

Voices from Occupied Wall Street

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<http://gcadvocate.org>
advocate@gc.cuny.edu

CUNY Graduate Center

Room 5396
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 817-7885

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

James Hoff

MANAGING EDITOR

Michael Busch

LAYOUT EDITOR

Mark Wilson

CONTRIBUTORS

Natasha Beharie
Lauren Dinour
Frank Episale
Antonio A. Fontana
Shane Gill
Amy Goodman
Jameel Haque
Adjunct Hulk
Stefamie Jones
Lavelle Porter
Conor Tomás Reed
Victoria Romeo

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FROM THE editor's desk

The Harder They Come, the Stronger We Get

"And the oppressors are trying to track me down
They're trying to drive me underground
And they think that they have got the battle won
I say, forgive them Lord, they know not what they've done"
—Jimmy Cliff

On Saturday, September 24 peaceful anti-capitalist protestors marching to Union Square were beaten, handcuffed, dragged through the streets, and pepper-sprayed by the New York City Police Department. Before it was over more than eighty people had been arrested and hauled off to jail. The protestors' only crime was a seemingly naïve belief and self-assurance that they could spontaneously exercise their freedom of assembly and speech without first having to apply for a permit from the city.

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The hardline response of the NYPD on September 24 was clearly designed to drive off the protestors and to crush the burgeoning Wall Street occupation movement. However, their tactics seem to have had the opposite effect. The movement is now stronger than ever and growing every day. The protes-

tors have referred to their encampment as New York's Tahrir Square, and just as the violence of the Egyptian police fueled the protest movements there, so the violence of the NYPD has fueled support for these protestors and their cause. Since the arrests on Saturday the number of people occupying Liberty Plaza (formerly known as Zucotti Park) has increased dramatically and the protestors have since been receiving unprecedented material and monetary support from ordinary Americans across the nation as well as political support from celebrities and writers such as Susan Sarandon, Michael Moore, Chris Hedges, and the tireless and indomitable Cornel West. When I was there on Wednesday afternoon, protestors were still busy unloading and opening a recent delivery of several dozen large packages of food, clothing, batteries, and camping goods from donors across the country eager to help out in any way that they can. Rumors of the donation of an electric generator were also making the rounds that day. The movement, it seems, is growing larger by the day, and the events unfolding at Liberty Plaza are beginning to look more and more like a revolutionary moment in the making.

And in a weird way, we have the NYPD to thank for this. Just as in Egypt, you had peaceful demonstrators converge on a public square, begin to make demands and call for reform, only to be met with brutal state violence, which was in turn met with greater numbers of more militant and dedicated protestors, as well as a surge of ordinary citizens who themselves had become suddenly radicalized through their witness of the brutality of the state and the giddy promise of revolution. Indeed, just today the Transit Workers' Union, one of the city's largest municipal unions, voted unanimously to support the occupation movement and no doubt many more unions will follow. Meanwhile across the nation there are already dozens of local occupation movements rising in support of the Wall Street demonstrations. From Boston and Chicago, to Los Angeles and Berkeley, groups are forming and beginning to take back their streets and squares from the corporate property owners, whose greed now extends even to the ownership of so called "public" spaces.

One of the most startling facts to come out of this particular movement in Zucotti Park is the fact that the park itself, the very same park where people daily eat their lunches and gather to play chess, exercise, or chat with friends is actually owned by a private corporation that apparently wants to control who can and cannot use the property and for what purpose. Since the beginning of the occupations when the NYPD forced the demonstrators off of Wall Street and into Zucotti Park, there have been several attempts by Brookfield Office Properties (a global real estate company that owns properties across the globe and is traded on the NYSE) to drive the demonstrators out of the park through the use of fake eviction notices. The awful consequences of the creation of this kind of public/private space, which has been going on in NYC for decades now, are finally becoming clear. Just as protestors have been refused the right to march as they wish, to use bull horns, or to wear masks, they are now being faced with the threat of eviction from their "public" square by the very same kinds of capital-obsessed corporate ne'er do wells they are protesting on Wall Street. Thankfully, as of now, the NYPD has said they can stay, but for how long and at what size remains to be seen.

What is clear, however, is that the more demonstrators there are occupying Liberty Plaza and the surrounding areas, the harder it will be for the police to evict them. And that is why every New Yorker who is able and who cares about the future of their city, who cares about free speech and public space, and who wants a fair and equitable economy that works for the people and not just the elites, should grab a book and a blanket and some food and water and head down to Liberty Plaza for at least a day or two to show your support. You don't have to spend the night, but at least spend the day; bring some signs, join the daily march on Wall Street, and add your voice to those who are fighting for a better future. Ⓐ

guest editorial

Solid Ground at Occupy Wall Street

CONOR TOMÁS REED

On Saturday, September 24, at least eighty participants in the "Occupy Wall Street" march in New York City were arrested in an explosion of police brutality that has catapulted this nonviolent public square movement to global attention. Swiftly, organizers blasted videos online documenting the NYPD's unhinged force, while securing legal support for those arrested and reorganizing to maintain "Liberty Plaza," a people's camp permanently nestled a brick's throw from Wall Street since Saturday, September 17. In the aftermath, NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly is being urged to resign.

These graphic images echo NYPD aggression from only two nights earlier, when a crowd of thousands claimed the streets of lower Manhattan, one day after Troy Davis's execution. Called "A Day of Outrage" by the NYC Campaign to End the Death Penalty, what began as a Union Square vigil mourning his death became a full-scale disavowal of the US government and justice system. Thousands of people of all colors shot through the streets, without

where people stay put in a public space to build power—isn't in many groups' repertoire, a pivotal movement may be passing them by.

An on-the-ground view clearly affirms why many more should actively support this project's growing significance. Soon after thousands peacefully set up camp in Zucotti Square (since re-named Liberty Plaza) at the corner of Broadway and Liberty, the assembly's various workgroups coordinated food, clean-up, bedding, student/labor networking, media/online and community outreach, legal support, childcare, arts/culture/festivities, and more. OccupyWallSt.org broadcasts daily statements from the square that address the movement's purpose, goals, and concerns, which much media coverage chooses to ignore. All group decisions are made in the assemblies, with constant attention to historically under-represented voices, ongoing political education, and yes, good vibes.

For many people contributing to this project, experiences from over the last several years have proven invaluable. These include the December

pre-figurative mini-society, but a decisive force in the belly of the economic beast that can collaborate with this widening network to transform global society altogether.

In 2008, David Harvey likewise asserted that our "Right to the City" is "far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization." Unsurprisingly, copies of this essay floated around the first Liberty Plaza assemblies, and continue to be shared at its free library. Harvey's big-sighted emphasis on mapping the hot-spots for urban change is reflected in the public square movement's attention not only to workplaces and schools, but to these democratized hubs where diverse community sections can envision and act together in plain sight.

Political discussions constantly engage the square. Serbian student leader Ivan Marovic came to share ways youth movements helped overthrow Slobodan Milosevic, and the CUNY STRIKE study circle poured through Joe Burns' *Reviving the Strike*. Alongside principles and ideologies, street tactics and strategies flow in and out of regular conversation. "Here's how we can use the police blockades of Wall Street to benefit our own efforts at shutting down financial operations. These are the city government and business pressure points. This is how we link arms or move quickly to avoid arrest or kettling. This striking union needs our support, that student coalition welcomes us to help demand a free CUNY."

Mostafa Omar's now-famous story on what the Egyptian revolution looked like is instructive for how "Occupy Wall Street" can ultimately deal with a bullish state:

"I listened online to an amazing tape of a radio communication between the police headquarters in Alexandria and commanders in the field, trying to deal with the flood of angry protesters. In the tape, police officers are begging headquarters for reinforcements to deal with what they described as massive and dangerous crowds of 10,000, 20,000 and 30,000 people, closing in on them everywhere in the city.

"But the headquarters was helpless because all of the officers in the field--literally all of them--were asking for reinforcements. The headquarters advised officers and units to retreat to the precincts, and the officers responded: 'Sir, protesters are burning the precincts.'"

The tape ends dramatically with the commander at headquarters asking a subordinate for an explanation for the police defeats. The officer simply told him: "Sir, it is over. The people are in the saddle."

The first night on occupied Wall Street, in which thousands of fiercely elated participants inaugurated this new public space of community power, hints at the kinds of action that can put people in the saddle. The tremendous roar of "Justice for // JUSTICE FOR ... Troy Davis // TROY DAVIS!" that for one near-insurrectionary night seized lower Manhattan hints at why people are propelled to take the reins. This anger and excitement will indeed continue after Saturday's unnecessarily volatile march. With protest at Baruch College on Sep. 27 against the CUNY Trustees' refusal to fund teachers' healthcare or roll back the \$1500 in tuition hikes, and then again at October 5th's student walkouts across CUNY, not to mention the ongoing actions inside and outside of Liberty Plaza that will continue, the city's prelude to a revolution may not seem so unexpectedly out of reach. (A)



permit, stopping traffic and dodging police vehicles from Union Square to the Village, then down across Broadway to join a mass rally at Liberty Plaza.

An unintended outcome of this state repression is the remarkably widespread public support for these interlinking community efforts at social change. Amy Goodman, Michael Moore, Lupe Fiasco, Tom Morello, Anonymous, WikiLeaks, the Yes Men, and others have praised the movement that is being modeled after past and present tent cities in Cairo, Madison, Athens, and Madrid. The experiment is now taking hold like a fever in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Madison, Toronto, London, Sydney, Stuttgart, Tokyo, Milan, Amsterdam, Algiers, Tel Aviv, Portland, Chicago, Phoenix, Montreal, Cleveland, Atlanta, Kansas City, Dallas, Seattle, and Orlando.

And yet, for those who may have only encountered the aspirations of Liberty Plaza from a computer screen, this dazzling picture can remain a bit time-lagged, grainy, and flat. At worst, it might even appear to be doomed, a political liability. As a result, the big secret is that the political event of the year is catching New York City's hundreds of leftist groups by complete surprise. Since early August, activists of varying stripes have held weekly outdoor assemblies to heed *Adbusters'* call to "Occupy Wall Street." But now, because this kind of protest—one

2008 New School occupation; the February 2009 NYU occupation; the March 4 and October 7, 2010 national days to defend public education; the February 2010 Wisconsin capitol occupation; early May actions in NYC and Albany against Governor Andrew Cuomo's budget; and the June 2011 Bloombergville encampment against Bloomberg's budget. To be sure, at times, discussions in Liberty Plaza are a bit uneven because of different knowledge and experience levels, but this collective radicalizing process can grow exponentially with consistent undogmatic support. Young and old leaders alike are pointing the way to a unique new form of social action that requires everyone to rethink familiar organizing modes.

During the early 2011 Egyptian Spring, the following phrase gave direction to mass mobilization: "the road to factory occupations lies through Tahrir Square." This city and country's own road to vibrant job actions, grassroots community control, opposition to legal lynching, and all other kinds of mechanized violence may lie through these Liberty Squares now blossoming everywhere. Egypt's lessons acutely demonstrate that liberated squares must lead to liberated workplaces, neighborhoods, and eventually liberated cities. This is exactly Liberty Plaza's aim—not to be a self-contained,

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Adjunct Health Insurance Totters on the Brink

Adjunct Healthcare under Attack—PSC Members fight back

The start of the new academic year could mark the beginning of an adjunct healthcare bloodbath if the rising cost of insurance, CUNY's "meh" attitude, and the city's blind eye to the welfare of adjuncts aren't successfully confronted. For the time being, PSC members have been successfully pushing back against the potential loss of health care for more than 1,700 CUNY adjuncts, but there is still plenty of work ahead.

At its heart, the threat to adjunct health care is simple. At the very moment that the CUNY system develops an increasing dependency on adjunct labor, it has scaled back its fiscal commitments to part-time laborers, most glaringly in the case of health-care coverage. At current, CUNY only contributes about 20 percent of the total cost of adjunct health care through contributions to the PSC Welfare Fund, a cost which has jumped dramatically in recent years. As the basic health insurance premium has more than doubled in the last eight years—from \$3,461 per member in 2003 to an incredible \$8,061 in the current year—the amount that CUNY contributes has actually decreased almost \$1,000, from \$2,583 in 2003 to \$1,675 in 2011.

The attempt to force CUNY to take a greater share of responsibility for adjunct health care will be an uphill battle, however. While university brass have recently indicated a willingness to work with the union to achieve a structural solution to the problem of rising healthcare costs and the startling increases in the part-time labor pool, its actions have not been as encouraging. In the past decade, PSC reps have asked CUNY to work with them on a compromise solution that will shift some of the fiscal responsibility from the Welfare Fund to the university system and away from the individual laborers whom CUNY has come to rely upon.

CUNY, however, says that in fact it has not underfunded adjunct health insurance but instead has lived up to its obligations as outlined by past agreements with the union. As Pamela Silverblatt, the Vice Chancellor for Labor Affairs argues, "the union has raised the issue of health benefits for adjuncts in prior rounds of collective bargaining, and it has consistently agreed to settle its collective bargaining agreements at the specified funding levels. Despite the fact that the costs have escalated—by the Welfare Fund's estimates adjunct health insurance will cost about \$14 million in the upcoming year—the PSC has over many years and several

rounds of bargaining agreed to the specified contributions to the Welfare Fund, and the University has consistently made the mutually agreed-upon payments."

The Union, for its part, argues that Silverblatt's response misrepresents the real issue, when she claims that CUNY has not underfunded adjunct health insurance.

"While CUNY has met its contractual funding obligation to the Welfare Fund, that is not the issue. The real issue is that CUNY, as the employer, has consistently resisted its responsibility to provide adequate, ongoing funding for adjunct health insurance for its eligible adjunct employees. Adjunct health insurance costs will grow to \$14 million this year; yet CUNY will provide only \$2.8 million of this cost. The union's position is that we should work together to solve the real problem, and we urge the University to join us in this effort."

Thus, CUNY adjuncts find themselves once again in the unenviable position of being stuck between two organizations, neither of which seems fully-committed to protecting their interests. It is imperative, therefore, that adjuncts put pressure on the PSC not only to defend the welfare fund, but to also push for meaningful advances in the extension of part-time employee protections and benefits, including permanent and stable health insurance for all adjuncts, significant wage increases, and real job security. What pressure organized adjuncts have placed on the union leadership has paid off.

On September 26, hundreds of adjuncts and other, vocal and supportive members of the PSC hit the pavement out in front of the Board of Trustees headquarters to protest the dismal state of health coverage for part-time labor. The protest was another spirited reminder that adjuncts and their supporters won't take the deteriorating conditions of their professional, and therefore their personal, lives sitting down.

Those gathered received a small treat for their labors and willingness to come out and stand united behind part-time claims for equal treatment. Barbara Bowen, president of the PSC, announced to the crowd (and, in fact, made the crowd repeat the announcement in unison) that Chancellor Matthew Goldstein had assured her that the board had requested that Albany provide full and permanent health-care coverage for all adjuncts in the CUNY system.

While it has taken huge amounts of effort to get the Board to simply make a request of Governor Andrew Cuomo—which in all likelihood will be laughed out of Albany—if we look at the numbers, the idea of full and

permanent healthcare for part-timers isn't so nuts. Said one HEO at the protest, "New York City has a budget of \$66 billion and the state has a budget of \$132 billion. \$14 million for adjunct insurance is chump change in the bigger scope of things." Asked why he was coming out for adjunct rights, he expressed solidarity, as well as a touch of healthy, self-interested pragmatism. "This is an assault on labor, and we feel that if they are coming for the adjuncts in the morning they will come for [the rest of us] at night."

In Solidarity: LIU Faculty Hit the Streets to Protest Austerity

As CUNY campuses begin to organize for another academic year under the pressures of fiscal crisis, other local faculty unions are embroiled in their own fight against the administrative squeeze on labor. On September 7, hundreds of faculty and staff at the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University (LIU), as well as a healthy showing of PSC representatives, took to the streets to protest a ten-year wage freeze and dwindling benefit packages.

The protests came a day after negotiations between LIU and the faculty union, the Long Island University Faculty Federation—an affiliate of the AFT/NY-SUT—broke down after the administration's latest crappy offer was rejected by union representatives. Reportedly, the university offered its part- and full-time staff a five-year deal where the wage freeze would remain intact for the first three years, followed by a paltry 2 percent raise in each the final two years.

The strike, which lasted for roughly a week, shut down 95 percent of the college's classes, effectively bringing university life to a halt. In the end, administrators returned to the table with a slightly better offer that was accepted by the striking workers. The new plan calls for a freeze in the first year of the new contract, a 1 percent base pay raise in the second, a 1.5 percent increase during the third, and then a 2 percent increase in the final two years of the deal. In addi-

tion, faculty members were promised additional payments in the final four years of the contract, between half a percent and 2 percent if the university tuition revenues increase by more than 3 percent.

The *Clarion* reports other gains as well. "The contract has some significant other gains—including the first ever paid office hour for LIU's adjunct faculty: one paid office hour for those who teach more than nine contact hours per semester." On top of this, LIU has promised to make matching contributions to adjunct pensions for the first time ever. The union scored another significant victory by forcing a cap on the number of non-tenure track appointments to the university, which are no longer allowed to exceed more than 15 percent of the total full-time faculty lines.

File Under "Sorry, What?!?": Anonymous Email Gets Department Chair Fired

An anonymous email sent to Medgar Evers College President William Pollard alleging inappropriate sexual relations between a faculty member and students led to the knee-jerk firing of Zulema Blair, chair of the school's public administration department. The unsigned email, sent from a Yahoo! account belonging to



"DisgruntledSue" cuts right to the chase, accusing Blair of having sex with students, having a student's baby, and being a member of the "elite Medgar Staff Slut List... You can't turn a whore into a housewife," the email concludes, "but you can definitely turn one into a Dean."

Apparently Pollard was convinced

Above: Former Medgar Evans department chair Zulema Blair.

by this reasoning. Two weeks after the email was sent, Pollard revoked the college's tenure-track offer to Blair and axed her shortly thereafter. CUNY refused to comment on the situation, and would not answer inquiries as to whether an official investigation had been launched to determine the validity, or lack thereof, of the claims leveled in the anonymous message.

For her part, Blair is irate. "This e-mail is slander. It's horrific, and I want whoever sent this out to be punished," Blair told the *New York Post*. "This is character assassination. This does not speak to any work or any of my accomplishments at Medgar Evers College." Indeed, New York State Senator Eric Adams recently honored Blair with public recognition of her contributions to academia and society more broadly. "Her academic activities spill out into the community, where she chairs the Black Brooklyn Empowerment Coalition, an organization committed to the political, economic, and social empowerment of Brooklyn residents of African descent," Adams recently wrote. "Her role within this organization has motivated her to work collaboratively with other area leaders to empower members of the Central Brooklyn community via voter registration

drives, political campaigns, education of formerly incarcerated individuals with respect to their voting rights, and more."

The situation has not been resolved as the *GC Advocate* goes to press. Meanwhile, Blair's attorneys have filed suit to force Yahoo! To disclose the identity of the person registered as "DisgruntledSue," an action the email provider has thus far refused. It doesn't take a genius, or even an academic labor activist, to draw some fairly obvious conclusions about what may likely be in play. According to Blair's lawyer, the context is clear. "The obvious conclusion according to the papers that were filed is that the e-mail was a motivating factor not to grant her tenure." Thus, the identity of the sender could offer a critical clue in understanding whether this is really about Blair's supposed relationships with students, or whether a much pettier and cutthroat motivation may lurking behind the accusations, a motivation that has nothing to do with keeping students safe.

Brooklyn College Faculty Condemn NYPD Spying on CUNY Campuses

By now you've likely heard that the New York Police Department has

been making a regular habit of spying on—you guessed it!—Muslim students across various CUNY colleges and beyond in recent months. The story was first broken by veteran police investigative reporter Leonard Levitt at the start of September. According to Levitt, "the New York City Police Department has been spying on hundreds of Muslim mosques, schools, businesses, student groups, non-governmental organizations and individuals [targeting] virtually every level of Muslim life in New York City, according to a trove of pages of Intelligence Division documents."

Of particular note to the CUNY community, Levitt revealed that "the NYPD has also been monitoring Muslim student associations at seven local colleges: City, Baruch, Hunter, Queens, LaGuardia, St. John's and Brooklyn.

The department calls the two student groups at Brooklyn and Baruch colleges "of concern" and has sent undercover detectives to spy on them, the documents reveal." On top of that, a "lecturer" at Brooklyn College was identified as a "person of interest," one of forty-two targeted around the city.

In response, faculty at Brooklyn drafted and passed a resolution condemning the NYPD actions,

arguing that the snooping operation violated students and faculty rights and academic freedom more broadly. "The use of undercover police agents and the cultivation of police informers on campus has a chilling effect on the intellectual freedom necessary for a vibrant academic community," the resolution stated.

The Faculty Council passed the resolution unanimously on September 13 after learning that undercover police officers were attending classes and meetings of campus organizations while pretending to be students. Alex Vitale, a professor of sociology at Brooklyn and author of the resolution told the *Associated Press* that "That's what's so troubling here: this was a giant fishing expedition," an accusation the NYPD denies.

"That seemed to be really beyond the pale of acceptable behavior, especially on a college campus," Said Vitale. And it also may be against the law. As it turns out, the spying was part of a CIA-sponsored endeavor to collect domestic intelligence on possible threats to national security, efforts that very well may violate laws that bar the agency from spying in the United States. (A)

October 5th: Student Walk-Out & Teach-In

Why are we paying **tuition** in CUNY?

Why is **tuition** so high?

Was CUNY really **free** prior to 1975?

What can I do—I'm just one person?

Come out and get all your questions answered and together we will move forward.

THE STUDENTS UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED

guest editorial

Establishing a Mother's Room at the GC

NISHA BEHARIE AND LAUREN DINOUR

Imagine this scenario. You are a new mother who is desperately trying to balance work, life, and parenthood. You have successfully made it through the trying first weeks and months of your baby's life and are finally more comfortable and confident about breastfeeding. You know that in order to continue breastfeeding your baby, you will have to pump several times during the day while you're at work. Since you don't have a private office, you inquire about where you can go to pump. You know that

legally, your workplace has to provide a space that is not a bathroom, and so you're happy to learn that there are several rooms that your organization has identified for this purpose.

Pump in hand, you head to one of the rooms, only to find out that it's a well-used pantry, complete with microwave, sink (full of dirty dishes!), recycling bins, and the smell of someone's reheated



leftovers. You decide that this is not the clean, quiet, comfortable place you need to spend 15–30 minutes pumping food for your baby. You look at the list of rooms, and notice three other locations. You try each one in turn, but find that you have to ask permission--and in some instances, schedule hours in advance--in order to use the room. And even when you are able to find a time slot that works, men and women walk in on you while you're pumping. With so many barriers, you feel frustrated, embarrassed, ashamed, angry, and defeated. All you want to do is provide the perfect food for your baby, but your workplace is just not supportive.

It sounds awful, but this is exactly what's happening for many women at the Graduate Center. Women have been observed pumping in bathroom stalls and even in the private offices of their professors. Even when visiting the rooms that have been identified as lactation spaces, women are routinely walked in on while they are pumping, likely because these rooms are used primarily for other purposes. Given all of these issues, the need for a dedicated space to express milk has

become apparent to students, staff, and administrators. During a recent poll conducted among students at the Graduate Center, 101 students reported that either they or a partner would utilize a space dedicated to expressing breast milk at the Graduate Center now or in the near future.

As such, we have been working with Student Affairs Vice President Matthew Schoengood to establish a dedicated lactation room at the Graduate Center. Room 7408 has been identified as the future site of a Mother's Room where women who work and/or study at the Graduate Center can go to express milk or breastfeed their infants. The efforts of identifying and establishing this room have, and will continue to, require the assistance of many campus departments, including Facilities, Security, and IT, as well as the support of faculty, staff, and students. In short, the opening of the Mother's Room will be a very welcome addition to the institution and will help make the Graduate Center a friendlier place for working mothers. After all, working or studying at the Graduate Center should not be the reason why women stop breastfeeding.

If you would like to be more directly involved in the establishment of the Mother's Room, please contact Nisha Beharie at Nisha.beharie@gmail.com or Lauren Dinour at L.Dinour@gmail.com. **A**

guest editorial

The Real Ponzi Scheme Is Wall Street

AMY GOODMAN

If 2,000 Tea Party activists descended on Wall Street, you would probably have an equal number of reporters there covering them. Yet 2,000 people did occupy Wall Street last Saturday. They weren't carrying the banner of the tea party, the Gadsden flag with its coiled snake and the threat "Don't Tread on Me." Yet their message was clear: "We are the 99 percent that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1 percent." They were there, mostly young, protesting the virtually unregulated speculation of Wall Street that caused the global financial meltdown.

One of New York's better-known billionaires, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, commented on the protests: "You have a lot of kids graduating college, can't find jobs. That's what happened in Cairo. That's what happened in Madrid. You don't want those kinds of riots here." Riots? Is that really what the Arab Spring and the European protests are about?

Perhaps to the chagrin of Mayor Bloomberg, that is exactly what inspired many who occupied Wall Street. In its most recent communiqué, the Wall Street protest umbrella group said: "On Saturday we held a general assembly, two thousand strong. ... By 8:00 PM on Monday we still held the plaza, despite constant police presence. ... We are building the world that we want to see, based on human need and sustainability, not corporate greed."

Speaking of the tea party, Texas Gov. Rick Perry has caused a continuous fracas in the Republican presidential debates with his declaration that the United States's revered Social Security system is a "Ponzi scheme." Charles Ponzi was the con artist who swindled thousands in 1920 with a fraudulent promise for high returns on investments. A typical Ponzi scheme involves taking money from investors, then paying them off with money taken from



new investors, rather than paying them from actual earnings. Social Security is actually solvent, with a trust fund of more than \$2.6 trillion. The real Ponzi scheme threatening the U.S. public is the voracious greed of Wall Street banks.

I interviewed one of the "Occupy Wall Street" protest organizers. David Graeber teaches at Goldsmiths, University of London, and has authored several books, most recently *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. Graeber points out that, in the midst of the financial crash of 2008, enormous debts between banks were renegotiated. Yet only a fraction of troubled mortgages have gotten the same treatment. He said: "Debts between the very wealthy or

between governments can always be renegotiated and always have been throughout world history. ... It's when you have debts owed by the poor to the rich that suddenly debts become a sacred obligation, more important than anything else. The idea of renegotiating them becomes unthinkable."

President Barack Obama has proposed a jobs plan and further efforts to reduce the deficit. One is a so-called millionaire's tax, endorsed by billionaire Obama supporter Warren Buffett. The Republicans call the proposed tax "class warfare." Graeber commented: "For the last thirty years we've seen a political battle being waged by the super-rich against everyone else, and this is the latest move in the shadow dance, which is completely dysfunctional economically and politically. It's the reason why young people have just abandoned any thought of appealing to politicians. We all know what's going to happen. The tax proposals are a sort of mock populist gesture, which everyone knows will be shot down. What will actually probably happen would be more cuts to social services."

Outside in the cold Tuesday morning, the demonstrators continued their fourth day of the protest with a march amidst a heavy police presence and the ringing of an opening bell at 9:30 a.m. for a "people's exchange," just as the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange is rung. While the bankers remained secure in their bailed-out banks, outside, the police began arresting protesters. In a just world, with a just economy, we have to wonder, Who would be out in the cold? Who would be getting arrested? **A**

Amy Goodman is the host of "Democracy Now!," a daily international TV/radio news hour airing on more than 900 stations in North America. She is the author of "Breaking the Sound Barrier," recently released in paperback and now a New York Times best-seller. Denis Moynihan contributed research to this column.

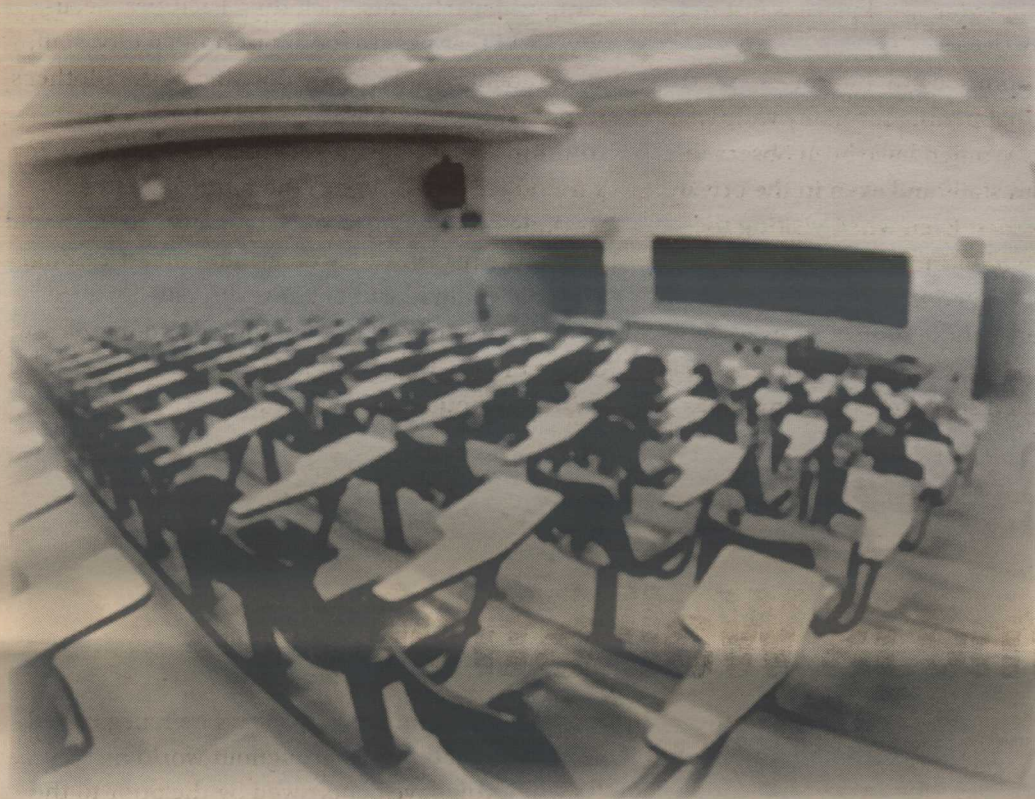
adjuncting

Adjuncts: Fight Your Own Commodification

STEFANIE JONES

We see it every day. Across the city, state, and nation, public higher education budgets are being slashed. In fact, we see so much of this that the impact of these radical cuts can get lost in the flow of other information. What form do these changes take at the City University of New York, especially for contingent labor? The largest impact is heightening: this fall brings a worsening of challenges we've been facing for years. Many contingent faculty members are seeing a reduction in benefits, and almost all contingents are facing a reduction in the quality of the work environment in the CUNY system.

Over 1,700 CUNY adjuncts are at risk of losing



all health insurance by next August. In addition to this reduction in benefits, at the Adjunct Project and around the Graduate Center we hear numerous complaints that are all, in one way or another, about the decreased quality of our work environment.

In the student lounge in my program I listened in on two colleagues discussing a course for which the maximum enrollment had been increased by ten students over the summer. This is a significant increase in students (and, subsequently, in grading, attention, and energy), but of course there is no corresponding increase in pay.

This is relatively minor (but still unacceptable) compared to the ever-increasing reports of "jumbo" lectures, where one adjunct faculty must single-handedly teach 100 or even 120 undergraduate students. We have also heard of a rise in unofficial "graders" to help manage these courses. These graders are doing the work of faculty, and deserve to be paid at faculty hourly rates but are usually offered something in the range of \$10 to \$15/hour. The combination of "jumbo" classes and severely underpaid graders also corresponds, of course, to fewer teaching positions overall. And of course those who lose here are contingent faculty, because they have no job security.

Additional reductions in the quality of our work environment stem from the deprioritization of contingent faculty. Every semester various campuses do not begin to pay their adjuncts until weeks or even months into the academic year. Every semester we hear complaints on this issue and this fall is no exception: a large number of GC-based fellows and adjuncts at BMCC, for example, won't get paid until October 6. These instances may at first seem

disparate and infrequent enough to be acceptable. So I ask you, where is the line? What will it take to believe that the simple yet multi-faceted approach to curtailing public higher education that we see occurring across the board is unacceptable enough to do something about it? When should we act to keep our collective rights from being whittled away completely? I submit to you that a collective line should at least be: adequate health care, timely and adequate pay for reasonable work, and basic job security. The CUNY system, when forced to operate on a rote business model without adequate public support, is pressured to increase enrollment and decrease faculty expenses. With swelling class

swelling sizes even further, the quality of education deteriorates while faculty workloads increase. This is especially true for contingent faculty, who teach a large number of the lower-level courses that are enlarged in such a manner, and who are constantly at risk of "non-reappointment," or losing their jobs to decrease expenses. Even outside of "jumbo" lectures, adjuncts across the CUNY system have seen their necessarily limited energy and time,

and their already-full classrooms, stretched even further by rising enrollment maximums. Contingents have little recourse and are not paid for their additional time. This is neither reasonable work nor adequate pay.

Adjuncts teach more than 50 percent of the courses at CUNY schools. Every semester, as CUNY campuses decide which classes they want (or can afford) to keep and which they'll cut, adjuncts' jobs are on the line regardless of the quality of their work. Every semester contingent faculty must cross their fingers, or scramble to find enough work to pay their bills. In other professions, or on other tiers of our profession such instability is the exception rather than the rule. This is not basic job security.

It hasn't been a clear crossing, but we must open our eyes and see that we have been pushed beyond the line of acceptable treatment. Nonetheless, the Graduate Center's current cultural milieu as a whole does not seem given to action. But I think we can expect our colleagues here to reasonably and intelligently consider a number of complex factors that bear on this contemporary, local situation. For example, what will force CUNY administration and city and state political figures to stop taking away or denying the rights and benefits we deserve? What will *not* do so? Put another way, why will anyone bother to take our concerns seriously if we don't insist that they do so? Because we have not insisted on a line that cannot be crossed, we have been nudged far past an acceptable standard for *any* kind of work environment. At this point, we will need broad collective action just to hold on to what we still have left.

Knowing what to do, however, is not enough. Whether or not we decide to do anything, action is being taken. Collective action often seems to blunder over a whole range of subtleties. Resistance may seem like too uncomplicated a gesture for some graduate students but in this historical moment the network of various interests that are working to actively destroy accessible public higher education (including graduate higher education) don't really care about subtlety or complexity. The consequences of this wave of radical reforms will be totalizing: a complete privatization and commodification of public higher education. Let us not look back on this moment and say, "That would have been our chance."

What can you do?

Whether you are contingent or full-time faculty, there is plenty of work, both immediately and upcoming, to be done.

- 1) Complain loudly and frequently to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the press. These cuts should be at least as difficult for them as they are for all of us. Put the pressure on! The best way to get the attention of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees is to speak to them in person. You can find a schedule of the BoT meetings at: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/trustees/schedule.html>. If you can't make it, make a phone call. If you are shy, send a letter. Even an email will help.

Chancellor


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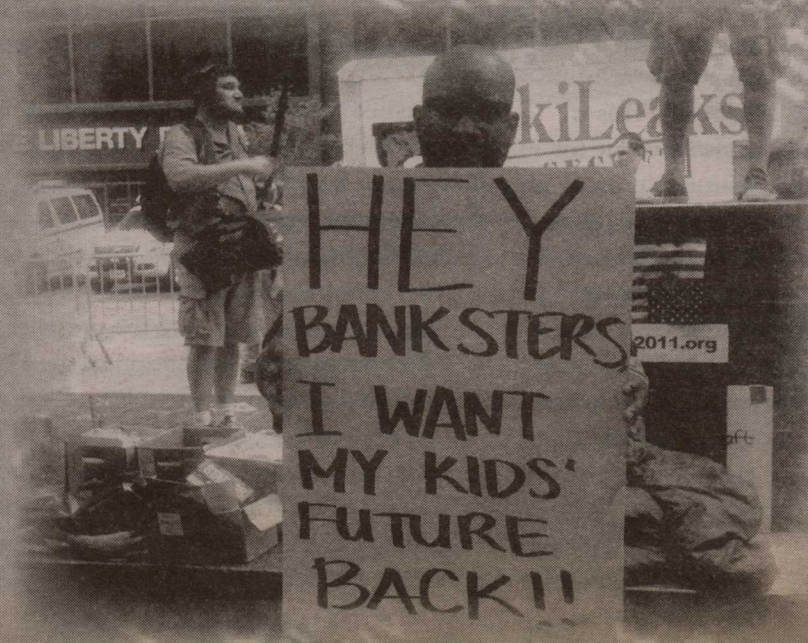
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- Valerie Lancaster Beal: vlancaster@mrbeal.com
- Wellington Chen: wellingtonchen@yahoo.com; wellingtonzchen@gmail.com
- Jeffrey Wiesenfeld: wiesenfeldjs@bernstein.com
- Benno Schmidt: Hourig.Messerlian@mail.cuny.edu

- 2) Sign an Action Pledge card, showing your commitment to join your fellow faculty in the event of a CUNY-wide action. (For a Pledge card, contact theadjunctproject@gmail.com).
- 3) Keep an eye on and get involved in activities that are popping up all over CUNY campuses.
- 4) Distribute information at the campus where you work or study.
- 5) Talk with five friends or colleagues about your concerns about the future of teaching at CUNY. See <http://cunyadjunctproject.org> for useful materials and more information. 

Voices from the Wall Street Protests

As the Wall Street Occupation, which began September 17, entered its eighth day at Liberty Plaza, the GC Advocate joined protestors to ask why they were there, what it had been like, and what their expectations were for the future of the burgeoning movement.



Rafael

"It is the magnitude of the crisis that we live in that brought me down here. We're here to send a message to the politicians, the bankers, and the establishment that we are actually paying attention. We're paying attention and our demands are simple: we want a government that is responsive to people and not just to corporations and bankers. We want a government that actually reflects the democratic system.

"There are people here from all walks of life, all social classes, races, religions, the educated, the over-educated, under-educated, the unemployed, people who have lost their homes, small business owners. This is a reflection of the America that we live in today, of those who have been pushed aside and marginalized by our society.

"The banks were bailed out with taxpayer funds and now they are passing the bill onto us even as the bankers are sitting on record breaking profits. The bankers are basically mortgaging my children's future just so they can continue to make profits."



Sophia

"I'm here because I do not like corporate greed, I do not like capitalism, I think it hasn't benefitted anyone at all, and I think we need to make our voices heard.

"We are finally getting media attention, and I think it's awesome

that we're all here. When I was here on Tuesday it was pretty small, but with the attention from social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook, I think more and more people are getting interested and coming out to show their solidarity."



Tom

"I am here to protest the corporate plutocracy that has developed in this country the last thirty, forty, even a hundred years. The reduction in government power over regulating the economy has become so drastic that things have gotten completely out of hand, and the only step we can take is to stand up to it directly on the streets, and hope for more and more people to show up and really build a movement to stop this. What we're doing down here is looking for solutions, talking about it all the time, having a dialogue, trying to figure out what set of actions need to happen to produce the change that's going to end the awful system we have. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer and that has been going on for so long and reached extreme ends.

"You get riled up after a while and want to do something and so I heard about this and came on down. I don't want it to end, though. I want it to keep building."



Chris

"We came down here to be supportive, hoping that this is the beginning of some serious change in the country. I think we have numerous problems. But my main reason for being here is to send a message that corporations should not be part of the political process at all. I don't think it matters who the president is. I think that cor-



porations run America. I think this is a start and I hope it continues and stays peaceful, because I think that people from the Tea Party and ultra-conservatives would love to see a lot of people fighting and getting arrested, which makes people look bad. I think if the peaceful protest keeps up and enough people come out across the country then real change will start to happen."

people that something is not okay. I realize that there are intense and intricate systems in place that have been around for generations, so I don't expect anything to happen for a very long time, but the awareness is there and that awareness leads to an exchange of ideas, and that will grow. We'll see."



Archie

"For a long time I've wanted people to stand up and do something about their misery. Everybody is here for one reason, I think, and that reason is that in one way or another we are all feeling uncomfortable and uneasy, unhappy, that something is not right. We don't really know what it is, but we all know that there's a problem and I feel like this is the first step to solving it. People are realizing that they are unhappy and want to do something about it. I am here to be human again, and I think that's why we're all here, because we are just sick of everything. I hope others will be inspired by what we're doing and try to make a change in their community too."



Daniel

"This is like the great American family reunion here. For the past couple of days, we've had people from Wall Street come out and talk to us, and they've said they are ashamed of what their colleagues are doing and have offered help and money. A ton of people in Wall Street should probably be in jail."

"What really appeals to me is that this is a genuinely collective thing. There is no leader here. The cops have been interrogating people, asking "who's your leader?" and we've been telling people to just say Barak Obama when someone asks them that."



Kat

"I have wanted to come down since this began, but I work as a counselor in Brooklyn so it's been hard to get away. I have a lot of good friends who have been down here and it's interesting to see, amidst the Arab Spring and everything else that has been going on, our own awakening and awareness. It's kind of difficult because the United States is pretty big but we'll see how it goes. I feel like for once we have a kind of unified front, which is difficult to make happen on the Left. To see a kind of unified front is actually really remarkable."

"It's funny how even those who aren't participating, who aren't protesting, who aren't sleeping here, still stop to read the signs and smile and seem to have an understanding. There is this underlying understanding and solidarity with the majority of American



Erica

"I think the government needs to be changed. There are a lot of things that are going on that are not right and need to be changed and that is why I'm here. I've been camping out here for six days and it's not that bad. I mean I live on the streets anyway, so it's just kind of like any other time except that there are a lot more people around. Everyone gets along for the most part. There have been a couple of little conflicts but that's going to happen anytime you get a big group of people together, especially because there are so many different people here from all different walks of life. I don't think there should be a Wall Street. I think it should all be torn down. Not literally, of course, but figuratively." Ⓐ

American Muslims' Slow Loss of Citizenship

JAMEEL HAQUE

My March 15, 2006 editorial in the Advocate, *My Kittens...Your Money*, detailed my certainty that American intelligence agencies had placed a tap on my phone. In that article, I wrote about a 2001 phone call to Quetta, a city in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. "The Pakistani operator had asked my father, a US citizen for more than half of his life, just what the heck was going on in America during the anthrax scare of '01. There is no word for 'anthrax' in Urdu, so my father and the Pakistani operator both used the English word in their discussion. The American overseas operator, who had connected them initially and was still monitoring the call (constant vigilance!) immediately disconnected the call. She announced her intention to call the CIA, FBI and the John Birch Society on my bewildered father." Well, it's been ten years since that phone call was made. That phone line no longer clicks when we pick it up. The soft warm breathing of an FBI or CIA operative, that had preoccupied my imagination every time I picked up the phone, has been extinguished. But don't worry; the government is still spying on me, because I am a Muslim. Forget *E Pluribus Unum*; our new motto should be *Exploratores ad omnes Musalmanni*—Spy on all Muslims.

Over the last decade, the *de facto* rights of American Muslims have been steadily eroded. This process occurs both in plain view of the mainstream media and American society and largely supports or quietly condones that same media and society. I believe that *de facto* restrictions on rights are more difficult to reverse than legal restrictions. Legal restrictions have a structure wherein they can be challenged. Public pressure and sympathy will usually side with groups of people seeking to take on legal restrictions. This *de facto* curbing of rights is brought on by steadily growing Islamophobic public sentiment; therefore, public sentiment and sympathy cannot be mobilized against it. This form of discrimination is diffuse and must be dealt with on an individual case basis which makes it more difficult, time consuming and exhausting to struggle against. Additionally, the manner in which anti-Muslim arguments are framed denies that Muslims can fully be Americans and therefore should not be granted the rights of Americans. It should be considered as symptomatic of a larger ill—in this case, growing Islamophobia in the United States. If this trend continues unchecked, American Muslims will continue to see their rights curtailed.

As for why I am again a target of the intelligence community, this past year I had the privilege to serve as faculty advisor to the Lehman College Muslim Students Association (MSA). The club was extremely active, doing countless fund raisers for disaster relief (especially for earthquake-rattled Japan) and continually sponsored programming intended to bridge gaps of understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. I participated and spoke on March 3 at an MSA sponsored event titled "Issues with Islam: The Misconceptions." Over two hundred people came to hear me discuss four of the most common misconceptions that exist in our country about Muslims. These misconceptions—that Muslims worship a separate God from Christians and Jews, that Muslims are all Arabs, that they are violent and that they enjoy oppressing women—do real harm to Muslims in America by fostering an atmosphere of evilness, otherness and separateness from what we all imagine to be the American tradition. By speaking against these misconcep-

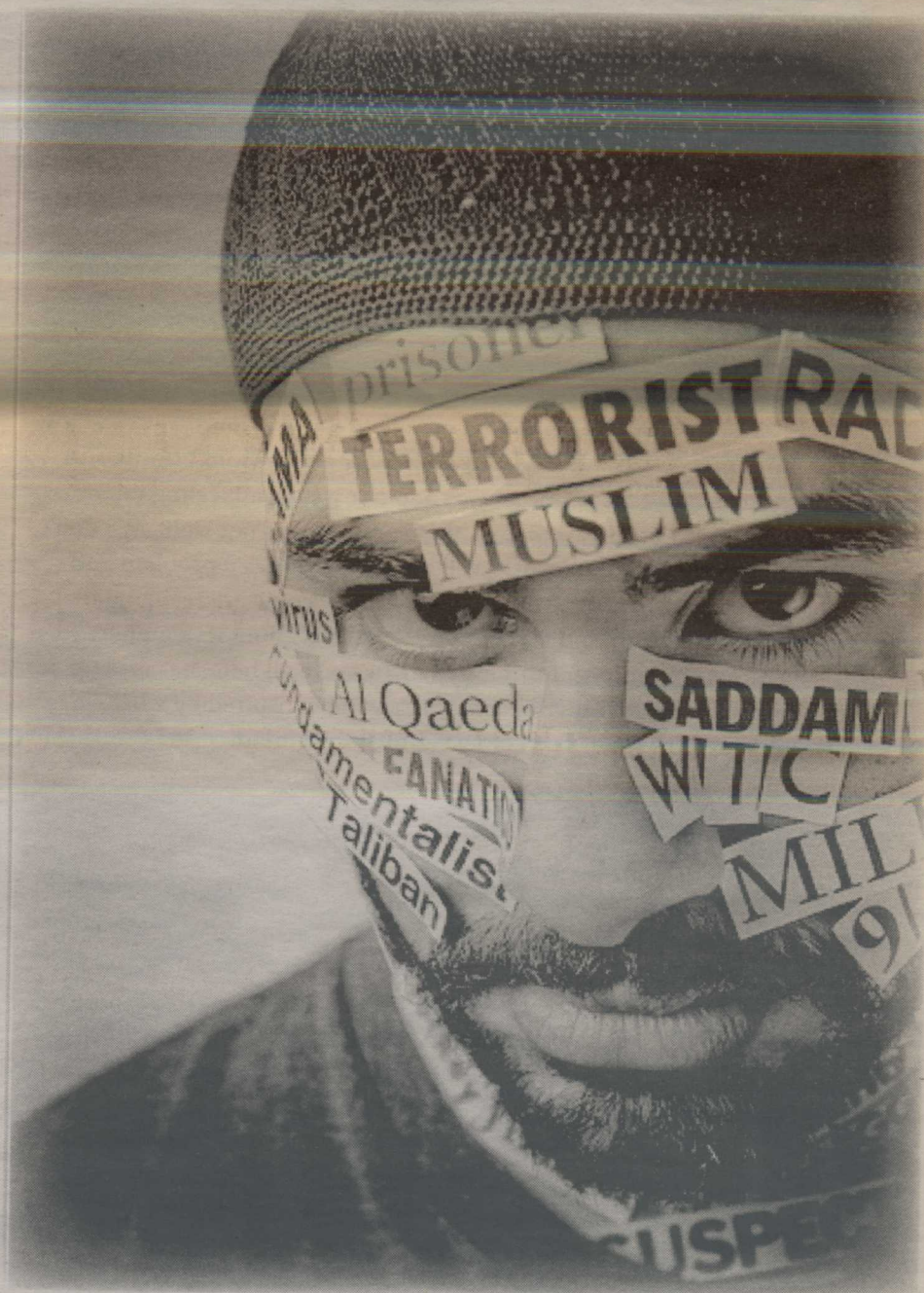
tions armed with a witty and awesome PowerPoint slide show, I was attempting to undo some of that damage. Much of my audience was clearly not from the student body, but from the greater community. Recently, information documents were released that show that the New York City Police Department spied on the MSAs of thirty-one different New York City area colleges. Forget evidence, this latest round of spy games occurred without even *suspicion* that these organizations have done and/or will do anything illegal. It is merely enough to be Muslim to be a suspect, removing any doubt that innocent until proven guilty is nothing but a mere pipe dream in our legal system. Muslims therefore are suspicious until proven guilty. Now when I think about that lecture and my sweet PowerPoint (which included a photo of Jennifer Lopez wearing what looks like hijab), I wonder which of those alert faces, which of those pairs of shining studious eyes, which and how many of my beloved audience was undercover NYPD.

Could I/we really be that important to warrant surveillance? Was our Lehman College MSA chapter a jihadist training ground, rife with radical events such as coordinated hijabs (head scarves)? Pink for Valentine's Day and Orange for Halloween? These clandestine spy operations are another ridiculous waste of time and money by our law enforcement and government and with super shady implications. Muslims seemingly can be spied on without any actual (again, credibility isn't the issue) information suggesting that they are up to anything nefarious. Moreover, the NYPD can and has exceeded its jurisdiction in pursuit of people and information, going well outside of the limits of New York City in pursuit of Muslim no-goodery. This surveillance represents another step in the slow stripping of Muslim civil rights by the various levels of society in the United States. The mere act of being Muslim is criminalized to the extent of being probably guilty until actually proven guilty. Displaying one's Muslimness by such questionable acts as joining an MSA or going to pray in a mosque; these make one a suspect. Muslims have lost the right, or perhaps it is only a privilege, to be individuals—we are no longer individuals that can practice a faith freely in this country. When we do so, wherever we may be, so follows New York's "finest."

The debacle over the Islamic Center at Park51 is another example of Muslims being restricted from freedom of religious practice. In a largely Fox News-fueled orgy of Islamophobia, communities around the country tried to block the construc-

tion of mosques. From California to Tennessee, anti-freedom forces coalesced to try to block the construction of Islamic places of worship. The reason that this became so virulent was two-fold. The media had a field day with it, fanning the flames of intolerance by not allowing the issue to die and by framing the debate within discriminatory boundaries. Secondly, the rhetoric used against the initial project denied Muslims the ability to be fully American. That rallying cry was that the Ground Zero Mosque was too close to the site of the September 11 terrorist attack and that decent Americans would feel that the terrorists had won if there was a mosque anywhere nearby. The implication was clear and simple—Islam equals terrorism and Muslim does not equal American. The line of reasoning is that if they're not "American then the Constitution and its guarantees do not apply."

Besides being restricted in our ability to pursue our religious practices, other recent instances of the loss of rights by Muslims include the ability to



freely move about the cabin. The removal of two Muslims from a Delta airlines flight, solely for the reason of them being Muslim, raises alarming questions as to whether or not one can be denied entrance to modes of transport, due to one's religion. As a curmudgeonly person, I am in the habit of writing complaint letters, with varying degrees of success. In response to my letter of outrage, Delta offered a startling admission, writing, "As the individuals responsible for the safety and security of their flight and everyone on board, pilots industry-wide do have authority over their aircraft within the parameters set by their individual carrier." The policy for allowing individuals to fly is not based on

anything other than the specific prejudices of the pilot. Although we rarely hear of these events, pilots are seemingly able to exercise complete authority over who flies on their planes, adding surprising currency to the television show "30 Rock's" joke of pilot enacted "Sky Law." As Islamophobia spreads, how many of us, cleared by security, will be denied entrance to an airplane because we are Muslim? There seems to have been no repercussions for the pilot that refused to take these two men. Will pilots, possibly veterans of the Air Force and our recent anti-Muslim wars, be allowed to deny their passengers on the basis of religion?

Besides being constantly under surveillance and not being allowed to freely roam the sky, Muslims' rights to have fun have also been under attack. A woman at Rye Playland was told that she could not board a ride due to her hijab. Arguments ensued and over 100 police officers responded to the disturbance...since the event was organized by an MSA, the NYPD must already have been watching it. These park rules do seem to be specifically aimed at Muslims, yet I can understand that rules are rules and that if this park has specific laws against head wear, that is their prerogative. However, the overwhelming police response and arrest of fifteen people for a simple disagreement is egregious and a demonstration of how police surveillance of normal people going about their daily business clearly leads to escalations and events such as this.

And what about government roles for American Muslims? Ongoing media driven allegations against President Barack Hussein Obama assert that he is some sort of secret Muslim. That one day Barack will rip open his suit and reveal, underneath, a green spandex superhero outfit emblazoned with a

bold crescent moon and star bearing the *shahada*. Then, *shariah* law will replace the constitution and the Dallas Cowboy's cheerleaders will be clothed in *burqa* and our freedoms will be erased. The supposed outcomes of having a Muslim president are so ridiculous that they have crossed the border into the realm of farce, set up their own society, lived there for generations and finally destroyed themselves in a fit of ridiculousness. Somewhat similar allegations were levied against John F. Kennedy during his presidential bid when "Mass-produced pamphlets, from extreme anti-catholic organizations, recapitulated the centuries-old belief that the Roman Catholic Pope ruled as a living anti-Christ." Yet the anti-catholic prejudice Kennedy received was never as widespread or as virulent as the Islamophobic attacks that Obama has been subject to, mainly because this current debacle exists within, and is legitimized by, mainstream American media. While it is unusual to publicly question a politician's religion, the question itself is not necessarily the problem. The problem lies in the response of both the Obama administration and the liberal media. When faced with the question, "Is Barack Obama a secret Muslim?" the answer of both the administration and the mainstream media is "No, of course not! He is a Christian!" Instead of answering, "He is not a Muslim but why would that be a problem anyway?" the debate focuses on how Obama could not possibly be a Muslim. The underlying message is that there is something wrong with being a Muslim. Something that precludes you from being President, which then makes Muslims less than fully American. This is reinforced by the legal requirement of having to be a native born American in order to be President. Therefore, even if one is an American

born Muslim, the religion disqualifies you from being the Chief Executive in the eyes of the American media and in the heart of mainstream American sentiment.

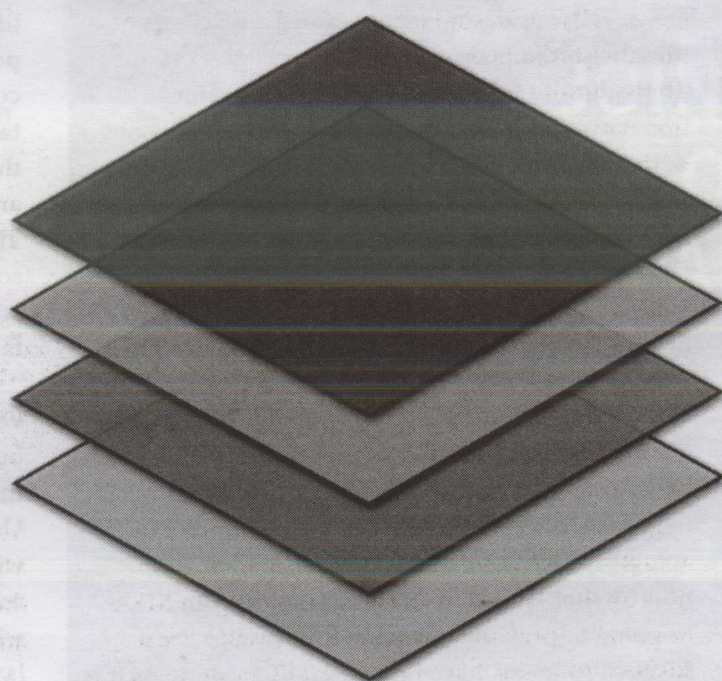
The June 2011 debate between Republican presidential candidates reinforces and expands the restrictions on Muslims holding high government positions. Both Herman Cain and Newt Gingrich specifically stated that they would not appoint Muslims to their cabinets or to federal judgeships. If being Muslim precludes one from being President, a cabinet member or a federal judge, how can we even jokingly say that these Republican candidates view Muslims as full Americans? And there is no corresponding condemnation of these restrictions coming from other politicians or any mainstream media sources. There are no legal restrictions on serving in the Cabinet or for being a Federal judge. No legal restrictions, but one social restriction—Muslims need not apply.

Muslim Americans, over the course of the last ten years, have lost significant rights in the United States. Although it is not legal restrictions that prevent Muslims from enjoying theme parks, flying on airplanes, freely worshipping their faith and from serving in high governmental posts, *de facto* societal prejudice exerts a very real and frightening anti-Muslim force. This *de facto* societal prejudice, a prejudice confirmed and promoted by the media and government officials, denies that Muslims are fully American, and therefore should not be privilege to the rights and freedoms of Americans. The *de facto* nature of these restrictions and prejudices are exactly what makes them so insidious and difficult to overcome in a society that is increasingly becoming more and more Islamophobic. Ⓐ

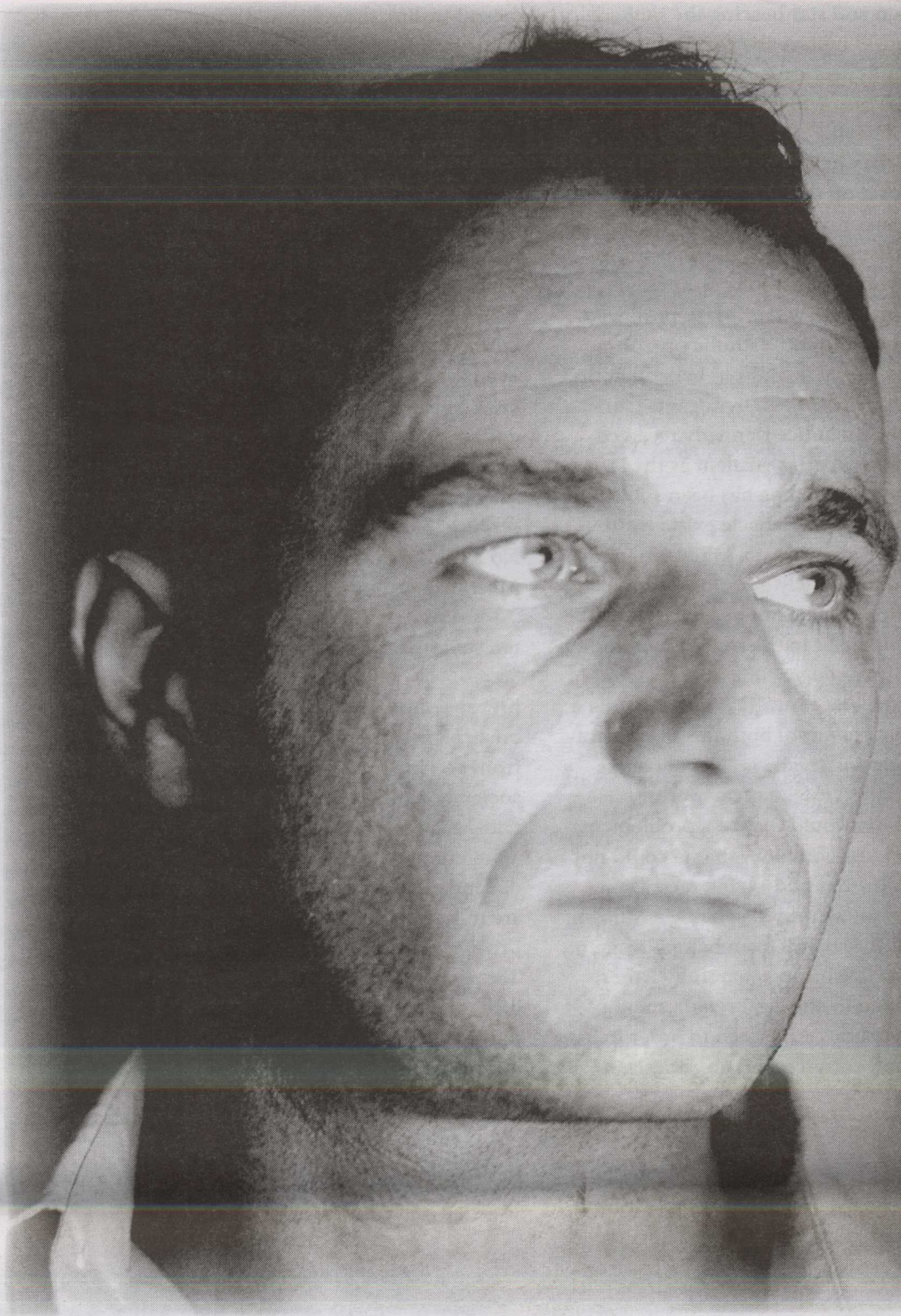
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Christian Parenti

and the Politics of Environmental Crisis

MICHAEL BUSCH

In many respects, 2011 has been marked as much by the mayhem of nature as it has by the upheavals of men. While challenges to political authority have captured the imaginations of millions and produced exciting tremors of revolution across the continents, Mother Nature's increasingly ferocious response to the heavy environmental footprint of industrial production will likely be judged the most profound source of social change around the world in the years to come.

From the Japanese tsunami, which triggered the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl, and the extreme drought that currently threatens the lives of millions in the Eastern Horn of Africa, to the wildfires, hurricanes, and periodic flooding that have decimated both coasts of the richest country in the world, anthropogenic climate change is increasingly—and undeniably—at the core of politics and society everywhere in the world.

Tropic of Chaos, Christian Parenti's excellent new book examining the intersections between climate change, neoliberal economic policy and the spread of political violence, bracingly argues that the convergence of these threats to international security has set our world along a course that will result in a broken planet conditioned by catastrophe, conflict and xenophobic distrust. That is, unless meaningful action is taken immediately to reorient international relations away from this disastrous trajectory.

The Advocate recently spoke with Parenti—who has for several years been a visiting scholar at the CUNY Center for Place, Culture and Politics and is currently visiting professor of sociology at Brooklyn College—about his book, the future of climate wars,

failures of leadership in Washington and at the UN to combat environmental degradation, and what can be done to avoid a world driven by the politics of natural catastrophe and the ethics of the armed lifeboat.

• • •

I wanted to begin by briefly touching on the book's title and, more importantly, discussing the theoretical concept that largely gives shape to the book's narrative arc: what you refer to as the "catastrophic convergence." Can you give us a sense of what you mean by each and talk about how they informed your research and analysis?

The "tropic of chaos" is less important than the "catastrophic convergence." The tropic of chaos is more of a play on words that refers to the conditions in the Global South which is that belt of post-colonial, underdeveloped, over-exploited states that mostly lay between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. So, it's sort of a name for that region of the world.

The "catastrophic convergence" is the driving thesis of the book, the argument that climate change doesn't just look like tornadoes, floods, and droughts. It also looks like religious violence, ethnic pogroms, civil war, state failure, mass migration, counterinsurgency and anti-immigrant border militarization. And so, climate change rarely works on its own. Usually, it arrives in the Global South on a stage preset for crisis. The forces that have preset that stage are militarism, and radical free-market restructuring—neoliberalism. Cold War militarism, and now the War on Terror, have flooded the Global South with cheap weapons and men trained in the arts of assassination and inter-

rogation, smuggling, small unit attacks and terrorism. Neoliberalism has created increased poverty, increased inequality and a tattered and stressed social fabric. As a result, it leads to less social solidarity, it damages and degrades traditional economies and makes more populations more vulnerable to sudden weather shocks, extreme climatic events like drought and flooding, which are due to anthropogenic climate change kicking in hard. And it is combining with these two preexisting crises—militarism and inequality and poverty—and the three of them are meeting in this catastrophic convergence and articulating themselves as increased violence. That can be religious violence, ethnic violence, sometimes class-based violence. Sometimes this is expressed as chaos and relative or outright state failure.

But in the Global North, the catastrophic convergence presents itself as a renewed emphasis on building-up the incipient police state that exists in many western European countries as well as the United States. So, we now have a reengagement with the discourse around border militarization, a reanimation of the xenophobic discourse that goes with those policies which are increasingly articulated in environmental terms—there's an environmental crisis; there's not enough to go around; immigrants need to be rounded up; everybody needs to sacrifice some civil liberties; the border needs to be militarized. If climate change pushes chaos and state failure in the Global South, it creates authoritarian state hardening in the Global North, at least in its earliest stages.

You offer compelling evidence that while the American popular discourse is largely primitive

and backwards when it comes to the politics of climate change, the United States military sees the challenges very clearly and informs to a great degree its doctrine on counter-insurgency. You argue that this gives life to “the politics of the armed life boat.” Can you talk more about how the US military is responding to climate threats, and what you understand to be the prospects for survival in the armed life boat?

The militarized response in the United States takes place in the military, but also at the state level in the development of a green xenophobia. They aren’t necessarily connected, but they fundamentally produce the same thing, which is a hardening of state policy. The military—to its credit—takes climate science very seriously. It does not question the validity of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report, which is the last one to be published, the one that was attacked because it had a few footnotes which were wrong. And they were wrong. There was stupid, arrogant stuff around those errors, but the errors and their correction in no way change the conclusions of the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report. The military takes the report seriously unlike, say, the Republican leadership in the House or many other elements of the American political class.

The military runs scenarios of what the future will bring. What they see is not so much an increase in conventional warfare between states as they do an increase in humanitarian crisis, civil war, banditry, religious wars, state breakdown. And they realize that the armed forces will be called upon to respond with various forms of low-intensity conflict: counter-insurgency, direct intervention, humanitarian intervention, shoring-up allied states, as well as increased training and advisory roles in these conflicts. The future for them is essentially one of open-ended counterinsurgency on a global scale as articulated through these various reports, some of them public, some of them secret.

In terms of the ethics of the armed life boat, which would seek to manage this crisis of a planet in decline, and manage it through the use of force, the examples of that are found on right-wing talk radio, which calls for expelling immigrants, or in people like Deborah Walker, who I discuss in the book. Walker describes herself as a northern Californian environmentalist. She’s also an anti-immigrant xenophobe and a racist. And then there’s the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)—which I didn’t address in the book because I didn’t know about it; it was only exposed after the book was published—FAIR—the original anti-immigrant lobby group associated with Garrett Hardin and others—started a front group called Progressives for Immigration Reform that was seeking to reach out to environmentalists and progressives with a message of excluding immigrants, talking about the carrying capacity of the country and making the case that immigrants, essentially, should be repressed.

These are the current features of this state hardening. One can imagine how this project of border militarization and planetary management through counterinsurgency and counterterrorism could build around it a kind of paranoid, frightened, xenophobic consent among more and more Americans. And that would be the politics of the armed life boat: the idea that we have ours, the world is ending, and we need to hold on for as long as we can through the force of arms. The military—again to its credit—does not think this is a good long-term plan. They always say that this stuff has to be dealt with through the reduction of carbon emissions. Otherwise, we are going to hit all the tipping points climatologically which will lead to self-compounding climate change and the unleashing of such radical transformations in weather patterns that it will be very hard for civilization to hold on.

Radically rising sea levels and the massive desertification of the grain baskets of the world, among other problems, will make it very hard for even the most developed economies to survive. That’s what scientists predict and project if we continue with business-as-usual, which is burning fossil fuels.

Let’s talk about water for a moment, a point of hope for some environmentalists insofar as it seems to be one of the few things that states have an interest in securing and a resource around which even antagonists—such as India and Pakistan—can cooperate. You take on a variety of this argument, that “water is rational,” when it comes to something like the Indus Water Treaty, and question its long-term viability. Talk about where things currently stand, and what you see as the prospects for the treaty’s continuing functioning in the future?

The Indus water treaty is remarkable insofar as it has worked for as long as it has. It was signed in 1960, negotiated in 1959, but it is fraying in part because climate change planners and elites in each country are very much aware that water resources are going to be increasingly scarce. So India is building lots of dams and canals on its side of the border and claims that it is not violating the treaty, that it has the right to use the water under the treaty—which it does—as long as it doesn’t diminish the flow. But then Pakistan argues that there is diminished flow which contributes to their suspicion of India, they believe that India is not simply impounding the water but that they are siphoning it off. And increasingly we witness this entering the discourse of the radical religious right in Pakistan, the asymmetrical assets that have been cultivated

by Pakistani intelligence like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jama’at-ud-Da’wah which recently made statements about India’s “water terrorism” and how water must flow or else blood will. So the issue is becoming more intense.

As and to the question of whether or not it can be maintained, that’s an open question in part because the threat of climate change is suddenly part of the equation but also because there’s just horrendously bad management of the agreement, in Pakistan especially, where there is very little productive adaptation. I wrote a piece in *The Nation* recently about just this. The core of any climate adaptation in Pakistan would be social justice and land reform. No elites in Pakistan are willing to consider this, however, nor do aid agencies make this a condition of development aid, and the United States government doesn’t want to talk about. There is a tradition of progressive movements in Pakistan but they have suffered tremendous repression and their demands for economic redistribution go unanswered. As a result, there has been no movement on the issue—even after the recent horrendous flooding—towards land redistribution and social justice, out of which might have come some better water management strategies, not to mention better use of the land.

In terms of what I criticize in the book was not the treaty itself, but instead what I thought was sort of a silly article that tried to explain why the treaty works between these two belligerents that have fought four wars, and yet the treaty works. The article argues that it is water rational which to me seems completely tautological. The real question is “why is it rational”? That’s the question, not a conclusion. Why is this rational as opposed to it

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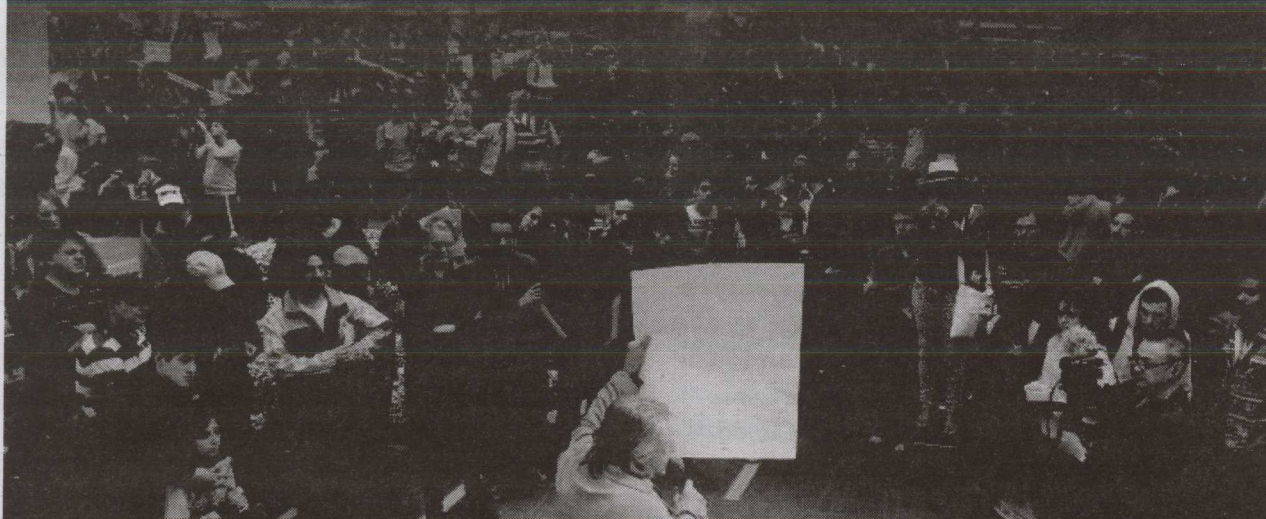
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being rational, for example, for India to annihilate Pakistan by just damming all the rivers? And I suggest a few answers that I think are rather obvious, including the fact that that would have been simply too extreme. India has the upper hand but the international political atmosphere is such that it would not allow that kind of action. Also, Pakistan has backing from the United States. But as things continue to unravel in the future that could be a possibility especially if India diverts more and more water from Pakistan and Pakistan becomes more

like the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition are doing to stop mountain top removal coal mining and coal plant production. Using everything from direct action to lawsuits and lobbying this array of groups has helped the construction of about 130 coal plants.

So, there are campaigns like the fight against coal that people should get involved with. There's also the actions that were taken in August to oppose the Keystone XL pipeline that would run Canadian tar sands slurry through the United States and down to

substantially reduced. At the same time, it would also likely create knock-on effects in the private sector by allowing the burgeoning clean tech sector to achieve economies of scale and provide its energy, vehicles and services at a rate that is cost competitive with diesel fuel and gasoline.

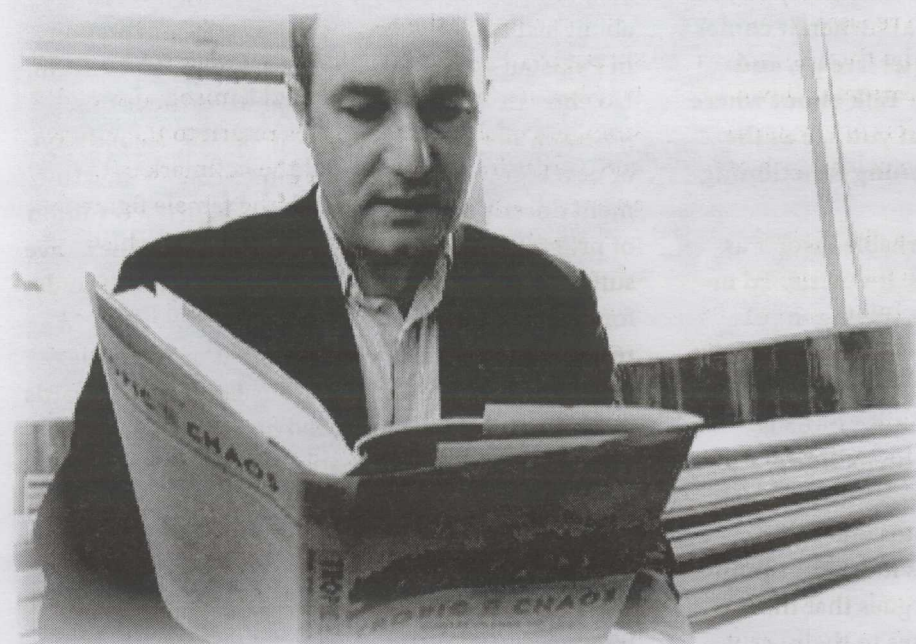
As power shifts from west to east with the so-called rise of China, many warn that China's growing political and economic might is being built on the back of environmental degradation, which is only further exacerbating climate change internationally. In the book though, you briefly mention that China is beginning to move to clean technology production. Can you give us a sense of how Beijing's approach has differed from that of Washington, and what the likely outcome might be?

I don't think that China's approach is that well-organized, yet. The main thing to keep in mind, though, is that Beijing's actions aren't motivated by some high-minded concern about climate change. The issue of local pollution has really driven China to embrace clean technology. Take the wind sector, for example, which is growing at something like 20 percent a year in China. They invited in all the Western firms—Gamesa, Vestas

, GE—then essentially counterfeited their technology and then invited these firms to take, in the case of GE, for example, 2 percent of the market. GE could go to war with them and say "hey, you stole our technology" and try to prove it in court which would only get them shut out of the Chinese market. Or, they can just shut up and take 2 percent of a market that is growing very, very fast. Needless to say, they have chosen the latter.

The one lesson we can take from China is the same lesson that most of the Asian economies remind us of, which is that capitalism develops best when there is a strong state guiding it. Capitalists and capital need discipline, they need to be disciplined. They need to be taxed, and their investments need to be guided by the state because when the market is left to its own self-regulation—which is the ideological preference and prevailing ethos of our political class—you do not get the types of innovations and hothouse developments that have characterized industrialization throughout East Asia. The command model of capitalism that China has embraced—a version of what was done in South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—this dirigiste model is quite effective in potentially mitigating the worst abuses of people and nature committed by capitalism while at the same time encouraging its better, Promethean qualities.

After all, Marx not only criticized capitalism ruthlessly, but also praised its ability to create enormous amounts of wealth and technology and transform the face of the planet. That is essentially what we have done in a bad way with fossil fuels. But we need to push on through it and have a reindustrialization around clean technology. I do not think a retreat from industry back to the local is in any way realistic. We have to accelerate through this crisis and come out the other end with clean technologies. That means that we can't keep flying around everywhere, driving big cars and generally being wasteful. We have to consume less and transform the way we live, radically. But we aren't going to do that by turning our backs on machinery and electricity. We need windmills. If we don't get them, we are going to continue burning coal and field-stripping our AK-47s in preparation for our neighbor's next attack on the bunker. **A**



"In terms of what the Obama administration could do to reduce emissions: if it wanted to engage the UN process, there's a lot that can be done without having to go and get permission from the Republicans."

and more desperate and lashes out, if not conventionally with military force then with their asymmetrical assets, i.e. terrorism, in both India and Afghanistan.

The ability for the world to mitigate against the worst effects of climate change will largely depend on multilateral efforts at containing the damage. The United Nations has traditionally been the center of gravity for this purpose and yet it's largely been a failure: Copenhagen was a disaster, and Cancun only cleaned up some of the mess. Among other problems, the Secretary-General has been almost entirely absent as a force in these proceedings, and as you point out, the United States, the necessary prime mover in all of this, hasn't assumed leadership on the issue. Why is that, do you think? Can you talk about how you view the Barack Obama administration's record on the environment thus far, and what you think can be done to reorient Washington to more productive action?

The way you framed it is correct. The United States has played a non-productive role, a destructive role. It has not taken the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations seriously and as a result they have broken down. We are the largest economy in the world and until recently we were the largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world before China overtook us. The world looks to the United States for leadership but US actions, especially at Copenhagen, were really depressing. As a result those talks fell apart. Though the process limps on towards its next round of negotiations in Durban South Africa.

What will change the US position? Protest, clearly. There has to be a movement that forces the Obama administration to do this. The Obama administration is proving itself to be very right-wing on many issues, including this one. It just hasn't been good on climate even as the majority of people who elected him take climate change very seriously and care deeply about the issue. And so, I think there needs to be a movement to pressure him. There are campaigns underway that can do just that. For instance, there is Beyond Coal, a big campaign sponsored by the Sierra Club under the leadership of Michael Brune, and the work that Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network and the direct action group Radical Action for Mountain People Survival and long struggling local groups

the Gulf final re-

fining and export, where people committed acts of civil disobedience in Washington, DC. These kinds of things need to be done.

Beyond that, I think organized labor has to begin taking climate change seriously. The main thing that organized labor has done recently was Rich Trunk urging President Obama to take China to the World Trade Organization because Beijing was subsidizing its clean tech sector. In the name of competitiveness, the AFL-CIO is trying to cut Chinese subsidies, which they will not be able to do, first of all. And second of all, they're not demanding similar subsidies here in the United States that would put people back to work. It's pathetic. So, all the various institutions of the left need to take climate change seriously and start building a movement to pressure government to make it an issue on the international stage.

Now, in terms of what the Obama administration could do to reduce emissions: if it wanted to engage the UN process, there's a lot that can be done without having to go and get permission from the Republicans.

The EPA, for one, has the obligation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. This is the result of environmental groups suing and fighting in court for ten years—and finally winning at the Supreme Court level—to get the EPA to consider greenhouse gas emissions under the 1970 Clean Air Act, which holds that if emissions are dangerous to human health than they have to be regulated. And sure enough, greenhouse gas emissions are dangerous to human health due to their adverse effects on the environment. Therefore, the EPA has an obligation to regulate them and has just begun promulgating these rules. Unfortunately, they are not very robust. In fact, they're pretty lame and the administration is dragging its feet on the issuance of these rules by building in delays. If the EPA were serious and really imposed strict rules, say, on smoke stacks in coal plants and oil refineries it could effectively push investment towards clean technology as the rising cost of dirty energy and carbon emissions would drive people away from it.

The other thing the government could do is leverage its tremendous purchasing power. If state purchasing of vehicles and electric power were done according to environmentally clean specifications, the public sector's carbon footprint would be

MOMA's Must-See de Kooning Retrospective

► *de Kooning: A Retrospective*. At the Museum of Modern Art. On view through January 9, 2012.

VICTORIA ROMEO

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) recently opened an impressive and exhaustive retrospective of the art of Willem de Kooning (1904-1997). Born in Rotterdam, the Dutch artist immigrated to the United States as a ship's stowaway in 1926. He gained notoriety and success in the New York galleries by the late 1940s and became intrinsically linked to the Abstract Expressionist movement. Despite his enormous success, de Kooning's work still remains less familiar to viewers today than the more celebrated works by Jackson Pollock or Mark Rothko hanging alongside de Kooning in the MOMA's permanent collection. De Kooning has not received nearly as much exhibition attention as either Pollock or Rothko, and, in fact, the current show represents the first comprehensive, all-media retrospective on the artist to date. De Kooning was a prolific artist, who produced work over the course of seven full decades and as MOMA's show proves, one that is more than worthy of a full retrospective.

The greatest success of this show lies in its thorough, almost painstaking tracing of the artist's progression from teenage apprentice to veteran artist. The seven galleries, filled with over 200 paintings, sculptures and works on paper are divided into seven corresponding periods of de Kooning's career. The galleries are organized in chronological order, allowing viewers to appreciate the clear changes and developments in the artist's work over the course of his life. His methods receive ample attention in the wall texts and labels and reveal a methodical and calculated approach, despite the often spontaneous appearance of the finished paintings. These wall texts are less helpful, however, in helping the viewer get any sense of what might have been behind de Kooning's drive to create works full of such intense agitation and anxiety. In tracing his long career, the only thing missing from this excellent show is a sense of de Kooning as a man and an intellect, of his identity beyond the canvases.

As de Kooning once said, "I have to change to stay the same" and in fact this aptly defines the retrospective from start to finish. Each of the seven galleries attest to this drive to change, displaying works that fall into at least one (and sometimes several) of the artist's favorite themes. Images of women, landscapes, and varying degrees of abstraction seem to serve as guideposts in his lifelong quest to explore new artistic techniques. It is only in the first gallery, representing the artist's early career, where viewers will find images of still lifes and of men. These early explorations give way in the proceeding rooms to the aforementioned themes, which the artist visited and revisited for nearly forty years.

The earliest work, a detailed still life in bright pigment was executed when de Kooning was only twelve years old. This and other early work display his talent as well as his commercial art training; he served as an apprentice to a decorative art and design firm in Rotterdam during his teenage years. In fact, de Kooning's understanding of commercial art methods would help shape his own later artistic production. Though he utilized commercial techniques such as tracing and layered collage, he used those techniques in such innovative ways that the results were always more avant garde than Madison Avenue.

De Kooning produced a series of male figures

from 1937 to 1944 but never returned to the subject again. These figures reveal a sense of melancholy and agitation that would become increasingly magnified in his later exploration of female figures. The artist often served as his own model for the male works, but intended them to represent the everyman and more specifically, the Depression-era everyman, who had become disheartened, downtrodden and alienated. These works convey a real feeling of anxiety that continues to color much of the later works as well.

The first gallery also reveals the artist's initial explorations with total abstraction in a series of paintings dating to the late 1930s. Influenced by the works of Picasso and Mondrian, whose paintings de Kooning had seen on display at MOMA, the works from this period show a marked shift away from the limits of figuration. These works, including *Father, Mother, Sister, Brother* (1937) nonetheless still retain a suggestion of the figure in their abstract forms. Indeed, in these paintings de Kooning seems always to be walking the often fuzzy line between representation and abstraction, a practice he would continue throughout his long career.

The following three galleries trace de Kooning's career through the 1940s and 50s, charting his innovations in technique and his intense explorations of the female form, abstraction, and landscape. The abstract works of this period are more nuanced and



original, and it is clear that the artist was slowly developing his own style and moving away from the influence of giants like Picasso and Miró. His series of black and white abstract paintings, including the enigmatic *Black Friday* (1948) comprised the artist's first solo show at the Charles Egan Gallery in New York in 1948. As the artist explained, he intended his abstract works to still contain "hints" of representation. The paintings from this period are meant to function as a passing glimpse of something seen quickly. For de Kooning, abstraction is less about minimizing form than it is about adding an often layered and usually chaotic emotional depth to it. It is no surprise, then, that it was these works that really launched de Kooning's reputation as one of the most influential artists in the circle of Abstract Expressionists, and they represent a clear shift into new territory for the artist.

The true pinnacle of the entire exhibition, however, occurs at the halfway point with the impressive installation of the artist's third series of women. De Kooning began this series with *Woman I*, perhaps his most famous painting. Begun in 1950, this work occupied de Kooning for two and a half years before he finally finished it in 1952. He also executed five other paintings of women in this series, as well as dozens of preparatory works on paper. The re-

sulting series contains images of women portrayed in varying degrees of abstraction, flattened and at one with their colorful backgrounds. The women, especially the figure in *Woman I*, appear distorted, grotesque and ferocious. When these work were first exhibited at the Sidney Janis Gallery in the spring of 1953, they caused a considerable uproar. De Kooning was quickly labeled a misogynist and simultaneously derided for his return to the figure and retreat from abstraction, the hallmark of the current avant-garde. Although the female figure is perhaps the most traditional subject in the history of art, de Kooning's women are radically different than those created by, say, Titian and Rubens, whom the artist greatly admired. Stylistically, these paintings are innovative in their merging of background and subject while maintaining a bright, wild color palette with some sense of visual order. The chaotic, yet carefully planned execution of paint gives the works an added sense of anxiety. And then, of course, there are those haunting, toothy grins on the faces of the women. These works seem intentionally disturbing and yet viewers learn nothing in this show about de Kooning that might provide a clue as to how to interpret this series. Although his two previous series of women paintings contained a decent amount of melancholy and angst, the third series takes this psychological state to a new level. The great mystery of de Kooning lies in these works and that makes them all the more fascinating.

To say that the rest of this lengthy show could not compete with the first half would be a bit unfair. However, the stylistic nuances and evolving combinations of abstraction, figuration and landscape begin to blur together after having already been awed by roughly one hundred works of art, including the *tour de force* that is the aforementioned third series of women. Yet, de Kooning had another three decades of art left in him, and so, we press forward. Fortunately, in the next gallery, de Kooning's large, colorful "abstract parkway landscapes," completed in 1956 and 1957 feel soothing in the simplicity of their wide brushstrokes and lack of figuration. Critic Thomas Hess termed these works, "full arm sweeps" in reference to the broad brushstrokes that comprise the artist's efforts to capture the roadways that lead into and out of Northeast cities. His color-blurred canvases artfully convey the feeling of whizzing down a tree-lined highway, barely able to discern the shapes of the things passed by.

De Kooning's exploration of the shifting nature of abstraction continues through the remaining galleries. In 1969, the artist began experimenting with sculpture for the first time, and over the next decade produced a range of small to large abstracted works. These were modeled in clay and cast in bronze, giving them a unique appearance in their combination of modern sensibility and traditional medium. While some of the works incorporate found objects, most are as inscrutable as his abstractions on canvas.

In the final gallery, visitors find de Kooning in the twilight of his career. With his health beginning to deteriorate, the artist was forced to take a more minimalistic approach to his paintings. These beautiful works—pared down offerings compared to de Kooning's earlier works—are the most serene of any of his paintings. Here, ribbons of color float across large white canvases, signaling the final innovative phase in de Kooning's seventy-year quest to understand his own artistic vision while at the same moment staying true to it. **A**

Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense

- Professor X. *In the Basement of the Ivory Tower: Confessions of an Accidental Academic*. Viking Press, 2011.
- Alex Kudera. *Fight for Your Long Day*. Atticus Books, 2010.

LAVELLE PORTER

1. So it seems we're finally getting around to that conversation about higher education. Several noteworthy and highly critical books on the subject have been published over the last couple of years, including books by scholars such as Lewis Menand, Martha Nussbaum, Andrew Hacker, and Claudia Dreifus. Last year PBS released the documentary *College, Inc.*, which raised the profile of the for-profit college industry and seems to have encouraged more public scrutiny of the dubious financial practices at those institutions. Most of these critiques of higher education seem to revolve around three core issues: 1) The decline of tenure and the rise of adjunct labor as the industry standard; 2) the escalating costs of enrollment and the increasing amounts of loan debt students take on to cover the costs; and 3) the overall corporatization of the university, which is the driving force behind the other two issues. We can debate about whether profit driven education is good or bad, but we can't dispute the fact that institutions of higher education are increasingly run like corporations, and that students are now as much "customers" as they are learners. And there's a lot of chatter out there now about how students are being sold a sham product. One Silicon Valley entrepreneur is offering talented young people money *not* to go to college and to develop startup projects instead. He insists they will learn more from their real world experiences than from writing papers on *Beowulf*.

2. One piece that broke through the clutter of commentary on higher education was "In the

Basement of the Ivory Tower" an article published in *The Atlantic* and written by a pseudonymous author, Professor X. The article touched a nerve and went viral in the academic world largely because of the author's contention that higher education may not be right for everyone, and that here in the U.S. we may be leading people to financial ruin by insisting that higher education be accessible for all who want to attend even if they are not prepared for college level work. In the book version of *In the Basement of the Ivory Tower* Professor X has expanded on the article and absorbed some of the livid critical responses that flooded the message boards and listservs. The resulting book is an elegant and forceful volume that uses the college writing course as a microcosm for higher education. The hidden identity of Professor X presents a bit of problem when it comes to accepting the veracity of his observations. We do know he is a middle-aged heterosexual married white male who has an MFA., if the autobiographical information included in the book is accurate. Having worked as an English instructor at the college level myself I can say I experienced the shock of recognition at several points throughout the book as he describes what it is like teaching freshman composition.

3. Some of the critiques of *In the Basement of the Ivory Tower* are mistaken. I didn't get the impression that Professor X is some kind of neo-conservative with *Bell Curve*-inspired ideas about the limitations of the intellect among certain groups of people. What the book does depict is the incredible stress that the new corporate paradigm of higher education is placing on students and teachers. Students are taking out more loans than ever to cover the cost of school. Many of them are being coerced to enroll in higher education even though they are unprepared for it, and may not get much out of

it. Teachers are expected to do more teaching with less job security, and to teach more students with less resources. The resulting situation is one where real learning gets sacrificed for economic efficiency, and both students and professors are feeling exploited and cheated by the situation.

4. Cyrus Duffleman (a.k.a. Duffy or The Duff) is the protagonist of Alex Kudera's academic novel *Fight For Your Long Day*. Like Professor X he also has an MFA but is an adjunct professor. In *Fight For Your Long Day* Cyrus Duffleman is an adjunct instructor of English in Philadelphia who shuttles between classes at multiple campuses and works a graveyard shift as a security guard. Alex Kudera's book is precisely the sort of academic novel I was hoping to see—one that obliterates the old images of genteel pastoral college life and shows what higher education actually looks like today in these times of corporate education, economic anxiety, digital distraction and political paranoia.

5. One thing that Professor X does well with in *In the Basement of the Ivory Tower* is to show how this new form of higher education compromises the grading process. Students, he argues, see themselves as *consumers*, and therefore a college education becomes something that they *purchase* rather

than something they earn through their work and diligence. The more cynical students realize this and leverage it to their advantage. "We're paying your salary" they say, explicitly or implicitly, "so I am entitled to my A." And what can the professors do about it, when all the professors are adjuncts and their own position in the university is tenuous? This significantly diminishes their authority in the classroom, and their ability to adequately teach their students. Professor X seems to have tried valiantly to maintain some standards of student evaluation despite this situation. I can't say I did the same in my own teaching experience. (I have taught at two CUNY colleges, but I am not currently teaching.) I didn't give out all A's but I did find it difficult to penalize students by being a stickler when I barely had time to keep up with the assignments myself.

6. The difficulties in higher education are also exacerbated by the new digital reality we all live in. It is impossible to ban electronic devices from classrooms entirely. Some students take notes on laptops, and you know they are on Facebook or Twitter or off searching the web while you are lecturing. And they are all texting on phones under their desks. Furthermore the scattered impulsive way that they absorb information has made them bad writers and impatient readers. Professor X stresses the point that writing is difficult and that it takes a level of time and effort that seems hard for students to justify in their get-money-fast worldview. It is hard to convince someone that careful, elegant writing matters in world where Snooki can get a seven figure advance for "writing" a book, and when more people read Chad Ochocinco's Twitter feed last Sunday than will ever read both of these books combined.

7. College writing instructors often use autobiographically themed prompts to get students to write in freshman composition. I wonder what will happen when Facebook's new Timeline format turns out to be as transformative as people are saying it will be. We won't even have memoir as a reliable subject to prime the writing process anymore. People will get used to narrating their lives through digital interfaces. Writing about yourself in full sentences and paragraphs will seem boring and pointless.

8. In *Fight For Your Long Day* one of the schools that Cyrus Duffleman teaches for is Liberty Tech, a for-profit school designed to prepare students for work in homeland security. The school has invested in digitalization, and the CEO of the school says that "the age of the printed word is over. Online research and education is the future."

"In this thinking," Kudera writes, "the CEO recognizes the adjunct instructor of freshman writing as just another middle man who could be eliminated. Like the book itself, a relic of the past, his quarterly 'nonbinding noncontract' is just another waste of paper." Later in the book he imagines a scenario that I have often thought about myself: classrooms full of US college students taught through satellite hookups to professors in other parts of the globe. "The fifteen grand a year they were paying the graduate student has become fifteen hundred for a hungrier South Asian. And they're whip smart. A friend of mine sat in on a Shakespeare seminar and said it was excellent. Fharard knew the Bard, better than most Aussies and many Brits. That's globalization and progress."

9. Professor X also writes about the problem of rampant plagiarism in one of his chapters. Students now aren't even clever enough to be good plagiariz-

[untitled]

At least no one is putting hot
nails into my body, no one is putting out
their cigarettes against my skin,
no one is raping me (with

or without condoms), no one is
enslaving me, forcing me onto
my knees, nor carving me up with
tin cans, nor branding me with fired

irons, nor fondling me with fireplace
tongs, nor beating me with either
poker, crowbar, or gun butt; no one
has taken a hammer to me; no one

is binding me with rope or barbed
wire, no one is piercing me
with knives, nor scarring me
with broken glass, no one is

holding me under water nor
spraying me with acid nor
burning me with flicked matches;
no one is depriving me

of light, no one is holding me
against my will. At least no one
is keeping me alive.

— Matvei Yankelevich

ers. As he says, "They don't copy from academic journals. They just take the first thing that Google belches up."

10. I haven't included a lot of plot synopsis for each of these books here. Even if I did want to include more summary of the books I would have just lifted some text from some of the other reviews online, and rewritten the sentences so that it sounds like I am paraphrasing in my own voice. I would take care to make sure I didn't cite all of the same passages that other reviewers have cited, and I would add some quotes I didn't see in other reviews to make mine look more original.

Chances are whatever rote information I was going to share about these books has already been written up anyway, so why waste time trying to come up with original sentences that will end up sounding like everything else that is already out there? I have often used this sort of cut and paste technique as a way to prime other pieces of writing as well. I don't keep the same text completely but I use the words of others get me started, and eventually what I end up with looks like "original" writing. Is that plagiarism?

11. To write a truly good review would have required me to read and absorb both of these books at a level of intensity that I am not willing to commit to right now. I have other things to do including another job that requires heavy memorization, two big presentations coming up, and finally finishing that blasted dissertation. Normally I like to read a book at least twice before reviewing it. The best way to write about a book is when you already have some of the details committed to memory and the writing flows easily. I read through both of these books one time each and skimmed back through them after that. My plan is to turn in this review to the editor, then promptly toss both of these books aside so I can move on to doing the next thing.

12. Yes, I have jacked the enumerated style of this essay from recent popular books such as David Shields's *Reality Hunger*, and Wayne Koestenbaum's *Humiliation*. Get used it. More and more people will be writing essays like this soon.

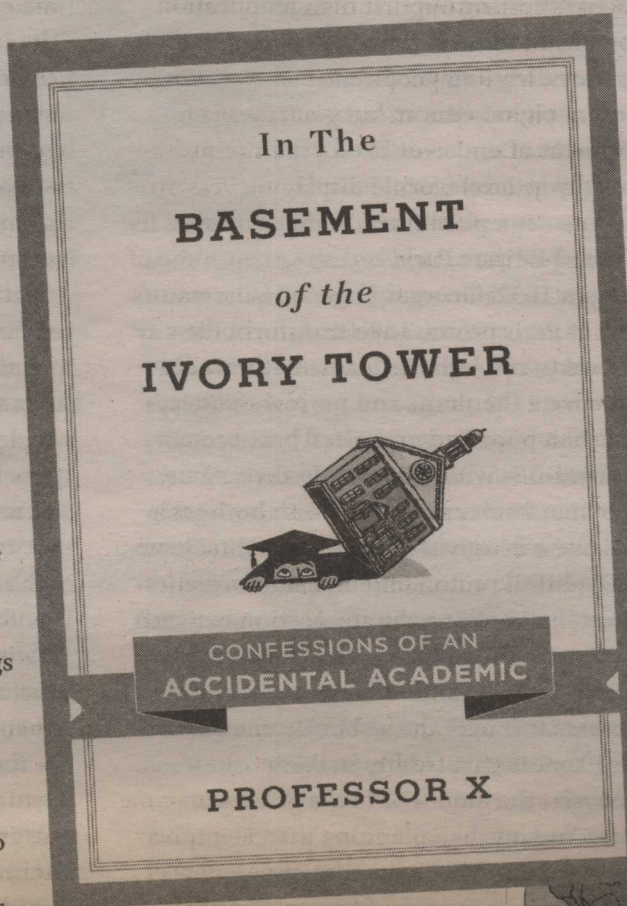
13. The truth is, I don't know how I would handle being an undergrad in this digital environment with the ubiquity of high-speed connections, iPhones, YouTube and Facebook. It is a marvel that any undergraduates ever finish writing a non-plagiarized paper given the assault on the senses that they experience every hour of their waking lives. I have enough of a background in reading physical books that I still feel at ease writing longer pieces. As Professor X points out, the biggest problem with teaching writing today is that students do not read, and therefore it is impossible to teach someone what competent writing looks like when they cannot recognize it from their own reading experiences.

14. Warning to any other reviewers: one side effect of *In the Basement of Ivory Tower* is that it makes you extremely self-conscious about grammar. Professor X has obviously taught plenty of writing courses, and absorbed a wide range of composition teaching advice. I even admit that this may have contributed to some of the anxiety that made my review even later than it already was. I began to think that if I'm going to review a book complaining about the decline of student writing, I better make sure my own language is in top shape. That led to procrastination, which led to delays in getting this done when other tasks started to intrude. I have found more than a few awful sentences and paragraphs in the pieces that I have published in this paper before. I'm sure I will find some in this one too.

15. So let's just be cynical for a minute and accept

that students really are consumers now. That's the way it is. We live in a capitalist economy, and the invisible hand of the market urges all institutions toward commercial efficiency. Adapt or die.

Fine. Then what kind of product are students being sold? Like the companies that sell diet pills and light beer, the students are being sold a lifestyle. And like those other products the advertisements for college are just as bogus. Students are being duped with the age-old practice of the bait and switch. On the subway in New York you see



advertisements for CUNY, for instance, that show students mugging it up with award winning professors. CUNY does have a few of those, but most of the students who enroll are unlikely to be chilling with Nobel Prize winning profs. No, they will be taught in courses where enrollments have been expanded to laughable proportions, and they will be taught by adjuncts. Some of their professors might be graduate students themselves, some of their professors will be career adjuncts with little prospect of becoming full professors. Just this week a discussion broke out on our English department listserv over an ad someone posted seeking a grader to help grade papers for a jumbo course at one of the CUNY colleges. This course has an enrollment of over 100 students, and jumbo courses like this are becoming the norm. (These are NOT the lecture courses you find at some big state schools where students are broken up into sections and taught by teaching assistants in a more intimate setting. These are *full* courses...taught by one professor...with no TAs.)

16. Professor X mentions one of the ugliest realities of the new adjunct paradigm. The more one teaches as an adjunct the less likely one is to be hired as a full time professor. Colleges want to hire full professors with hot shot credentials who just graduated from brand name schools and may eventually publish books that will gain some notice. At most schools there is no way to work your way up to tenure by being a dutiful adjunct professor. The harder you work at being a good teacher the more you get tainted with the stain of "career adjunct." You can piece together a meager salary from

teaching four or five courses at \$3,000 a pop, but you will not move up the ladder by being a good team player. You may in fact be dooming yourself to adjunct purgatory by being devoted to educating your students.

17. One thing I liked about *Fight For Your Long Day* is that it feels very much like a 21st century novel. Kudera depicts a world of higher education where the aspirations of learning and self-improvement still exist, but they exist alongside a world full of the crass, crude, and pornographic, a world that

milicates against contemplation and learning, a world where everything from violence to paranoia to frivolous pop culture is filtered through the interactive screens that nearly all of the students carry around with them everywhere they go. The book is full of allusions to current events, politics and pop culture, and is probably oversaturated with too many references, but even in that sense it feels familiar.

I didn't like the fact that the book had thinly drawn secondary characters. But then again, thinly drawn characterizations are sometimes all we are able to get from our students when they are being throttled through the higher education assembly line. I went to a small liberal arts college where I knew my professors and they became mentors. I went back to attend a retirement celebration for one of them last year. In contrast, I haven't seen any of the students I taught in my courses since the classes ended, and barely saw them outside of class when they were enrolled.

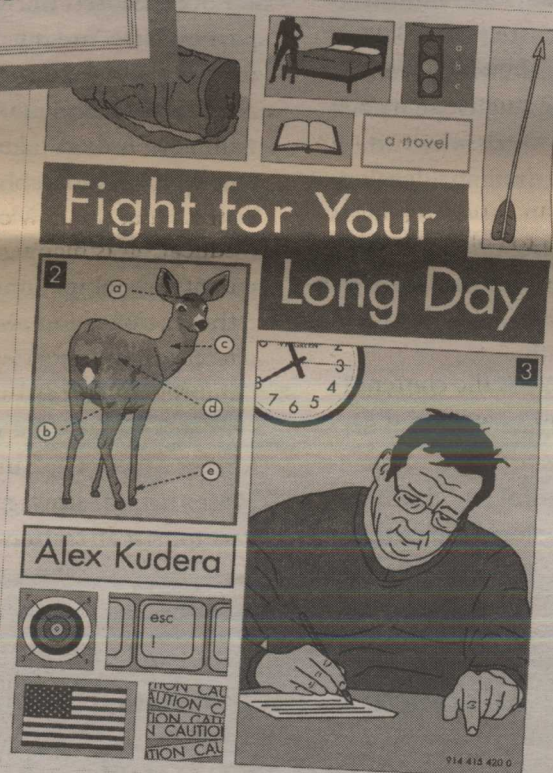
18. "To the young, schooling seems relentless, but we know it is not. What is relentless is our education, which, for good or ill, gives us no rest. That is why poverty is a

great educator. Having no boundaries and refusing to be ignored, it mostly teaches hopelessness. But not always. Politics is also a great educator. Mostly it teaches, I am afraid, cynicism. But not always. Television is a great educator as well. Mostly it teaches consumerism. But not always.

"It is the 'not always' that keeps the romantic spirit alive in those who write about schooling. The faith is that despite some of the more debilitating teachings of culture itself, something can be done in school that will alter the lenses through which one sees the world; which is to say, that non-trivial schooling can provide a point of view from which what is can be seen clearly, what was as a living present, what will be as filled with possibility.

"What this means is that at its best, schooling can be about how to make a life, which is quite different from how to make a living. Such an enterprise is not easy to pursue since our politicians rarely speak of it, our technology is indifferent to it, and our commerce despises it. Nonetheless, it is the weightiest and most important thing to write about."—Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (1995). ^A

As Professor X points out, the biggest problem with teaching writing today is that students do not read, and therefore it is impossible to teach someone what competent writing looks like when they cannot recognize it from their own reading experiences.



Living In The Stew

A DIY music scene goes small and goes home in Brooklyn

► Death By Audio performance space.

SHANE GILL

On approach, Death By Audio, one of Brooklyn's Do-It-Yourself, all-ages concert venues, is unassuming—and strikingly so. The north side of South 2nd Street's sidewalk runs unevenly, from solid concrete slabs at the corner of Wythe Avenue to mid-block cracked asphalt and unkempt grass. Ailanthus tree branches drape over a gravel-pathed parking lot, surrounded by blank facades of anonymous warehouse space. The south side of South 2nd Street boasts new commercial spaces and freshly built, still mostly unoccupied condominiums. If the south side of the street exemplifies the spectacle of progress, the north side lays paused before pedestrians, not unlike the neighborhood's elderly residents, watching passers by from their front steps on a Sunday afternoon. They're living monuments to the neighborhood's past, and their rigid silence suggests foreboding and anxiety over whether they'll fit into the Williamsburg of tomorrow. For many, the Williamsburg of tomorrow—a condominium covered refuge for Manhattanites, dormant industrial warehouses rising into a Frankenstein-like Battery Park vis-à-vis Miami Beach—is already the Williamsburg of today. On a stifling August afternoon, Edan Wilber, one of a few individuals who run Death By Audio, reflects on the dramatic development with self-aware awe. "When I started booking shows here, this was the only thing on this block," he explains. "Now there are three restaurants, a bar, those condos, and a movie theater on the corner. All of that sprang up in 18 months."

For many New Yorkers, be they those suffering from the financial challenges of gentrification or those resigned to it with the presumption of inevitability, the conversation is dreadful and devoid of long term context. There are few local topics that

incite more despair than the false choice between caricatures of salivating opportunists and heart-broken liberals. In historic terms, Williamsburg's acclaim as the newly-crowned center of New York cool is a recent phenomenon, but gentrification—the development of under-utilized urban areas by and for wealthy interests, while displacing low-income residents—is a phenomenon that can trace its roots to Second Empire Paris.

Beginning in 1852, Georges Eugène Haussmann's renovations of Paris promised to transform the city from medieval to modern. As Haussmann would have it, gone were the slums and narrow roadways where the urban poor had organized barricades in violent stand-offs with the state. In their place, the new Parisian boulevards, lined with bourgeois apartments, were designed to facilitate military suppression of political protest and to enable commercial transport, epitomizing the connection between a city's modernity and its commercial viability. While his influence, known as Haussmannization, can be witnessed all over the world, its manifestation in New York is particularly striking.

Robert Moses, the man who had a greater impact on New York's urban planning than any other individual in the last 150 years, admired Haussmann's work, and many of the features of daily life that New Yorkers take for granted—from bridges and highways to public works—have been shaped by his prerogative. Moses favored the interests of the city's wealthy minority over the lower income public, divesting money from inner city public transportation and resisting investments into poor urban neighborhoods (often destroying them in the process), instead supporting suburban expansion and commercial interests. In the mid-1990's, former Mayor Giuliani proceeded from where Moses left off, aiming to transform the city into one part tourist attraction and one part status symbol

for the world's wealthiest people. His actions were the logical extension of an ideology that seeks to distance public and private space from presumptions of public good, in order to maximize private wealth. The notion of the neighborhood itself has been transformed from a sprawling community to real estate organized by commercial interest, turning all space, both public and private, into one homogenous economic entity.

Today, in New York City, the monthly charge of rent and minimum cost of living are so demanding that any act on the hierarchy of needs lower than strict survival can be nearly impossible for many people. Acts of artistic expression often require free space for development, but most concert venues and art galleries, focused on making money at every possible opportunity, in large part to pay their high rent, cannot offer the flexibility artists need. David Harvey reflects on the legacy of Haussmannization in his essay *The Political Economy of Public Space*. "What had been lost was the idea of the city as a form of sociality," he writes, "as a potential site for the construction of utopian dreams of a nurturing social order." But now, in North Brooklyn, ground zero for the gentrification debate, an alternative economic model for the arts, with broad implications for all New Yorkers, is gathering steam amongst a loose collective of artists and musicians. In venues like Death By Audio and Silent Barn, free space for art is a necessity, not a luxury.

One can discover Death By Audio from the slightly ajar, nondescript door facing the sidewalk of South 2nd Street, flanked on either side by columns of frosted glass. In a neighborhood inundated by ad campaigns for its apartment complexes, assorted flyers, and brightly lit marquees, the lack of identification around Death By Audio's entrance seems intentional. Inside, past the volunteer collecting donations in the doorway, stacks of the DIY community's self-published art project/leaflet *Showpaper*, and an L-shaped hallway with exposed piping, the venue is broken up into two rooms. The front contains the performance space, and the back is used for selling merchandise and socializing. Art and graffiti cover the walls, including a striking mural, painted by Screaming Females vocalist Marisa Paternoster, which faces the audience from behind the stage. Amidst its cartoonish expressions and mischievous insinuations is a depiction of a bearded man brimming with excitement, looking out at the room in adoration. On good nights, the audience will crowd around the stage and look back at the man's image with the same enthusiasm. That man is Edan Wilber.

Wilber currently books shows for Death By Audio and plays an integral role in Brooklyn's DIY all ages movement. Wilber moved from Florida to New York over ten years ago to attend NYU film school, but was forced to take a year off because he couldn't afford it. Although he went to shows every night after work, he often wasn't allowed in because he was under twenty-one. "I used to go to Mercury Lounge and stand outside," he says. "It got to the point that the bouncers were like, 'We know you. We know you're not twenty-one. There's no way you're getting in here.'"

Joe Ahearn, the managing director of *Showpaper* and one of the organizers behind Silent Barn, argues that "there are many reasons to run a twenty-one-plus event, but the primary motivation

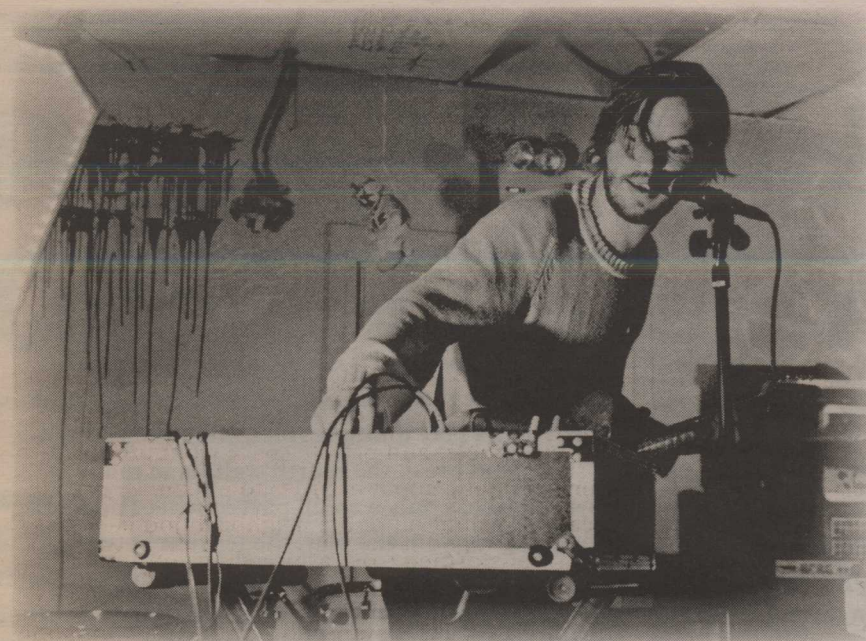
The GC Advocate is pleased to announce the Second Annual GC Advocate Poetry Competition.

The winning entry chosen by our judge will receive a \$250 cash award plus publication in the May, 2012 issue of the GC Advocate. Second and third place winners will receive \$75 and \$50 respectively plus publication.

The contest is free and open to any poet, previously published or unpublished.

Submissions must be received no later than March 1, 2012. Winners will be notified by April 30. All poems submitted to the contest will also be considered for possible future publication in the GC Advocate.

To enter, submit up to five poems of no more than 6 pages total as a Word attachment to advocate@gc.cuny.edu no later than March 1, 2012. Please be sure to include "Advocate Poetry Competition" in the subject line.



is economic. Making sure everyone in attendance is able to drink allows you to perpetuate a bar-and-alcohol model for your business, offsetting the cost of rent and whatever your overhead may be. All-ages events are almost never an economically successful model for throwing shows."

Faced with such challenges, Wilber and others who run Death By Audio rent the performance space from a landlord but also live on the premises, in the same warehouse structure. Money, which comes in at the door, largely goes to the band. Liberated from the bar-and-alcohol business model, Death By Audio is free to let anyone and everyone in, whether eight years old or eighty.

"Philosophically, we're similar to Death By Audio," says Nathaniel Roe, one of the organizers behind Silent Barn. Over seven years ago, Silent Barn began as a renovated warehouse used for band rehearsals, before transitioning into an innovative model for maintaining the artistic integrity of a performance space—all within a city that defines its sense of modernity by its commercial viability.

The organizers of Silent Barn are now actively pursuing a new space, which will afford them the option to legally reside within the venue that they also hold performances in. "Without public grants or private donors, the only way you can run a venue without making it a blow-out, with tons of people buying booze, is to live in your venue," Roe asserts. "It frees you on a financial level. Art values rather than money values."

Even though the Brooklyn DIY scene's innovative tactics for self-subsidizing space in a restrictive market breaks rank

with much of the precedent set by punk's past, the scene stills draws influence from a legacy established through thirty years of counter culture. The DIY culture, and the all ages movement which rose from it, began in the early 1980's American punk and hardcore scene. These bands and audiences, primarily teenagers, were disregarded by the mainstream music industry, deemed incapable of producing anything commercially viable. If they wanted to keep producing art and music, their only choice was to do it themselves. And they did, creating touring routes across the country and dotting the American landscape with independent venues, press, and record labels, often in unconventional locations. Michael Azerrad, author of the definitive text on America's DIY movement, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, explains, "For musicians and audiences, DIY spaces are a way of separating their community and its culture from commerciality, making it more about the joy of getting together and having fun—which is exactly the right priority."

"We call it living in the stew," Roe says. "To me,

living in the venue symbolizes a complete turn-over to aesthetic values—there's art everywhere all the time. This is a complete immersion in artistic value."

Instead of occurring in a vacuum, these experiments in the public utility of private space are catching on. "People are disillusioned with capitalism, even if they're not anti-capitalist," says Amy Klein, of the band Titus Andronicus. "They know that the economic system is failing and we need something new." Titus Andronicus utilizes another DIY venue, the so-called Shea Stadium, as a rehearsal space and recording studio. The band The So So Glos runs the space and oversees its day-to-day operations. "These venues aren't just about space," Klein adds. "They're about fostering a particular style of music with a philosophy that says anyone can do it—anyone can make music. Your music is more important than your financial status." According to The So So Glos' drummer, Zach Stagers, the features of these spaces are essential to the integrity of the final product. "Music is supposed to be listened to in spaces like ours; it's an atmosphere of freedom."

Upon departure at the end of an evening, Death By Audio shrinks deeper into the anonymity of its unassuming façade with each passing step forward. The urban spectacle of a viable alternative from the dreadful norm lingers in the air—or in this case, in the divisions of cracked sidewalk slabs, accompanying the departing crowd fifty feet in all directions from the venue's door. If, in fact, the use of public and private space often nakedly reveals people's determinations and the values of their time, what conclusion can be drawn from understanding Brooklyn's DIY scene?

As Amy Klein sees it, "We are in a time of economic upheaval. With rent being so high, young people are opting out of the traditional lifestyles that aren't even possible anymore." A

This is the first bookstore I ever visited in NYC. It's where I go to meet friends, it's a quiet place for friendly people in one of the busiest parts of town, and it's a beautifully curated store. Please don't let it disappear. / Emily

The city needs St. Marks bookstore - please save us from another drug store or bank taking over every corner making NYC just like a mall. / John

St. Mark's Bookshop is Vital and irreplaceable. It must be retained. / Louise

I grew up in CT, and whenever I would go into NYC, I would visit this book store! Keep it open. / Alyssa

Our future is robbed of the tactile discovery of our collective culture without physical bookstores. Keep bookstores alive and you keep the path of discovery alive. / James

St. Mark's Bookshop is a NECESSARY part of the culture/community of the lower east side & NYC as a whole! Please keep the rent affordable to them as an act of preservation of the history of a place YOU own property in. Respect yourself, your community & those who visit for years to come, please! / Kimber

Dear Cooper Union—Please do everything possible to keep this wonderful book store open. Our schools and students are only as good as our local resources. / Diana

Asian American Arts Centre supports this historic landmark, lose it and we lose who we are. / Robert

SAVE THE ST. MARK'S BOOKSHOP

The St. Mark's Bookshop, a vital Lower East Side cultural institution, needs a rent low enough to survive. Join the Cooper Square Committee petitioning Cooper Union, the bookstore's landlord, to give St. Mark's Bookshop a lower rent.

St.
Mark's
Book
shop

The St. Mark's Bookshop has a long tradition in the Lower East Side and serves an admirable and increasingly rare function. St. Mark's is struggling to pay the market rent that Cooper Union is charging them at 31 Third Ave. A significant rent concession by Cooper Union could save this irreplaceable neighborhood institution.

SIGN THE PETITION

Go to <http://signon.org/sign/save-the-st-marks-bookshop.fb1> and help save the St. Mark's Bookshop! Or better yet get down to St. Mark's and buy some books ASAP.

The Swedish are Coming!

Invasion! by Jonas Hassen Khemiri, produced by the Play Company, at the Flea Theatre, 41

Invasion! is a really fun and funny play. I want to state that right at the beginning before it gets lost in what's to follow. Smart, funny, highly theatrical, it is proof that political theatre need neither be dry nor

During a post-show chat early in the current off-Broadway run of the 2006 Swedish play *Invasion!*, playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri revealed that he had never thought about his 2006 play in connection to New York and 9/11 until very recently. This came as a surprise to everyone in the audience; seeing this play only steps from the World Trade

terrorism, and the simultaneous dismantling of the criminal justice system and of elsewhere as well. Explaining why they decided to change the setting, director Schmidt quipped that, to New York audiences, lines like "everything is Sweden's fault" would be kind of funny. She's right that it's difficult to imagine blaming Sweden for the current geopolitical mess, but I suspect the line plays as kind of funny in Sweden as well, even as it is also an important reminder that citizens of a non-"superpower" nation still grapple with the question of their place in the world, and their responsibility for it.

Invasion! is not an easy play to write about. Wisps of plot twist and turn, both illuminating and obscuring one another and, ultimately, this isn't a

writer's dandace with an unfamiliar form. Everything about *Invasion!* is designed to exploit and maximize the material conditions of the theatrical form. Actors play multiple roles, change costumes on stage, and break the fourth wall, as in many plays, but there's only a small part of what I'm talking about. Throughout the play, the tension between actor and character, between narration and action, is playfully explored. We are told one thing, but see another. We see certain scenes from more than one character's point of view. A character is described as screaming, but remains relatively calm. These are techniques that are particularly well suited to the theatrical medium, and Khemiri clearly loves to play with them. There is also a moment, which I've been asked not to discuss, that Hwang called one of the greatest coups de théâtre he had ever seen.

Schmidt, her actors, and her design team have crafted a fast-paced, quirky production that meets the challenges of the script and keeps the audience on their toes without disorienting them unnecessarily. As I've already noted several times, the play is very funny, sometimes sweetly so, and at other times acerbically so. The humor itself is also an effective theatrical device, because several moments are both funny and unsettling, the laughter fading as the implications of the situation become clear.

This is the first of Khemiri's plays to appear in the United States, and I wish it were getting a longer run. I also hope that this isn't the last we'll hear from Khemiri on this side of the Atlantic. Until we get another play, though, it's worth noting that his novel *Mantecore* was recently published in the US, and that it, too, was translated by Wilson-Broyles. I haven't read it yet, but I downloaded it as soon as I got home from the theatre.

I first saw Diane Paulus's production of *Hair* during its Central Park run in the summer of 2008. I was worried at first, when a woman took to the stage before the show not only to welcome us to the Delacorte Theatre but also to thank, without a hint of irony, Bank of America for sponsoring the production. It was a gloriously, distressingly perfect example of how anti-materialist, countercultural movements are coopted and commoditized. That said: I enjoyed the show. I thought at the time that it was probably as good as *Hair* can get: not perfect, but highly effective and enjoyable, and with a kick-ass onstage band. There were, of course, aspects that didn't work. The squeaky-clean young actors who made up the ensemble weren't always very convincing as hippies, and certain moments ended up feeling like a theme park attraction about the late sixties, but I left impressed and energized by the production's many successes.

The production went on to Broadway and a national tour. At the end of the tour, it made its way back to Broadway in 2011 for a limited run with the touring cast. Of course, shows that have been running for that long, and have been through that many cast changes, lose some of their luster. When I was offered very inexpensive tickets to the return engagement, though, I looked forward to revisiting *Hair*, and brought a guest who had never seen the show. This time, the balance was off. There were moving moments and some great voices, but the flaws and ironies seemed more amplified.

My friend was frustrated that the strongest voices didn't have the lead roles, and that those casting

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Center, in September of 2011, it was nearly impossible not to read it as a meditation on, and indictment of, the politics of identity and terrorism in the early twenty-first century. Even panel moderator David Henry Hwang, whose own sophisticated comedy about ethnicity and identity is about to open on Broadway, admitted to being surprised, and said that this was the first time he'd heard that Khemiri's play wasn't originally set in NYC. Indeed, the play had a shorter run in a smaller space last season, with much of the same creative team, and won a 2011 Obie for "helping us see ourselves, as Americans, more clearly."

For Khemiri, even though he allowed and even encouraged his collaborators in New York to change the setting, and to adjust certain cultural and topical references accordingly, *Invasion!* is a play about Sweden. That it feels so topical, timely, and relevant in a setting 4,000 miles from Stockholm, is certainly a credit to translator Rachel Willson-Broyles and director Erica Schmidt, who have successfully made the play sound like New York, or like a version of New York envisioned by a playwright with a biting sense of humor and a love of language. It is also, of course, a credit to Khemiri himself, who has written a probing, intelligent play that is at turns funny and alarming, challenging and engaging, political and heart-wrenching. Finally, it is an indication that, despite the tendency of those of us in the United States to think we're at the center of everything, the play's topicality—its articulation of anxieties sur-

plot-driven piece. There are also several surprises along the way that it would be unfair to reveal, including one that the publicist specifically requested we keep to ourselves. And yet describing the play in terms of its themes and politics, as I have a little bit above, creates another problem: it might sound self-important, dry, pretentious, when it is none of those things.

The play centers on a character who may or may not exist. Abulkasem may be a legendary figure from Arab history; he may be the gay uncle, visiting from Lebanon, of one of the play's characters; he may be an urban legend; he may be a terrorist, or a revolutionary, or a misunderstood asylum seeker. Because Abulkasem may be any, all, or none of these, the name itself becomes a highly unstable—and yet almost totemic—vessel for a great many people's anxieties, insecurities, aspirations, and fears. During the post-show chat, Khemiri, who is half Tunisian, talked about his father, a professor of Arabic and French, demonstrating how differently people reacted to him if he spoke with a French accent than if he spoke with an Arabic accent. It is clear that the playwright's love of language and his fascination with identity are deeply entwined, and that both have informed his work as an artist and his reading of various political issues.

What keeps this play of ideas from feeling like a sterile exercise in gratuitous cleverness, is how aggressively, intensely *theatrical* it is. Khemiri has said that he considers himself primarily a novelist

Above: Nick Choksi and Francis Benhamou in *Invasion!*

Pasolini, Anti-Consumerism, and the Counter-Culture of A-Politicism

► *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* by
Pier Paolo Pasolini (1975).

ANTONIO A. FONTANA

In 1975 Pier Paolo Pasolini's last film, *Salò, or The 120 Days of Sodom*, was screened at Italian art houses just a few months after the controversial filmmaker was murdered. By that time, Pasolini had distinguished himself as one of the great filmmakers and cultural critics of post-World War II Italy, using his films and novels as a medium for his critique of consumer capitalism and consumer culture. *Salò*, which portrays acts of unspeakable violence and brutality being enacted upon helpless teenagers by a wealthy and degenerate fascist officialdom, shocked and scandalized audiences everywhere. Since then, the film has become something of a cult phenomenon amongst devotees of vintage grind-house and exploitation films. However, what its fans and detractors fail to realize is that the film was just another installment of Pasolini's ruthless and enraged attack against what he labeled "neo-capitalism" and "consumerist civilization." It is this that makes *Salò* different from the average grind-house and exploitation film. Pasolini described himself as a Marxist, and indeed, was for a time, a member of the Italian Communist Party. Yet he held a cornucopia of *unorthodox* and contradictory political views, views which (along with his publicly avowed homosexuality) led him to be expelled from the ICP. What were his views, then? And how are they relevant for today? What's more, did his prediction of the 1960's hippie counter-culture degenerating into an a-political conservatism, come true?

Pasolini was, in many respects, the first critic of mass consumerism. For him, consumerism, unlike, say, Italian fascism, or German Nazism, was able to carry out the "homologation" and "anthropological transformation" of European man in a way that was never thought possible. This is because consumerism is tied to a hedonistic ideology, an ideology that teaches us that we do not have to, nor should we, delay our own personal individualistic gratifications. Paradoxically, however, by adhering to this new type of hedonism, one does not achieve, according to Pasolini, individuation.

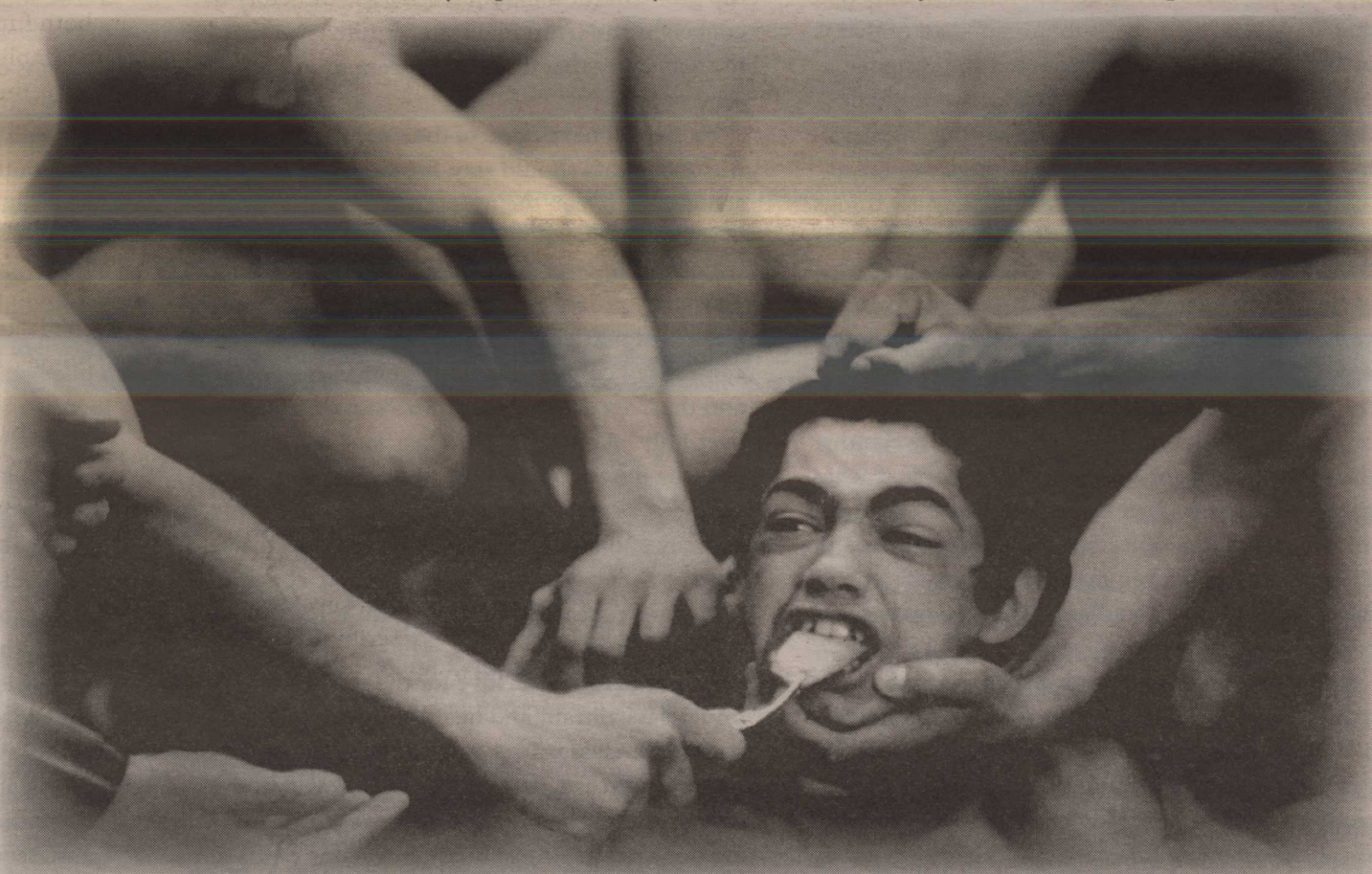
Rather, by defining who you are by what you possess or what you wear, as well as by what others own and wear, one loses one's individuality and sense of personal worth. And if there should happen to be any individual who refuses to conform to this scheme of things, and refuses to let herself be defined by whether or not she owns a Play Station 2, then that individual is looked upon as "weird," or "abnormal"; she is someone who doesn't know that its "human nature" to buy and consume.

In short, for Pasolini consumerism was the new fascism, the new conformism. The fascism of the 1920s, '30s and '40s, at least, demanded that the individual sacrifice himself for the sake of the collectivity. In German National Socialism, the collectivity was represented by the German "race," in Italian fascism, by the Italian nation. It was an ideology

requiring some degree of asceticism and self-sacrifice. Consumerism on the other hand, requires no sacrifice of the self, but rather invites a kind of self-indulgence. It is precisely this hedonistic element in consumerism that enables it to captivate the individual soul in a way that fascism was never able to do. (The infamous scenes of coprophagia in *Salò*, in which the victims and their 'masters' are served a gigantic meal of cooked human feces, days old, in a "Banquet of Shit," were described by Pasolini as a critique of the processed and fast food industries, and of mass production, which, according to him, produced "useless refuse" that we then consume.)

Everyone wears the same mass produced clothes; everyone buys the same mass produced furniture. In a gentrified, neo-liberal world, a world of gray skyscrapers and uniformed office workers, a world where brand names like Prada and Gucci dominate the landscape of the city, and where reality T.V. Has become the principal intellectual staple of the average American, Pasolini's gloomy predictions take on a chilling reality. The French Filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard famously implied that the youth

of the local court, and a banker—the very pillars of bourgeois respectability and morality—kidnap 18 teenagers and bring them to a deserted villa near Marzabotto, in Northern Italy. (Marzabotto was, in fact, a town that was razed to the ground by the Germans in 1944 in retaliation for the murder of SS officers by Italian partisans.) They also hire four middle-aged prostitutes whose job it is to tell arousing stories of sexual acts, which will "inflamm the passions." They then begin to torture, rape, and abuse the youngsters for three months, before finally killing them by means of mutilation, while the four officials look on at the executions through binoculars. Among the brutal tortures and humiliations the young men and women are subjected to are: being forced to eat food laced with nails and shards of glass, being raped, having to crawl on all fours on a leash, and barking like dogs, being forced to eat and drink their own and each other's feces and urine, licking the four officials' boots, and finally, being mutilated by scalping, having their tongues cut out, etc. The film, parodying Dante's *Divine Comedy*, is divided into four parts, or "circles":



of the 1960s were the children of Marx and Coca Cola. For Pasolini, they might, more appropriately, be considered the "children of Mussolini and Coca-Cola."

Because *Salò* is considered by most critics as Pasolini's greatest film, it would be fitting to give a lengthy synopsis and history of the movie; especially since it is also the most virulent expression of his anti-consumerist views ever shown on the screen. The film is set in Italy in 1944, during the Republic of *Salò*, the Nazi and SS backed puppet regime of Benito Mussolini, which was established after his liberation from Allied captivity by Hitler. Whereas Mussolini had previously shared power with the Savoy monarchy and the Vatican, he was now, with the Nazis' backing, enabled to create a true totalitarian dictatorship. This is probably why, in Pasolini's writings, the *Salò* Republic is often used as a metaphor for absolute tyranny.

Four fascist officials: a duke, a bishop, the presi-

The Ante-Chamber to Hell, The Circle of Manias, The Circle of Shit, and The Circle of Blood. The brutality that is shown in the movie is so extreme that it sometimes descends into the ludicrous and, in a sick way, the comic.

Salò is often looked upon as a modern transposition of the Marquis de Sade's novel, *The 120 Days of Sodom, or, The School of the Libertines*. And it is. Whereas de Sade set his novel in Central Europe during the Thirty Years War, Pasolini has the events of his film take place in Fascist Italy, during the Second World War. Yet there is more to the film than just the switching of historical periods, which nevertheless was a stroke of genius. De Sade's novel, which he wrote during his imprisonment in the Bastille in 1789, was only discovered and published in 1905. Even though he was born into the French aristocracy, de Sade was very critical of the moral degeneracy and corruption of that class, and, when the French Revolution broke out, he immediately

joined the revolutionaries. Indeed, *The 120 Days of Sodom* was meant to be a scathing critique of the degeneracy of the aristocracy, of the silliness of their views on property rights, and an affirmation of the Enlightenment view of man's agency trumping the Divine Will.

In *Salò*, Pasolini is attempting to accomplish something very similar. In one of his last interviews, Pasolini stated that by coming up with the idea of setting de Sade's novel in the time of the Salò Republic, he finally had a real insight into the "true choreography of Fascism." In fact, Pasolini himself lived in Salò in his early twenties. He personally witnessed horrible acts of brutality committed against the local population by the Fascists and the SS, particularly against the region's Jewish inhabitants (which, before the German invasion of Italy, had always been protected by Mussolini). Pasolini, then, had a first-hand experience with the brutality of fascism.

Like de Sade, Pasolini wanted to expose the moral degeneracy of a particular class (the Italian bourgeoisie), and its collaboration with fascism. However, unlike most Italian Marxist theorists, such as Antonio Gramsci who saw fascism as a "progressive" phenomenon because it supposedly drew segments of the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie into power, Pasolini had a much more radical viewpoint. In his view, fascism is all about the transformation of the human body into an object, a commodity. Many of his critics accused Pasolini of wanting to make just another exploitation film, since the only connection *Salò* has to fascism is in its setting. Oppression, torture, the dehumanization of people that are looked upon as "subhuman"—all of that is in *Salò*. And what was fascism, but the systematic oppression, degradation, and torture of humanity? The Nietzsche and de Sade-quoting "masters" in the film treat their victims as things, as objects to use and abuse for their pleasure; they are things to be used, "consumed," and destroyed. And it was this objectification of the body that Pasolini saw as the ultimate connection between fascism and consumerism. For fascism and consumerism are not tied to each other just by the fact that they force the individual to conform to an ideology and mode of behavior. The ultimate connection between the two is the process of objectification; that just as fascism attempted to turn its victims and their bodies into dehumanized objects, mass-consumerism, in a less obvious, but even more insidious way, turns the individual into a soulless thing, always eager to conform.

It was his views on the sub-proletariat, or, as many liberal and conservative sociologists today like to call them, "the underclass," that scandalized Pasolini's fellow Communists the most. He (correctly) viewed the working class with suspicion, as capable of being infected with the middle-class mores of the Italian bourgeoisie. The real opponent of bourgeois hegemony, according to Pasolini, was the peasant and the *ragazzo di vita* (young man of life), the young, unemployed hustler of the Roman *borgate* (slums), projects, and shantytowns. These were the people who Pasolini described to the Italian journalist Furio Colombo, in his last interview, as being "poor and real people who struggled to defeat the landlord without becoming that landlord." According to him, "Since they were excluded from everything, they remained uncolonized." These were people who refused to accept bourgeois, middle-class values, who refused to accept the white Anglo-Saxon, Protestant work ethic. These were people who fought against their oppressors, without wanting to become like their oppressors. Like Richard Wright, who also came to the same conclusion in his struggles with the American Communist Party, Pasolini saw that what the bourgeoisie should fear the most are not the workers, but rather those "abnormal" and "bohemian" types who refuse to

accept its values, norms, and work ethic.

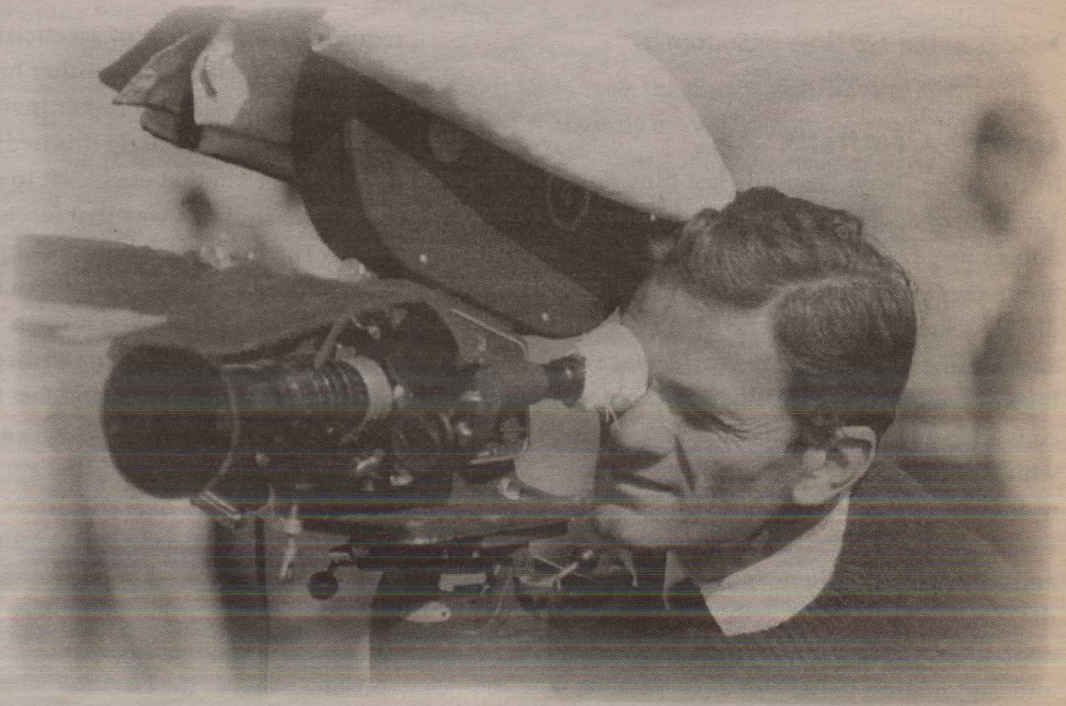
Of course, this did not sit well with most orthodox Marxists. Pasolini's almost Weberian emphasis on social attitudes and lifestyle instead of on class, his love for the peasant, and his romantic idealization of the *lumpenproletariat*, as well as his distrust of the laboring classes, was a complete reversal of the schema presented by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*. This view of his also runs counter to the goal of every social worker, anthropologist, and sociologist on the planet. Both the liberal and the conservative sociologist view the existence of the urban underclass as a problem that should be solved. For the conservative, the answer is less government dependency. For the liberal, the answer is for government programs for the alleviation

of poverty. Pasolini sees the problem those who study the city have. In his 1958 article, *The Shantytowns of Rome*, he writes, "Ethnologists recognize the problem (of the underclass), the difficulty of conceiving an irrational state within a rational state in such a way that it does not seem gratuitous and schematic."

Yet he will have none of their solutions. For him, the underclass should stay, for it is the only thing standing between the modern city and the process of total gentrification. In Italy, this process of gentrification is described by Pasolini in a 1973 interview as a "process of acculturation, of the transformation of particular and marginal cultures into a centralized culture that homogenizes everything" and that "occurred more or less simultaneously all over Italy." And in his 1958 article, *The City's True Face*, he describes the Roman underclass's "acculturation" as an attempt to "mutate the deep mix of anarchy and common sense of these people into a kind of American-style indifference, a 'standardized' type, repeated obsessively, hundreds of thousands of times."

Pasolini's romantic love for the underclass, an underclass vibrant and healthy and uncorrupted by middle-class values, as well as his sympathy for society's outcasts, were the two ideas that dominated his literary and cinematic works. These ideas are depicted in almost every single one of his films. His first film, *Accatone* (Street Urchins), which came out in the 1950s was a romantic, homo-erotic glorification of the young hustlers and hoodlums of the Roman *borgate*. Indeed, so realistic were the scenes in the film, that there were cries for censorship, particularly from the Christian Democrats, the CIA-backed center-right party that ruled Italy, with very few interludes, from 1946 to the late 1970s, and which, in Pasolini's view, was mainly responsible for destroying Italy's peasant culture in the name of "economic development." His second film, *Ricotta Cheese*, depicted a semi-proletarian who is chosen to play Christ in a passion play, and who literally dies on the cross after having eaten some bad ricotta cheese. In *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, which, of all his films, is the most widely seen in the United States, Pasolini portrays Christ, not as the gentle Good Shepherd found in the Gospels, but rather, as an angry, dedicated revolutionary who cares about the plight of the poor and is ultimately crucified by the governing elites.

His so-called "Trilogy of Life" films—*The Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *The Arabian Nights*—were immensely popular and became huge hits. In fact, it was the immense popularity of these films that, at least in part, prompted Pasolini to make *Salò*; for one of his greatest fears was that, in producing popular entertainment for the masses, he was helping to keep them in their condition of oppression; hence the shocking brutality of *Salò*. Unlike Chaucer or Boccaccio, though, who cen-



tered their tales on the heroic escapades and sexual adventures of the Italian and English aristocracy, Pasolini, in his film adaptations of their stories, like a true socialist, took a different tack. In his versions of the *Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*, the action is centered on the moral struggles waged by a hardy, but oppressed, peasantry, in their conflict with a dissolute aristocracy. In *Porcile* (Pigsty), two social outcast—a homosexual and a coprophiliac—find themselves in their fight against a society that oppresses them and views them as outsiders. And in *Torema*, (Theorem), which some critics say is his greatest film, we see a middle-class Italian family take in a stranger as a lodger. The "lodger" is really a bi-sexual extra-terrestrial who winds up seducing the mother, father, and the teenage son, and ultimately destroys their bourgeois susceptibilities. There is a constant theme, running like red thread, throughout almost all of Pasolini's films. The theme of the young *ragazzo* and street hustler, and the social outcast and outsider who is oppressed by society and its "respectable" value—these twin loves of Pasolini's are the very heart and soul of his films.

It is this concept of an oppositional subculture being co-opted by the culture of the establishment, that led Pasolini to formulate his critique of the beatnik and hippie counter-culture of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. For Pasolini, the hippie was the quintessential symbol of acculturation and cultural co-optation. At first glance, the hippie represented the very apex of cultural resistance to the bourgeoisie. The long hair, the drug use, the sexual promiscuity—all these things are the antithesis of bourgeois respectability. The hippie chooses a lifestyle that is contrary to the typical middle class norm. And it is precisely this emphasis on personal choice, on lifestyle, that Pasolini sees as the chief danger in the hippie's world outlook. Many of the flower children of the 60s later became conservative. They kept the weed, but not the values. Pasolini saw that there was something inherent in the hippie counter-culture that led it, in an almost deterministic fashion, to become subsumed by the dominant establishment ideology. Why? Because of the inherent, hedonistic, consumerist character of the worldview of the hippie. The hippie of the 1960s (who usually came from a middle-class background) emphasized the importance of the freedom to choose one's lifestyle, one's sexual orientation, one's style of clothing,

Continued next page

Above: Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Services and Facilities from the DSC

The Doctoral Students' Council is the sole policy-making body representing students in doctoral and master's programs at the Graduate Center.

The DSC

The Doctoral Students' Council is located in the Robert E. Gilleece Student Center on the fifth floor. The main office is Room 5495; telephone: 212.817.7888 or 212.817.7845; email: dsc@cunydisc.org; website: <http://www.cunydisc.org/>.

The DSC provides a host of services to Graduate Center students including but not limited to:

- ▶ Room Reservations for student-only lounges and conference room (Rooms: 5409, 5414, 5489)
 - ▶ Grants for organizing conferences, performances, events, etc.
 - ▶ Discount Movie Tickets (\$6 AMC/Lowes)
 - ▶ Legal Services
 - ▶ Social Events, including three all-school parties
 - ▶ One-year Locker Rentals allocated through a lottery each September
 - ▶ Information, Referrals, and Advice on GC administration, governance, and policy
 - ▶ Free Yoga & Pilates Classes
- In addition, each program has

representatives to the DSC who are elected on a proportional basis according to the number of students enrolled in the program. Program Representatives also dispense program allocations. At-Large Representatives are elected from the student body as a whole. A listing of Program Representatives and At-Large Representatives is available at <http://cunydisc.org/people>.

DSC Affiliates

The DSC also funds several affiliates. The Adjunct Project exists to improve the employment opportunities, situation, and status of CUNY doctoral student adjuncts and adjunct equivalents. Project staff engage in advocacy for doctoral student adjuncts, publicize issues of importance to doctoral student adjuncts, facilitate communication about issues of concern, and assist students in advocating for themselves with department chairs and other University administrators. For more information, call 212.817.7869 or visit <http://cunyadjunctproject.org>.

The GC Advocate is the student voice of the Graduate Center community and is published six times a year. To read current and past issues and

The screenshot shows the DSC website interface. On the left is a navigation menu with links: Home, News, Services, Funding, Resources, Forms, People, Governance, Meetings, Budgets, Resolutions & Reports, Calendars, Chartered Organizations, Program Student Associations, The Advocate, The Adjunct Project, and OpenCUNY. The main content area is titled 'THE DOCTORAL STUDENTS' COUNCIL' and features a large image of a building. Below the image is a description: 'The Doctoral Students' Council is the sole policymaking body representing students in doctoral and master's programs at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York.' To the right of the image are two sections: 'Upcoming Meetings' and 'News and Announcements'. The 'Upcoming Meetings' section lists three meetings: Grants Committee (10.06.11, 5:30pm), Steering Committee (10.14.11, 6:00pm), and Health Issues Committee (10.19.11, 7:00pm). The 'News and Announcements' section lists three items: \$55-DSC Grants (11:59pm), More legal consultations available (1 week 3 days ago), and OpenCUNY Network Social (2 weeks 9 hours ago).

learn more, visit <http://gcadvocate.org>.

OpenCUNY advocates on behalf of and provides students access to free and open source digital media. Currently, OpenCUNY runs an installation of WordpressMU, which offers free web space for students as well as organizations, whether they are officially chartered through the DSC or are ad hoc groups. For more information about OpenCUNY, visit <http://opencuny.org>.

The Fundraising and Alumni Commission (FAC) is a new DSC office that works to generate fundraising opportunities for student-led initia-

tives and to increase outreach with recent GC alumni. For more information about FAC, visit <http://opencuny.org/dscfac/>.

The DSC also charters a number of organizations. For more information, to join an organization, or to charter a new organization, visit <http://cunydisc.org/organizations>.

Lastly, you can also follow the DSC on Twitter @cunydisc, like our Facebook Page "Doctoral Students' Council, CUNY", and for the most up-to-date information visit our website <http://www.cunydisc.org/>.

Movie Review

Continued from previous page

etc. It is a very personalized, customized ideology, an ideology that was co-opted in the late 1970s and early 80s, by the attempt of neoliberals to portray capitalism as a post-modernist utopia, where everyone is free to choose his own personal brand or style. Ultimately, it degenerated into an a-political and even anti-political, worldview. In his brilliant essay, *The Hippie's Speech*, written in 1973, Pasolini commented on the middle-class snobbery of the hippie, and of the possibility of his being snatched up by a consumerist, and even fascist, culture. According to Pasolini:

That long hair (of the hippie) was hinting at right-wing 'stuff'. The cycle is concluded. The subculture in power absorbed the subculture that was in opposition and took possession of it with devilish ability, and passionately made of it a fashion that, if we cannot really call it fascist in the classic sense of the word, is after all extremely right-wing....Now the long hair is saying, in its inarticulate and obsessed language of non-verbal signs, in its vandal symbolism, the 'things' of T.V. and commercials, where it is now inconceiv-

able to foresee a young person without long hair, something that nowadays would be a scandal for the power in charge....Nowadays no one could ever distinguish, from the physical presence, a revolutionary from a provocateur. Left and Right have physically merged.

In the early part of the century, one knew who was a fascist and who was not. The fascist had either a shaven head or a crew cut, he wore a black or brown uniform and armband, and raised his hand in the Roman salute. Now, one can have a short haircut, a clean shaven chin, and look like a "square," and be on the Left, and a long-haired hipster can be on the Right, all as a result of a-political hedonism.

Pasolini may have been an unorthodox Marxist, but his views shocked those of the Left and the Right. His advocacy of what Furio Colombo called "a sort of magical paleo-Catholic and neo-Chinese monasticism" may sound a little strange, but his ruthless criticisms of a new, heartless capitalism that stultifies the intellectual life of modern man with shiny baubles, is as relevant today as when he

began his crusade in what was then still an industrially backward nation. In an age of reality shows, of *Entourage* and *America's Next Top Model*, Pasolini's gloomy message should be hearkened to. And in a United States with the largest underclass in the world and one of the highest poverty rates in the Western hemisphere, Pasolini's prediction that "The core of the struggle for the Third World revolution is really America," should be taken seriously.

So why is Pasolini's social philosophy still relevant? Why should we read his essays and poems now, at this particular historical junction? We are living in an era of neoliberal capitalism; a capitalism that is trying to stamp out any form of cultural and political resistance. It is an insidious form of capitalism that tries to dull us with Gucci hand-bags and reality TV shows. By remembering Pasolini and his message, we can learn that what the bourgeois fears the most are oppositional cultural norms, rather than mass strikes. Let us hope his message will be remembered for as long as the bourgeoisie remains with us.

Theater Review

Continued from page 20

decisions seemed to have been made along racial lines. We were both distracted by the uniformly perfect, impossible-looking bodies of the entire cast. Dozens of trimmed and waxed young gym-bodies danced around on stage while singing about how hairy they were. Of course, that kind of body is an asset, a commodity, and I have no objection, really, to selling sex. But for *everyone* on stage to look like that was a bit much.

I had a similar response to the current Broadway musical *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. It's a fun, campy show that tries way too hard to please, but

often succeeds in doing so despite occasionally feeling desperate. There's a lot of talent on stage, and there are a lot of beautiful bodies, and some of the numbers work well (though others fall surprisingly flat).

But here's the thing. I know some drag queens. And I know some hippies, and they don't all look like Abercrombie and Fitch models, or like they're auditioning for the next season of *True Blood*. The decades-long quest to address images of women's bodies in popular culture hasn't resulted in more realistic images of women; it has instead resulted in less realistic images of men. I guess that's a move toward equality in some sense (we're all objecti-

fied now), and again: I'm not entirely against the objectification of bodies and the commodification of sex. But I do wish that in the theatre, of all places, we might make some effort to recognize that there is more than one way to be sexy, and that there are kinds of diversity not reflected in Benetton catalogues.

Invasion! by Jonas Hassen Khemiri. Translated by Rachel Wilson-Broyles. Directed by Erica Schmidt. With Francis Benhamou, Nick Choksi, Andrew Guilarte, and Bobby Moreno. Sets by Antje Ellermann; Costumes by Oana Botez-Ban; Lights by Matthew Richards; Sound by Bart Fasbender. Produced by the Play Company, at the Flea Theatre, 41 White Street, September 6–October 1, 2011. Running time: approx. 90 minutes. Tickets: \$15–40. Visit www.playco.org for tickets and more information.

THE back page

adjuncthulk: THAT WUZ NO AFTERSHOCK!!! HULK WUZ JUMPING FER JOY!!! TEACHING SIX COURSES THIS FALL. MEANS HULK CAN MOVE OUT OF YMCA!!!

adjuncthulk: HULK HAVE SAD SUMMER. HULK TRY TO SAVE WORLD, BUT TURNS OUT HULK'S PHD MAKES HULK OVERQUALIFIED FOR JOB!!!

adjuncthulk: HULK DREAM LAST NIGHT DR. DOOM WAS PRESIDENT OF UC SYSTEM! DOOM HAD EVIL PLAN TO OPEN UP ADJUNCT CLONING FACILITY AT UCLA!!!

adjuncthulk: NOBODY ON TWITTER KNOWS REAL NAME OF ADJUNCT HULK. JUST LIKE REAL LIFE, WHERE NOBODY IN DEPARTMENT KNOWS NAMES OF ADJUNCTS.

adjuncthulk: HULK WANT SUMMER SUPERHERO FLICK WHERE SUPERHERO SPEND 72 HOURS STRAIGHT GRADING. THERE NO OTHER SUPERHUMAN FEAT WORTH MAKING MOVIE ABOUT.

adjuncthulk: ON TWITTER NOBODY KNOW YER BIG AND GREEN, UNLESS YOU TELL 'EM!! BUT THEY FORGET YER ADJUNCT CUZ, WELL, WHO WANT TO REMEMBER ADJUNCTS??

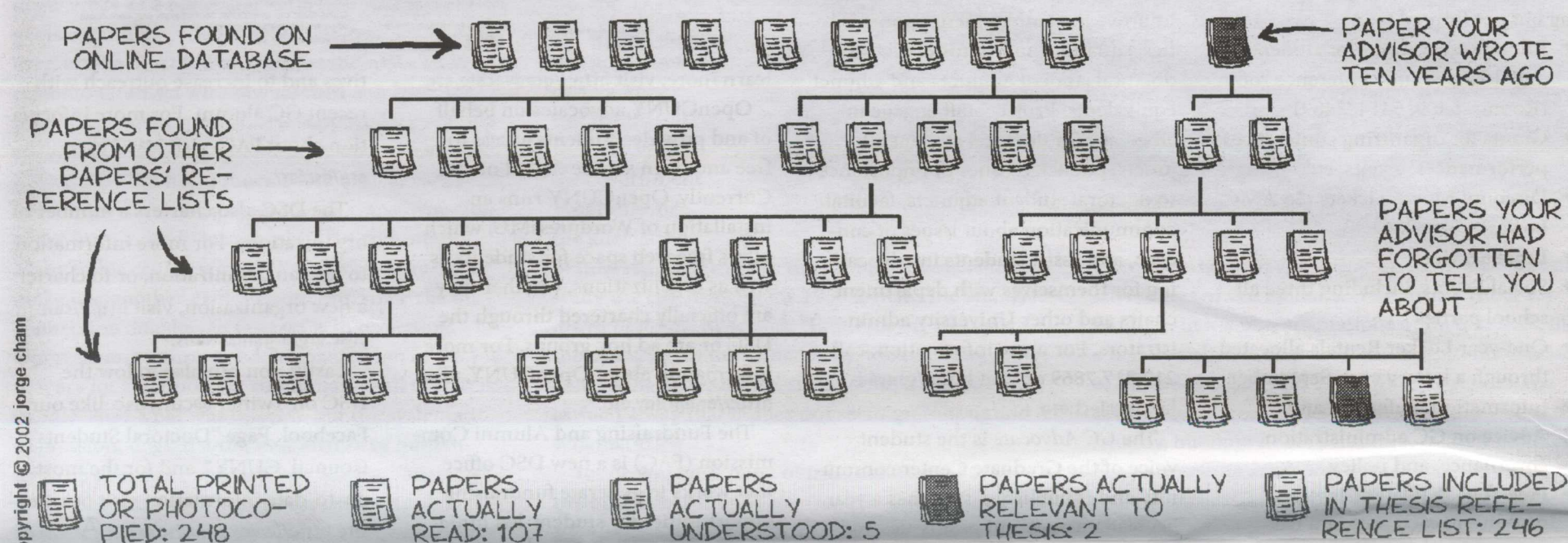
ph.d. comics BY JORGE CHAM

REFERENCES

MAKING SURE NO ONE HAS ALREADY WRITTEN YOUR THESIS

www.phdcomics.com

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The DSC seeks candidates for the open position of Adjunct Project Coordinator for Labor Relations.

The Adjunct Project advocates on behalf of and disseminates information to and concerning the Graduate Center student adjuncts and those with equivalent teaching responsibilities, with attention given to the CUNYwide adjunct situation and the state of academic labor as a whole.

The new coordinator will serve from September 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, with the possibility of reappointment, and be paid an annual stipend of approximately \$4,300, which is paid in monthly stipends throughout the year. Applicants must be matriculated Graduate Center students with experience as CUNY adjuncts or adjunct-equivalent roles.

The successful applicant will join Stefanie Jones (Coordinator for Organization and Planning) and Conor Tomás Reed (Coordinator for Advocacy and Education) and together will be responsible for:

- recruiting members for the Adjunct Project;
- updating website content and producing other publicity regarding issues and events relevant to their domain;
- stimulating awareness and discussion of adjunct issues among the broader Graduate Center community;
- ensuring that all activities of the Adjunct Project are consistent with the DSC Constitution and Bylaws; and
- hiring consultants, contingent on need and funding.

The open position of Coordinator for Labor Relations shall be responsible for:

- facilitating reciprocal communication with the PSC and other labor-related entities; *representing the interests of graduate student adjuncts to the PSC;
- serving as primary spokesperson in contract negotiations; and
- identifying changes in national, state, and local labor relations relevant to graduate student adjuncts.

Please direct inquiries and CVs/cover letters to Eero Laine (ccsa@cunyds.org), DSC Co-Chair for Student Affairs by September 24th, 2011.