent as both actor and director, but her success relies on collaboration with a skilled, disciplined, talented, and enthusiastic cast that also had considerable input into the structuring of the play itself. The performances navigate levels of stylization and realism, empathy and alienation, that go a long way towards making the play as complex as it is. For a show written and directed by Young Jean Lee, and produced by Young Jean Lee's Theater Company to make it difficult to identify any one actor reinforces the genius/auteur mythology that dominates so much theatrical analysis. (For the record, I was particularly impressed by Mikeah Ernest Jennings, whose offbeat performance was simultaneously charming and distancing, familiar and strange. In a show largely about stereotypes, Jennings created characters that were recognizable as such, and that still felt like something I had never seen before.)

Another possible objection to the show is that, in pedagogical terms, it is a lecture, not a seminar. Lee and her team maintain absolute control over everything except for the degree to which the audience might laugh or not. The production opened and closed with a dramatic, absolute blackout, a clear signal that it was time to pay attention and listen to what Lee had to say. When a show is designed in no small part to attack the assumptions of the audience, it might be argued that the audience should have some opportunity to defend themselves. A playwright whose work occasionally screams "Fuck you!" might consider giving her fans a chance to scream it right back. Lee's impressive degree of control over her production is a part of why I enjoyed it, but it also makes the experience of watching the show a rather passive one, despite all the techniques she employs to keep us off balance and alert.

Regardless of these quibbles, which should be read more as queries than complaints, Young Jean Lee has further solidified her place as one of the most notable theatre artists working today. The Shipment is a remarkable piece of work that made me squirm and laugh in equal measure. A first-rate cast and design team, a smart and challenging text, and Lee's ongoing experiment to challenge herself in uncomfortable ways have clearly paid off. Lee's next project is an adaptation of King Lear that, as she writes in her blog, she wants "to make a hard-core, old-school, Aristotelian pity-and-fear tragedy that will work on today's jaded audiences in the way I like to imagine the Greek tragedies worked on the Greeks." Sounds like a terrible idea; it'll probably be great. Ⓐ

The Shipment (closed), written and directed by Young Jean Lee. Performed by Mikeah Ernest Jennings, Douglas Scott Streater, Prentice Onayemi, Okierete Onaodowan, and Amelia Workman. With Foteos Macrides and Joseph John. Sets by David Evans Morris. Costumes by Roxana Ramseur. Lights by Mark Barton. Sound by Matthew Tierney. Choreography by Faye Driscoll. Fight Choreography by Jason McDowell Green. Produced by Young Jean Lee's Theater Company at The Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street. January 8 -31, 2009.

Wrestling with Oscar

Mickey Rourke as Randy "The Ram" Robinson in Aranofsky's *The Wrestler*

NICHOLE WALLENBROCK

Although I long ago rejected the idea that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences could pick the best films of any given year, I have continued to be fascinated by the Oscar extravaganza and its voting process. Each of the films has a specific team to lobby for nominations, proving again that money and hobnobbing are the backbone of the industry, even when it claims to be about talent. However, in all sincerity, my preferences last year were for the winners. This might suggest that my taste has become more Hollywood, but I believe it actually demonstrates that 2008 was simply an "experimental" year for the Oscars. *There Will be Blood* (best actor) and *No Country for Old Men* (best supporting actor, best picture) were transgressive westerns that challenged American values, and last year's best actress winner (Marion Cotillard as Edith Piaf in *La Môme*) was the antithesis of Hollywood, a French actress starring in a French film!

Yet this year, the experimentation in the best picture category is no more than an English take on Bollywood, Daniel Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*. If tropes abound in the love story, Boyle is more successful in making the luscious colors and sounds of Bollywood, one of the world's highest grossing film industries, palatable for a western audience. In this manner, *Slumdog*'s success in the United States is an interesting counterpoint to the recent "American West" focus in Hollywood of late. As the western was the prevalent theme in 2008, this year's theme for two best picture nominees (*Frost/Nixon*, *Milk)* is seventies politics. These films offer simplistic liberal perspectives on the past that Americans can apply to the more recent secrecy of the horrible George W. Bush administration, and the current flourish of Proposition 8 homophobia. The fourth nominee, *The Reader,* was ensured the Academy's attention, as it is a Holocaust film with glossy production design. Indeed, it is difficult in a year of political correctness to guess which film will attract the most guilt, *Milk, Frost/Nixon,* or *The Reader.* Perhaps it is in this moment of American malaise and culpability that an exotic feel-good such as *Slumdog Millionaire* can win the Oscar for best picture.

The winner of the best actor award likewise represents an amalgamation of talent, politics, money, and direction. Although last year's winner, Daniel Day Lewis, playing an oil tycoon, was a sure pick, this year's winner is less certain. Both Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler* and Sean Penn in *Milk* seem equally deserving of the statuette. But if you want to try to predict the winner, keep in mind 1993, when Tom Hanks' performance in *Philadelphia* beat out Anthony Hopkins (*Remains of the Day)*, Liam Neeson (*Schindler's List)*, and Daniel Day-Lewis (*In the Name of the Father*) for best actor award. The Academy clearly tends to judge its actors as much for the political content of their performances as for their acting skills, making Penn's perfect portrayal of Harvey Milk—the first openly gay mayor of a major US city—a potential favorite. Surprisingly, Clint Eastwood was not nominated for the Oscar this year, but his performance in *Gran Torino* did win him the National Board Review award for best actor, as well as a nomination for the Golden Globe. Eastwood's elderly veteran in *Gran Torino* is not unlike Mickey Rourke's middle-aged wrestler, since both performances ask the audience to draw on their own familiarity with the actors' younger roles. Both cast their past career into relief as they act in films written specifically for their prototype, allowing for an egotistical (even when self-deprecating) performance and prodigal reception. In the comfort of nostalgia, the audience may recall their childhood or adolescence at the movies, while celebrating the screen icons of yester-year in a contemporary mold. With that said here are two reviews of stellar reflexive performances in their less worthy films:

The Wrestler

The hype surrounding *The Wrestler* was enough to kill any film; "Mickey is back!" "The best-actor Oscar!" Yet in all honesty, without the hype I would not have paid the admission to watch men in tights and wigs smash each other to a pulp. In fact, as a bourgeois ABD yogini female, the WWF is something I have carefully avoided my entire life. But on that note, the film is an insightful commentary on the male population who seek such entertainment, on class and education boundaries that promote it, and on the effects such "sports" have on the wrestlers themselves. One should be forewarned, according to the film's gripping realism, professional wrestlers do not fake all of the blood and back breaking (or rather some of the faking is actually done with razors).

For this reason the film is ingenious and difficult to watch. In the film's first half, the audience intimately witnesses the wreckage done to Rourke's "Randy the Ram." His tightly framed face screams agony and repression louder than the referee's megaphone. Close-ups of his limbs twisting and then pounding down (the sound design is grueling) left me squirming with sympathy in my seat. To this extent Aronofsky has surpassed and banalized violence in cinema; for rather than presenting us with the realism of violence in war, *The Wrestler* presents us with the realism of violence in performance—within a performance.

The casting of Rourke as Randy makes the paradigm complete. Rourke, like Randy, enjoyed considerable success in the '80s as a bad boy. In addition, though Rourke never wrestled, he enjoyed another concussion inducing sport, boxing, and did brutal damage to his brain and face. Although the basic storyline is often trite (for instance, an overacted angry daughter, Evan Rachel Wood, seems to emerge only as an afterthought), Rourke is so compelling in this role that the camera and the audience can scarcely focus on secondary matters. Therefore, there is barely enough space to contemplate another age-limited industry, stripping, though Pam (Marisa Tomei) skillfully demonstrates the other sex's more typical compromise. If you are one for '80s nostalgia, you will enjoy all the hair-metal hits that might have been played at wrestling events, as well as the superb score co-written by Slash. The film closes with an almost too appropriate Bruce Springsteen song "One-Trick Pony" providing the perfect finale to a picture about an underclass of the entertainment industry. To this extent *The Wrestler* can be compared not only to *Rocky* and *Raging Bull*, but also to *Boogie Nights*.

Gran Torino

The Gran Torino in the title of Eastwood's latest film refers to a vintage '72 car protected by a feeble garage and the gun power of its owner, Korean War vet Walt Kowalski (Clint Eastwood.) Everyone longs for a chance to drive the mint condition classic, including Walt's materialistic son and suburban nightmare family, his painfully shy teenage neighbor, and the violent gang of Hmong gangsters, who like Walt, tote guns. Just as everyone in the film yearns to cruise the prized vintage Ford, *Gran Torino*'s target audience craves vintage Eastwood. Strumming memories of Dirty Harry, Eastwood as Walt delivers countless versions of "Make my day" (now the word "gook" is added at the end) and squints with every bit of the same severity.

Although the dialogue in Nick Schenk's first screenplay frequently proves amateur, the plot itself offers a modern if simplistic view of American society in 2008: Senior citizen Walt, who embodies the racism of his generation, has outlived his wife and is the only white man left in his deteriorating, now Chinese, neighborhood. At long last Walt confronts his prejudice when he accidentally becomes friends with the Chinese family next door while protecting (by chance) their awkward teenage son Thao (Bee Vang) from Hmong gangsters. The choice of the Hmongs as a community in anguish reveals a Hollywood orientalism (the Hmong culture makes for an exotic contrast to Walt's, and the audience's, middle-American values.) However, the Hmong decision was primarily practical: unlike "gook" apparently, in Hollywood the "n" word is still unacceptable, and even at seventy-eight, Eastwood can tower over the diminutive Hmongs.

In *Gran Torino*, the elderly but fit Eastwood recaptures the allure of his past roles. Though Eastwood was thirty-seven years younger when he developed the iconographic Harry Callahan under Don Siegal, and younger still when he built his tough cowboy appeal in *Rawhide,* and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, in *Gran Torino* the cold call to justice is rejuvenated as a crotchety old man. If Eastwood's lines and performance are predictable, they are doubly comic, for each time nostalgia is retrieved an element of spoof results. (In fact, at the screening I saw the Union Square audience roared with laughter at each of Walt's threats and bigoted insults.)

David Schwartz in his interview complimented Eastwood by saying *Gran Torino* resembled classic Hollywood. Yes, there are many long shots of the neighborhood, the story holds a moral, and the characters (other than Walt) are flat types. However, the film is primarily a vehicle for Eastwood (and his public) to relive his glory-days. Eastwood has perfected the delivery and timing of the quiet, vengeful rebel and is further aided by a script tailor-made for him (according to Eastwood, screen-writer Schenk hunted down his agent.) *Gran Torino* does not rival any of Eastwood's recent directorial gems, (*Million Dollar Baby, Mystic River, Flags of our Fathers*) but it makes an interesting bookend to the angry screen icon's long career.

NEWS FROM THE **doctoral students' council**

Looking Back, Looking Forward

We've taken a moment to consider the accomplishments of the last semester as we contemplate new ways to improve student life at the Graduate Center. The DSC has worked to ensure that tuition increases would not be implemented, and that services at the Graduate Center will continue to be offered at current levels, if not exceeded. We've monitored the NYSHIP rollout and worked with HR, the Provost's Office, and Student Affairs to provide timely information to students about our long-overdue health insurance option for graduate students. We've continued to work to maintain the targeted Fall 2010 rollout for the student dormitory in Long Island City. We've launched opencuny.org. We've implemented and participated in a task force on printing at the Graduate Center. We've urged our reps to remind their departments to have open departmental meetings, per our governance. We brought news about Social Security and Medicare exemptions for GC students at CUNY campuses (http://opencuny.org/adjunctproject/social-security-and-medicare-refunds/). We've spread the word about new IT initiatives, including the underused laptop loan program (http://web.gc.cuny.edu/informationtechnology/tech_svs/laptoploan.htm). We've seen the Advocate expand to four fall issues, and we've seen our membership average over seventy representatives, with quorum achieved and exceeded comfortably at every fall meeting. We've issued a policy paper on Financial Aid and cost-of-living that has been escalated to the highest levels of CUNY, with promises to take our research and make changes to how our financial aid is calculated for graduate students.

Looking to this semester: There will be online nominating and voting for DSC elections, reducing costs and reaching more students for inclusion in student government (last year we doubled participating: let's try do to it again!). Duplex printers are being rolled out in department lounges. There will be more committees to sit on, and issues to watch out for. There will be more parties, meetings, committees, and advocacy for student issues by your DSC.

Keep looking out for ways the DSC is serving you: check the DSC news in *The Advocate*. Check out our website, www.cunydsc.org. Attend our meetings and events, which are advertised in *The Advocate* and on our website.

And if there's more we can do—if there's more you want to do—talk to us. Drop by room 5495. Call x7888. Email dsc.steering.committee@gmail.com. Come to a meeting (see dates/times below). Talk to your rep—or fill an opening in your department and become a rep.

DSC Committee Reports

Scholarly Awards Committee

The Student Scholarly Achievement Award was established by the DSC to recognize the efforts of doctoral students engaged in scholarly activities in their fields. All students who wish to apply must be registered in a program at the CUNY Graduate Center and must submit a dossier outlining their scholarly achievements. All students are encouraged to apply and should check the DSC website to view application requirements.

For details on other committees, please refer to www.cunydsc.org for meetings and minutes.

Health Issues Committee

The Health Issues Committee has ambitious plans for the Spring semester: following on the successful Fall 2008 blood drive, there will be a February blood drive (see www.cunydsc.org for more information). Plans are underway for the annual wellness fair, and, in accord with our new health insurance situations, the Committee plans to start a blog at www.opencuny.org to help disseminate information about health/wellness for GC students.

DSC Calendar

The DSC has the following meetings scheduled. Guests are always welcome.

Plenary Meetings (all plenary meetings are held in room GC 5414)

- February 13. 6:00 p.m.
- March 20, 6:00 p.m. (Spring Party to follow)
- April 24, 6:00 p.m.
- May 8, 5:00 p.m. (2007-8 reps) May 8, 6:00 p.m. (2008-9 reps)

Steering Committee Meetings (all SC meetings are held in room GC 5489 except as noted)

- January 30, 6:00 p.m.
- March 6, 6:00 p.m.
- April 3, 5:00 p.m.
- May 15, 6:00 p.m., room 5409 (2008-9 and 2009-10 Steering Committee members)

Media Board Meeting

- February 27, 5:00 p.m., room 5489
- March 27, 5:00 p.m., room 5489

Spring DSC Party

- March 20, 8:30 p.m., room 5414

Steering Committee Office Hours

Come visit us for all your student government needs. Buy discounted movie tickets, make a room reservation, pick up forms and/or flyers, or just chew the fat about grad student life.

- Jill Belli: Thursdays 2-5p
- Gregory Donovan: Wednesdays 4-6p & Fridays 1-5p
- Rob Faunce: Fridays 12-5p
- Allyson Foster: Wednesdays 11a-2p
- Anton Masterovoy: Fridays 9a-12p
- Christine Pinnock: TBA
- Chris Alen Sula: Fridays 12-5p
- Suzanne Tamang: Tuesdays 1-4p
- Denise Torres: varies
- Tasha Youstin: Tuesdays 6:30-9:30p

You'll be able to find out up-to-the-moment office hours, and so much more, by visiting us on the web at http://cunydsc.org.

You can also reach us on the phone at (212)817-7888, via e-mail at dsc.steering.committee@gmail.com, or in person at room 5495 of the GC.

Help Wanted: Advocate Editor-in-chief

The Media Board is soliciting applications for the position of Advocate Editor-in-chief, for the 2009-10 academic year. This is a paid position. Further information about the job can be found at the DSC website, www.cunydsc.org. Please send resumes and cover letters to robfaunce@gmail.com or DSC, Attn: Communications, 365 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5491, New York, NY 10016. Priority deadline: February 26, 2009.

Help Wanted: Adjunct Project Coordinator

The DSC is soliciting applications for the position of Adjunct Project Coordinator, for the 2009-10 academic year. This is a paid position.

Further information about the job can be found at the DSC website, www.cunydsc.org. Please send resumes and cover letters to robfaunce@gmail.com or DSC, Attn: Communications, 365 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5491, New York, NY 10016.

GC Library Gets Corporate Makeover

MATT LAU

It is the worst of times. It is the epoch of incredulity. It is the season of eight dollar chicken Caesar wraps and "make-a-difference" coffees from 365 Express Café. It is the winter when, as usual, the vegan students have devoured all the library printer paper. Can spring be far behind?

In such an economic climate of "belt-tightening" and "tough choices," the Graduate Center has announced its latest and boldest plan to reorganize.

"We figured we'd get a head start on the era of 'new media literacy' by making our library entirely virtual," said unofficial public relations officer, Mark Schiebe. "Our students don't really read anything anyway, except for the occasional article in *The Voice* or *The Chronicle* about how dumb it is to go to graduate school."

"This move has a lot of pros," added Mark's twin sister Kram. "Not the least of which are the two potentially lucrative new revenue streams from our bookstore and food court. Students will find that the new dining options at the Grad Center will only enhance and complete midtown's incredible diversity of fast food, which, studies show, is the preferred dining option of both the overeducated and the ironical consumer."

"Our airport style bookstore is ideally suited to the life of a Grad Center student, who spends about half their life commuting in one way or another," Kram continued. "Who can concentrate on Quine or even Derrida with all the talk of candy not being sold for no basketball team on the subway? Plus, if you display a fancy book you're more likely to get mugged. Petty thieves figure you probably have an Iphone or some hot jacket brand that has yet to be rapped about.

"So put that copy of *Queering Projectile Vomiting* away, or at the very least conceal it inside the latest John Grisham novel, which is, of course, available just off the lobby. You could probably finish one of his longer novels in your trip from the Grad Center to Queens College, depending on the wait between transfers."

"We are aware, of course, that this new plan will have its skeptics," said Schiebe, in a tone that seemed meant to counter his sister's sales pitch. "But those people are mostly socialists and communists with little buying power, so we think we can probably just ignore them. If they do picket our new Kentucky Taco Hut, we think a round of free tacos or boneless, sauce-less buffalo wings will probably shut them up."

Indeed, there are likely to be a lot of taco promotion nights in coming weeks, months, and years. Already there are unsubstantiated rumors that incoming student aid packages will consist less of "actual" money and more of perks, like free Chalupas and unsold newspapers from yesterday, the perfect insulation on cold nights for students on a budget.

"We want to incentivize student productivity as much as possible. That's why we're already considering giving out free pizzas as prizes for graduate students with perfect attendance. Not, mind you, in the classes their taking, but in the ones they're teaching. If, on top of that, they manage to somehow show up the whole semester without being hungover, we're talking about doubling their compensation. But of course we know this is very unlikely."

But it may take more than a few packets of fire sauce to cool off the Grad Center's militant pacifists. "You wouldn't believe how much action there's been on the CUNY Contingents Unite listserv," said James Hoff, one of the collective's founders, as he bit into a ten dollar Chipotle burrito. Ⓐ

ph.d. comics BY JORGE CHAM

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS TAKES ITS TOLL