CUNY GRADUATE CENTER

Advocate

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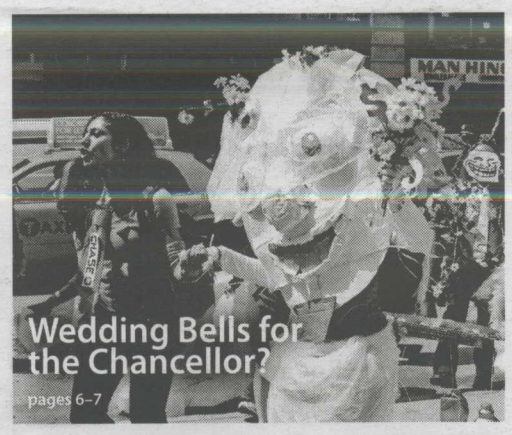

Wedding Bells for the Chancellor?

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Summer Books ISSUE

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FROM THE editor's desk

The Ongoing Challenge

It's been almost six years now since I took over as head of the *GC Advocate,* and—having finally defended my dissertation and landed a job (sorry to brag)—I am moving on to make room for a younger, no doubt smarter, and with any luck hungrier and more ambitious Editor-in-Chief to take the reins. This will be the last issue that I will help to publish, and I want to take a moment to sincerely thank all of the passionate, brilliant, witty, and endlessly patient writers, contributors, editors, and friends who helped me make the *GC Advocate* the publication that it is today. Special thanks go to my co-conspirators: the intrepid Michael Busch for his indispensable editorial assistance, and the always talented Mark Wilson for his uncanny ability to make sense of my often vague design suggestions. Although I will no longer be Editor-in-Chief, I am confident that the paper will continue to offer intelligent, insightful, original, and inspiring news, commentary, and criticism, and that it will, most importantly, stay true to its name and remain a medium and platform for radical social change within and beyond the Graduate Center and CUNY.

Looking back on my tenure, I am amazed at how much has changed both at CUNY and across the world. When I began my stint as Editor-In-Chief in September of 2006, the Left seemed lost, floundering, beaten, and genuinely disheartened and disenchanted. Having watched in disbelief as the Supreme Court and the Electoral College elected George W. Bush not once, but twice, many of us were beginning to feel that the war was lost; we had met our Waterloo and the Right had won a permanent victory. The United States was then still mired in two bloody and unwinnable wars, veterans were returning shell-shocked and wounded, civil liberties were under attack, economic and social inequality were on the rise like never before, and there was a strong sense that not only the Left, but the entire nation had just given up. Responding to this deeply pessimistic and cynical political climate, I saw my first editorial as a kind of psychological call to arms. Addressing the "fashionable cynicism," intellectual distance, and easy resignations of the academic Left, I urged our readers to reject the idea that "dead Muslims and growing slums are just another casualty of capitalism, that democracy is nothing but an export, that torture and extradition are acceptable tools against terror, and that elections are sometimes stolen, sometimes twice in a row." Such facts I argued, though surely depressing, should be catalysts for transformation, not excuses for inaction. Towards that end I argued that I wanted the *GC Advocate* to be not only "a source for information, but a vehicle for action and change."

Despite my optimism, if you had told me then that within just a few short years there would be a wave of democratic revolutions across the Middle East; that tens of thousands of Wisconsin workers would surround and occupy their capitol in defense of unionization; that students across the globe would begin to rise up to fight against austerity and privatization; and that a small park in lower Manhattan would give birth to a global movement for economic justice and equality, I would have called you a dreamer. I also would not have believed that there would be so much radical activity at the Graduate Center and CUNY: that students, adjuncts, and faculty would become so organized and creative, or that they would be coming out so frequently and in such large numbers to protest tuition hikes, faculty inequality, campus privatization, securitization, and the abuses of the Board of Trustees. When we published our first expose of the CUNY Board in that same September issue, for instance, the only people calling for the abolition of the BOT were the campus Internationalists. Today such calls are a regular part of many CUNY protests, and students and faculty across the campuses are beginning to really question and mobilize against the highly undemocratic structure of the university system, including the recent revolt against Pathways.

Although it is no doubt still too early to call, such events seem to foretell a true political sea-change. Not only in America, but everywhere, people are coming out to resist dictatorship, imperialism, corporatism, austerity, and privatization in numbers thought impossible before. Indeed, every day seems to bring more news that the Left has shaken off its chains, and is rising again. On May 1 in cities across the United States and the globe, workers, immigrants, and students marched together against the "One Percent," proclaiming that "another world is possible." Earlier this week, a reported 400,000 students and workers poured into the streets of Montreal and Quebec City to fight for public education in direct defiance of their government's truly brutal and heavy-handed attempts to crush their hundred-day-old movement; and in Greece just today, there is word that the Left Anti-Austerity Party SYRIZA is polling four points ahead of all other parties in next month's special election, a sign that European attempts to maintain a neo-liberal Eurozone might finally be faltering.

Despite these inspiring and impressive changes, there is still much work to be done and the next several years will most definitely offer a slew of victories and defeats for the Left. The Egyptian elections, for instance, seem to have offered little in the way of real change. OWS occupations, although they started strong, have taken a serious beating from municipal police forces across the country, and while the international student movement seems as strong as ever, global austerity continues to chip away at education funding placing the burden of higher education more and more on the backs of the young. Meanwhile at CUNY, although there is a fair amount of momentum against cuts, recent tuition increases have yet to be rolled back, state funding is still in constant jeopardy of being further reduced, and campuses are becoming increasingly militarized, threatening both students and their right to peaceably assemble and air their grievances on university property. While the PSC has done a valiant job of coming out against Pathways, there is still no sign from the administration that they plan to alter or halt implementation, and although the PSC leadership talks a good talk about defending CUNY employees, workers have been without a contract for more than a year now and there is little evidence that there will be any movement toward pay parity when negotiations do begin; in fact, there is every indication that the disparity between adjuncts and full time faculty will actually increase again.

Faced with these challenges, it is more important than ever that we continue to maintain a spirit of defiant optimism and a sincere belief that when we communicate with each other and come together to fight for our common interests, we can in fact affect real change in the world. It is my honest hope that the *GC Advocate* can and will continue to be a part of that inevitable transformation. Thanks again to all of our readers and contributors for a great six years. Ⓐ

James D. Hoff
Editor-in-Chief
The GC Advocate

Write for *The Advocate* and Get Paid.
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guest editorial

PATHWAYS To Debt?

JUSTIN ROGERS-COOPER

As many readers by now have heard, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and the Board of Trustees initiated the "Pathways to Degree Completion" last June. The program is a massive new general education curriculum for CUNY. In its wake, faculty members across the university system have taken unprecedented steps to announce their displeasure with it. In addition to the 5,746-plus signatures that the Professional Staff Congress has collected, dozens of resolutions have been passed by academic senates, departments, and councils, including the Graduate Center's own Doctoral Students Council. The conflict over Pathways has turned acrimonious, with administrations and faculty bitterly divided over what is best for student education. It might be useful here to briefly summarize "Pathways" in good faith, and to note some criticisms articulated by the PSC faculty union as well. Whatever happens with Pathways, CUNY faculty, administrations, the Chancellor, and the Board of Trustees will have to work together after this fight has been resolved.

In a recent *New York Post* editorial, Graduate Center President Bill Kelly aptly summarizes the perspective of those championing Pathways. Undertaking an overhaul of the general curriculum, he reminds us, is part of a national trend. Pathways is an effort to bring these trends forward to CUNY. Specifically, the general education for CUNY students will consist of thirty "common core" credits that aim at three main goals. As Kelly writes, these are "bolstering basic skills, strengthening critical thinking, and providing broad curriculum exposure." These common core classes fall into five different categories or areas of study, such as "Individual and Society." Each of these categories contains "learning outcomes" developed by special faculty chosen to undertake Pathways reform. Twelve of these thirty credits are part of the "required core," and eighteen of these credits are part of the "flexible core." Each four-year college requires twelve more credits for the Bachelor's degree, for a total of forty-two general education credits.

Kelly supports the freedom that the thirty common core classes will give to CUNY's 270,000 students as they move around the university. He rightly points out that students transferring within CUNY currently face logistical and financial hurdles because various general education credits do not transfer. This adds to their "tuition burden" and has "limited their exposure to upper level courses." Kelly also correctly surmises that too large a general education requirement would place onerous burdens on students and limit their ability to concentrate in particular disciplines. Kelly also feels that the "pleasure inherent in learning" should be a primary experience of student education at CUNY; for all sides, these points about transfer and pleasure should be common ground.

In his editorial, Kelly draws an interesting line between Pathways proponents and Pathways critics: implicit to critiques of Pathways, he charges, "is the assumption that CUNY students require a good deal of hand-holding as they are led through a highly-proscriptive curriculum." For many reasons, this is a fascinating statement. In an unexpected twist, Kelly's charge dually functions as both a rebuttal to Pathways critics and as a mirror image of that criticism. Aside from the faculty conviction that Pathways was muscled through to minimize opposition, one of the central concerns of the faculty is that Pathways dampens the pleasure of student learning by mandating that course content focus on the learning outcomes, and not disciplinary knowledge or professorial expertise. Further, many opposed faculty feel that Pathways itself implies that students "require a good deal of hand-holding as they are led through a highly-proscriptive curriculum." For them, Pathways is a large, administrative hand that powerfully steers students to take general education courses at the expense of vocational majors and traditional majors in the sciences and humanities.

At the very least, the ability of Kelly's rebuttal to describe both sides in this conflict suggests that both sides are talking past one another. As a former student of President Kelly's, I can attest to his integrity, his commitment to CUNY, and his dedication to education. I'm more and more convinced that the conflict over Pathways has occurred because of a genuine collision of cultures, and not because of a manipulative desire to mislead students by either side.

This collision of cultures, however, is very real. Both sides need to respectfully respond in full to the reasons and objections held by their opponents. With this approach in mind, I'd like to share an objection to Pathways that has been relatively ignored. This objection is grounded in both reason and in fear, and represents the perspectives of faculty who share beliefs rooted in a fundamentally different philosophy of education, it seems, than some of the proponents of Pathways.

I should state at the outset that my objection will reflect the concerns of community college faculty and students. This is because I proudly teach and serve at LaGuardia Community College, and I'm determined to represent the voices of my colleagues and our students. In no way do I speak for all of my colleagues nor for my administration, of whom I have the highest respect. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work at LaGuardia under the leadership of that administration and my department. I believe we all share the same basic goal: to fulfill our mission as the world's community college, and to prepare our students for a wide diversity of experiences and challenges in their lives beyond our college.

Different perspectives on Pathways exist at LaGuardia, just as they certainly must exist at all CUNY campuses. As one of my colleagues supporting Pathways said at a recent meeting, Pathways is a liberal arts model that serves our students better than one with majors and disciplines. This colleague went on to say that she didn't believe that the ability of students to major in disciplines at the two-year college level was advantageous to them. At an earlier moment in the semester, a colleague opposed to Pathways said that it had the potential to "kill the majors" at the two-year colleges. Both these excellent teachers differ in what they believe is best for our students, but both seem to imply that Pathways might mean a very different model of education than the one that currently exists.

Based in part on these observations, I can definitively say that there are faculty with grave concerns about how the common core credits will affect the majors at the community colleges, since those credits would mean that nearly all of the remaining thirty credits of the sixty-credit Associate's Degree—those credits coming after the common core—would need to be in individual majors. In terms of student advisement and common sense, this appears logistically daunting.

This concern extends to the effects of the common core classes on two-year student wallets and purses. As President Kelly rightly explained, transferring between CUNY campuses is now hazardous to students and puts an unfair "tuition burden" on them. As a result, very few persons feel that transfer reform isn't urgently required. From the perspective of two-year college advocates, however, the "tuition burden" for our students will remain after the completion of the thirty credit common core. Students who spend a second year at LaGuardia and other community colleges will not get the "seamless" transfer options that Pathways provides. They will still face the same transfer problems with their credits: only their common core credits will definitely be accepted. Further, since the Pathways common core classes in math and science will no longer contain a lab, these students will also be locked into transferring mostly to CUNY colleges: outside institutions will not accept those classes as legitimate science and math classes.

Seen from a practical point of view, there appears to be a financial incentive for students to transfer to CUNY four-year schools after their first year at community college: this way, they will be ensured that all of their credits transfer. With the exception of departments that have articulation agreements, in which four year colleges accept all credits from specific majors, it appears many students will rationally decide to transfer to four-year schools after the common core. It makes plain economic sense.

Although neither Pathways proponents nor opponents have any data or research on whether this will happen, it seems fair to speculate that financial logic may influence many students to flee community colleges once their common core credits are achieved. This is where Pathways opponents raise a real and so far unanswered objection, and it goes beyond whether or not majors should or should not exist at the two year colleges.

Many students who transfer from LaGuardia will resemble the ones I have in my classrooms: students working full and part-time jobs, students with families, recent immigrants, students from low-income neighborhoods, students of color, and students from failing public schools. Most of these students lack money, and one of the primary reasons they drop out and fail classes is due to the "tuition burden" President Kelly so poignantly mentions, as well as other financially rooted burdens. Meanwhile over the last few years, their tuition has gone up while state and city support has been cut. Their tuition will continue to go up, while current levels of state and city support isn't assured.

As these students leave LaGuardia and transfer to four year colleges, they will pay higher tuition at these colleges. This higher tuition may require them to get jobs, work more hours, and to take on new student loans. This additional financial burden will

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Brooklyn College Cracks Down

Tensions over Fees Grow in Brooklyn

On May 16, hundreds of faculty, students, and staff gathered at Brooklyn College for a silent vigil protesting the arrests of two students made by the New York City Police Department two weeks earlier. The arrests came during another protest on May 2 when students and supporters picketed the offices of Brooklyn College President Karen Gould. The *Knickerbocker Ledger* reported that "students dropped a large red banner from the fourth floor window in Boylan Hall that read '1, 2, 3, 4 tuition hikes are class war. 5, 6, 7, 8 students will retaliate.'" From there, "About sixty students then moved into Boylan Hall and conducted a sit-in demonstration in front of the office of the Brooklyn College president and demanded an immediate open forum to discuss their demands. Shortly after, CUNY Public Safety officers supported by NYPD arrived on the scene and began to break up the demonstration. Officers pulled apart the seven students blocking the door to the President's Office and began forcibly pushing students out of the building."

After giving the order to clear the hall, the Brooklyn College Student Union blog reports that "The crowd failed to disperse, but parted to allow people through. The police entered the aisle created by the crowd and were standing by to begin arresting the sit-in. Suddenly, the crowd started to move and the hallway filled with yelling as the NYPD violently shoved the people on the edges of the crowd on both sides down the hallway and ordered them to disperse. The officers then used the ensuing chaos to begin dragging away those of us who were sitting in, starting with me, on the end. I and the others sitting down were grabbed by the officers and dragged to the doorway of the nearest stairwell, at which point I was told to 'just get the hell out of here,' and shoved into the doorway, opening it with my face. A few others were tossed through the doorway after me, we re-grouped in the stairwell and joined the demonstrators on the other side of the hallway, who were not allowing the police to move them down the hallway, soft-blocking them and doing a decent job of holding the line. This prompted the officers to begin grabbing students and attempting to drag them behind the police line. However, the students would not allow this to happen, and managed to pull the police off of every person they attempted to snatch away. This resistance prompted a melee of police brutality, including multiple students being slammed against walls, knocked to the floor, manhandled,

and injured." Two students were ultimately arrested for disorderly conduct and, in one of the cases, assault on an officer.

Sarah Jaffe reported in *AlterNet* the disturbing news that "During the scrum in the hallway, one student, Cecelia Adams, already walking with a cane after having her feet broken in a clash with cops at last fall's tuition fee protests at…Baruch College, had her cane taken from her and thrown down the hall. A slim young woman, she told me she'd been grabbed by a cop who wouldn't let her go as she fought to breathe—'He was squeezing me to death'—and that she was on medical leave from the university after her injuries in last fall's actions, was supposed to start classes again in the summer but because of cutbacks, the university had cancelled eighty-three of its planned summer offerings."

Protesters on May 16 gathered to silently object to the use of force against students on campus, and to demand that the college drop its charges against the two undergraduates arrested. While the protesters marched in silence, a letter submitted by them, and others, to President Gould spoke quite loudly. It argues that "students who engaged in this boisterous but peaceful demonstration were not only within their rights under the First Amendment, they were expressing a viewpoint about the burden shifted onto students under CUNY's austerity budgets. This may be a viewpoint with which you and others disagree, but the demonstrators arrived at it through personal experience and an analysis of the facts at their disposal. Your response to the demonstration was unnecessarily aggressive and adversarial, and your characterization of the behavior of students and security guards in your communication with the campus community was recklessly inaccurate…You have said that 'In order to work together as an educational community, the rights of everyone at Brooklyn College need to be respected so that we can fulfill the essential activities and responsibilities of our core mission.' We do not consider the essential activities of this educational community to be limited to the execution of administrative duties and the pursuit of classroom study but to include at its very core the maintenance of an atmosphere of open dialogue free from intimidation and physical coercion."

New Campus for CUNY Law

We've given CUNY Law a rough time in the past for the less-than-stellar academic performance of its students. Most recently, the school took flak for encouraging its more intellectually challenged graduates *not* to take the bar exam (the whole point, incidentally, for going to law school) for fear that the number of expected failures would do damage to CUNY Law's already crappy reputation. The school faces possible sanction from the state because of the unusually low number of students who pass on their first try.

But we are happy, sort of, to report that next month the school will celebrate the inauguration of a new campus. Hopefully new surroundings will kick-start the slowly churning wheels of CUNY Law's collection of dunderheads enough to get them performing a bit better. The recent addition in Long Island City, which has been in the works for several years now, will offer students a far more convenient location than its previous home in Flushing. "A move to this terrific location will greatly enhance our ability to carry out our mission to diversify the legal profession and to train the next generation of public interest lawyers," said CUNY School of Law Dean Michelle Anderson. "With its greater centrality, our mission will be enhanced by our closer proximity to the public interest community and to our clients."

As expected, the school will be sharing the premises with private business—in this case, Citigroup which will inhabit eight floors of the new building, with CUNY taking residence in the remaining six. The move is part of a broader scheme to encourage greater development in the already gentrifying neighborhood as students and corporate stiffs will surely be a boon to local businesses. Mike Gianaris, a Democratic State Senator says that "construction of CUNY Law School's new facility in Long Island City is a tremendous addition to a neighborhood that continues to emerge as a hub for jobs, revenue and economic development. The additional students, faculty and visitors will bring more jobs, create new business incentives and increase revenue here." Because, of course, that is the purpose of higher education institutions—to stimulate the private sector.

CUNY Opens New Center Devoted to Mexican Studies—Take That, Arizona!

At a moment when all things Mexican—including the people—are being squeezed out of Arizona, CUNY is celebrating the Mexican diaspora by opening up a new institute for the study of Mexico and Mexican-Americans, particularly those in the New York area. The Institute for Mexican Studies will call Lehman College home and is literally one-of-a-kind. The IMS is the only academic institute on the entire eastern seaboard that focuses on Mexican studies. The center will offer research opportunities for scholars who focus on Mexico, a certificate in the area of Mexican studies for graduate students studying at Lehman and beyond and will make a point of working with local community organizations on advocacy and activist projects.

Moreover, the institute will sponsor conferences and study abroad opportunities to Mexico for qualified students. "At CUNY we don't do anything in the abstract only," Alyshia Galvez, the institute's acting director, told the *New York Times*. "So it's really a question of combining world-class scholarship with advocacy and collaboration with the community organizations."

Brooklyn College: Kosher Campus

We reported in the last issue that Brooklyn College once again was finding itself in the middle of controversy pushed, as usual, by State Assemblyman Dov Hikind. In April, Hikind and a number of other prominent local politicians called for an independent investigation into college provost William Tramontano and what was alleged to be a hiring bias adversely affecting Jewish academics. CUNY complied with the request, and rejected the claims leveled against Tramontano in a twenty-four page report prepared by university lawyers.

According to the report CUNY investigators "conclude[d] that the evidence does not support the allegations of a pattern of discrimination against Orthodox Jews at Brooklyn College." The report also found that ""Each of the cases involved a decision based on a good faith application of academic judgment or employment procedures unrelated to any prejudice or bias." The report concludes, too, that hiring procedures followed recently established protocols designed to increase the reputation of the school's business division—where all the claims of discrimination were logged. Not one to be deterred from the mission at hand, Hikind has since demanded that New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman carry out an independent investigation to verify CUNY's findings. Good luck with that, Dov. Ⓐ

Above: PSC's Alex Vitale addresses crowd in front of Boylan Hall at the May 16 Brooklyn College protest.

adjuncting

On the City as University

Occupy and the Future of Public Education

CONOR TOMAS REED

For quite a long time now, we precariously situated students and faculty in CUNY have been practicing the art of what Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o calls "poor theory"—"maximizing the possibilities inherent in the minimum… being extremely creative and experimental in order to survive." Unable to isolate ourselves within the velvety quicksand of armchairs and seminar table solipsism, we have instead pursued a kind of *crowd scholarship* that jettisons "interest" for "involvement." Discussions among crowds of people—in and out of assemblies, street marches, virtual forums, shared meals, space-transformations, and yes, even jail stints—have assembled critical lessons and experiences not yet valued by scholastic frameworks of singularly rendered knowledge. Thousands have co-authored this document itself.

We are engaged in a process of defending our educational and social futures from a threadbare past and present. US student debt has surpassed $1 trillion—a third of this debt is held by graduate students. Crippling tuition increases and education cuts in some cases triple tuition and erase whole departments. Meanwhile, our campuses become increasingly militarized. As recently spotlighted in UC-Davis and CUNY's Baruch and Brooklyn Colleges, administrators unabashedly welcome the surveillance, intimidation, and brutal arrests of students and faculty who peacefully dissent. But after our pulses shudder from being followed by armed officers, after our indignation roils from reading lies that presidents and chancellors print about our political acts, and after our bruised bodies heal from being treated like enemy combatants on our own campuses, we gather in crowds again because we have no other choice.

In spite of these grim circumstances, we're also witnessing and creating major explosions of resistance through education movements across the world—Quebec, Chile, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Spain, England, California, and around CUNY. Suppression of dissent is being met in resourceful ways. These struggles have demonstrated the power of creative action to mobilize millions—including street theater, public visual art, alternative models and sites of education, music, viral performance videos, and more. For activists in NYC, a few significant developments have arisen out of our own work—to conceive of education itself as a potential form of direct action, to rethink how we approach the call to strike, and to focus more acutely on dialectically connecting student/faculty work with wider community efforts at social change.

In the City University of New York and around the metropolis more broadly, our experiences in the Occupy movement taught us decades of lessons in a matter of months. As *Advocate* readers know, many CUNY folks were an active part of Occupy Wall Street, helping to maintain a multitude of working groups during the swift upsurge in city-wide radicalization. We facilitated thousands-strong public conversations and direct action trainings, built the People's Library, and connected a global art and design community through Occuprint. At the CUNY Graduate Center, we began to hold regular general assemblies using the OWS model of direct participatory democracy. We claimed campus spaces that had otherwise not been used for political discourse (such as the recent week-long "Transforming Assembly" interactive exhibition at the James Gallery), and encouraged deeper undergrad students/grad students/faculty collaboration (including multiple open letter campaigns).

We worked on outside free public education initiatives, such as the People's University series in Washington Square Park, as well as multiple-week open forums on the general strike leading up to May Day, all the while engaging in constant discussions of how to alter our pedagogies and institutional structures. Students and faculty explored consensual direct democracy in our classroom settings. This semester, several graduate student adjuncts team-taught a course at Brooklyn College entitled "Protest and Revolution: Occupy your Education," in which the students and facilitators together shaped how each class was used.

And yet, after the White House-directed nationwide eviction of Occupy encampments this winter, the movement's future was by no means foreseeable. Furthermore, when the May Day general strike call came out, a serious schism arose in activist circles in NYC and around the United States about whether to frame our efforts as a general strike when we knew that this was an actual impossibility. We queried whether this political action term could be used more as an act of prescriptive manifestation, rather than of descriptive demonstration. Students and faculty in the CUNY movement decided to build for the day with affinity for the language of striking, but not going to such lengths as setting up picket lines at our schools. We considered more fruitful ways to engage in a strike action that wriggled out of the negation-driven rhetoric that dominated initial May Day calls. "No/stop/don't/shut down" left very limited visions of what the day would actually look like. We recognized that Occupy's spring coming out party couldn't be simply a long laundry list of what we opposed.

In early 2012, several graduate students wrote a short piece entitled "Five Theses on the Student Strike" in Occupy Wall Street's *Tidal* journal, which set useful initial terms of the kind of affirmational, go-power, strike-as-on-switch tactics and political vision we wanted to create for the day. We sought to invoke the most dynamic and capacious political rhetoric to envision our specific goal of educational direct action, while using the weeks leading up to May 1 to theoretically and practically build for this, instead of standing still to debate whether the day's actions should be called a strike or not.

By the time May Day had arrived, we had amassed a coalition of students and faculty from almost a dozen schools to produce the Free University: a "collective educational experiment" that ended up drawing almost 2000 participants in what is now delightfully considered the sleeper hit of the day's event in NYC. We wanted to provide the best of Zuccotti Park's legacy—unpermitted reclamation of public space, heterogeneous gatherings for radical discussion, and, what is still one of the best organizing tools out there, free food. The big secret is that around forty people coordinated this event within about a month. Our call for anyone to sign up to hold any kind of class or skill-share was met with a deluge of exciting workshop submissions. Our call for anyone to attend meant that tuition, ID cards, costly books, security checkpoints, and many other chains tied to higher education were easily dissolved.

Educators conducted over forty workshops, classes, and collective experiences during the five hours we occupied and transformed the park. Over a dozen faculty members contractually prohibited from striking moved their entire classes off campuses and into the park in solidarity with the call to strike. Attendees shared and learned from front-lines movement experiences on occupying foreclosed housing, student organizing and debate skills, indigenous environmentalism, open access academic publishing, and anti-capitalist approaches to math and science. Collective poetry readings brushed up alongside figure drawings and collage projects. We welcomed such luminaries as Drucilla Cornell, David Harvey, Neil Smith, Ben Katchor, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Wayne Koestenbaum, and Chris Hedges to join large crowds that gathered and mixed freely.

However, our ambitions mustn't be misunderstood as creating a Free University to be a temporary utopian enclave, full stop. We promoted these outside classrooms as areas for generating rooted political content that could be catalyzed into movement activity. Indeed, at 3:00 p.m., our whole Free U campus marched to the main Union Square rally location, and then later swarmed the financial district, book shields and banners in hand. To focus on education itself as direct action suggests that we can transformation public space into mobile classrooms—in public parks and community centers, as well as in street intersections, board rooms, and bridges. Future Free University initiatives can include radical think-tanks, hosting classes inside other classes, projecting our stories on various walls around the city, and performing pop-up Free U's at annual city-wide events. We're establishing the foundations for future attempts at dual power with such projects as People's Boards of Education that decide and implement our own education plans while refusing those dictated from above.

Crowd scholarship of education outside walls can focus on such anti-disciplinary subjects as the compositional practice of street writing. Science lessons can observe as well as counteract neighborhood environmental devastation. Social geography can be taught through power-mapping areas of surveillance and gentrification, as well as routes for resistance. Poetry writing as a social and bodily practice

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Above: David Harvey at the Free University. PHOTO BY ANTONIA LEVY

MayDay in NYC

May Day this year, the proclaimed "day without the 99%," was a beautiful, creative, educational, participatory affair in New York City; often more of a festival than a demonstration. Students from the Graduate Center collaborated with faculty and students from various schools in NYC to set up the Free University in Madison Square Park— a "collective educational experiment," designed to "intervene in a dysfunctional, inequitable, and inaccessible system," offering "education that is open, free, and accessible to all." From morning until early afternoon, educators (including the Graduate Center's own David Harvey and Frances Fox-Piven, among many others), activists, and artists offered free lectures, workshops, and a variety of participatory experiences, such as "radical recess" or yoga classes, which were attended by hundreds of New Yorkers.

Meanwhile, at the Graduate Center, preparations were underway for the long-awaited wedding between Kroll Securities and CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. After getting ready in the 8th floor cafeteria, the happy couple met their wedding guests on the front steps of the building; welcomed by bubbles and cheers and a wedding march played by the Rude Mechanical Orchestra in their honor. After posing for their official wedding pictures, the wedding party made its (loud) way down Fifth Avenue to be happily greeted by a large audience in Madison Square Park.

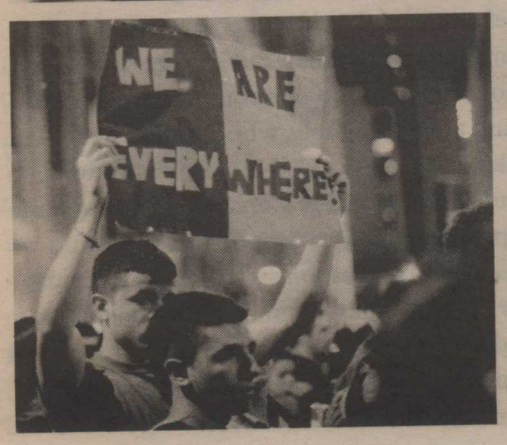
Here, "Reverend Privatize" led the wedding ceremony of "a public institution and a private security corporation", and had the groom and bride exchanging similar vows: "I, Goldstein, take you Kroll, to be my wedded contractor. To police and to surveil, to exploit and to obey, for better for worse, for richer for richer, in protest and in classroom, from this day forward, until contract do us part." But the "marriage between education and policing" wasn't meant to be, being crashed by a disagreeing audience waiving "HELL NO!"signs, and demanding the "end of a system that exploits and profits from us", toasting to the Free University and public education instead.

After an "almost married" dance, led by the Rude Mechanical Orchestra's cheerleaders, the crowd made its way down to Union Square to share in the May Day festivities with many activist groups from all over the city, and to join the celebratory march downtown that concluded the day. — *Antonia Levy*


FREE U


JUSTICIA


ANGRY
PACIFIST


WE ARE
EVERY WHERE!

guest columnist

Veterans Say No to NATO

AMY GOODMAN WITH DENIS MOYNIHAN

Veterans of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan are now challenging the occupation of Chicago.

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The focus of the summit will be Afghanistan. "Operation Enduring Freedom," as the Afghanistan War was named by the Bush administration and continues to be called by the Obama administration, is officially a NATO operation. As the generals and government bureaucrats from around the world prepare to meet in Chicago, the number of NATO soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2001 topped 3,000. First Lt. Alejo R. Thompson of Yuma, Ariz., was killed on May 11 this year, at the age of 30. He joined the military in 2000, and served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Shortly after his death, The Associated Press reported that Thompson would be receiving the Purple Heart medal posthumously and is "in line for a Bronze Star." On Wednesday, President Barack Obama awarded, also posthumously, the Medal of Honor to Leslie H. Sabo Jr., killed in action in Cambodia in 1970.

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Occupy Chicago, part of the Occupy Wall Street movement, has been focused on the NATO protests. The unprecedented police mobilization, which will include, in addition to the Chicago police, at least the Secret Service, federal agents, and the Illinois National Guard, also may include extensive surveillance and infiltration. Documents obtained through Freedom of Information requests by the activist legal organization Partnership for Civil Justice (PCJ) indicate what the group calls "a mass intelligence network including fusion centers, saturated with 'anti-terrorism' funding, that mobilizes thousands of local and federal officers and agents to investigate and monitor the social-justice movement." PCJ says the documents clearly refute Department of Homeland Security claims that there was never a centralized, federal coordination of crackdowns on the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Aaron Hughes and the other vets understand armed security, having provided it themselves in the past. He told me the message he'll carry to the military and the police deployed across Chicago: "Don't stand with the global 1 percent. Don't stand with these generals that continuously abuse their own service members and then talk about building democracy and promoting freedom." Ⓐ

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Adjuncting

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This work must also boomerang back into the academy walls in the process of ultimately decentering university spaces as the sole, tightly guarded sites where knowledge is made and trafficked. Each conference is a space to differently occupy, establish networks, and debate living strategies. Each thesis and dissertation is an opportunity for multi-author, multi-modal scholarship to be evaluated by a committee of peers. Cross-department/cross-borough gatherings and actions can replace the vacuous insularity of academia. Our libraries can become true active repositories of 21st century movement life that is being daily archived in posts, streams, pamphlets, and feeds. Such participatory archive sources as occupycunynews.org and Interference Archive are excellent models for librarian archivists today.

Moreover, faculty nationwide will have to heed UC-Davis professor Nathan Brown's recent challenge: "Student activists have understood the simple point that forms of action which do not pose an immediate and concrete barrier to the normal functions of the university will be ignored, deferred, and displaced. So they organize occupations and blockades. If faculty want to confront the totalitarian conduct of administrations, we will also have to organize and participate in occupations and blockades." His jibe that faculty can organize international conferences, but not a twenty-person faculty sit-in, demonstrates how academics' priorities will have to shift and grow, or else risk social irrelevance. I welcome our own CUNY professors to meet this challenge by considering the incredible power that mass faculty direct actions would contribute to our movement.

Occupy is at a crossroad, its development is not inevitable, we can become another mysterious blip (especially as the election season approaches), or we can do the patient and painstaking work of building a mass movement that will flourish in the face of what *is* an inevitable reality of further violence, crackdowns, and surveillance by the state. Academia has a role to perform in Occupy's future, but one that employs both a step forward and a step aside. Academia must cede intellectual space for community members—the exiles of our current university systems—to raise their own critical voices while we listen and learn. And academia must also reconcile its own demons of the past 30+ years of significant yet extremely disillusioned and defensive theoretical positions. The current international spotlight on higher education can offer us the chance to make dramatic advances towards community control of our daily lives. Now that's the kind of education no school but ourselves can provide. Ⓐ

Guest Editorial

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affect their academic success, their study habits, and their ability to graduate. Many who do graduate will graduate with more debt, and this debt will alter their choices about careers, families, and further higher education.

While unintentionally encouraging attendance at higher-priced CUNY colleges might be a beneficial byproduct of Pathways for CUNY's overall budget, such costs appear to be borne by the students and families who are the most economically vulnerable in the system. For these reasons, Pathways may unintentionally reduce their future choices, increase their tuition burdens, cost them new opportunities, and ultimately reduce the number of CUNY graduates from low-income families.

Addressing these potential consequences would seem to be in the interests of all the parties involved. At this point, it's clear that Pathways lends itself to schizophrenic predictions about the future of CUNY education. At least some of these diverging perspectives are due to significant and emerging cultural differences; some will argue that these differences are rooted in class perspectives, but it is more complicated than that. But clearly what is at stake is how education in our country is supposed to work and also, inevitably, who should pay for it. These stakes should give CUNY administrations, faculty and students real reasons to pause. The time seems appropriate to have proponents and opponents offer sustained responses to rationales and criticisms on both sides. No matter what happens, this would be a step toward mutual respect, cultural compromise, and a future where we find creative and just solutions to our differences. Ⓐ

Rhetoric and Composition, Academic Capitalism, and Cheap Teachers: Part II

The first half of the article appeared in the April 2012 issue of the GC Advocate, *and can be read on the* Advocate *website: http://www.gcadvocate.com/2012/04/rhetoric-composition-academic-capitalism-cheap-teachers/.*

ANN LARSON

The previous discussion of disappearing full-time jobs in Composition and Rhetoric allows me to define some terms. What do I mean by the word "system" that I have been using so far? Viewing contingency as a systemic problem means acknowledging that we can't make everything better by cutting off the supply of PhDs, by encouraging veterans to retire, or by working harder for table scraps. And we certainly aren't getting anywhere by waiting patiently for the field's *éminence grise* to voluntarily develop an accurate grasp of the facts.

Yes, I am bringing up the Trimbur/Brereton debacle again.

Even though I find their unwillingness to frankly address the greatest crisis in the field appalling and unpardonable, I do not think Trimbur and Brereton are personally to blame for the general lack of interest in labor contingency from those who benefit the most from it. However, I focus on them because *systemic problems are reflected in the attitudes and perspectives of individuals.* Was it Upton Sinclair who wrote that "it is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on not understanding it"? No one is immune from this diagnosis.

So what can be done? As many scholars, from Richard Ohmann to Stanley Aronowitz to Donna Strickland have argued, we need to see the academy in general and Composition and Rhetoric in particular from a global economic perspective. Within this framework, Humanities PhDs are workers within a larger economy in which good jobs have been disappearing for decades in exchange for an itinerant, unstable, low-wage workforce. In academia that means adjuncts.

To see the problem of adjuncts on Medicare as part of a global trend, it helps, as always, to have a theory. (By the way, an adjunct on Medicare is not a "problem" for capitalism at all. Foisting an employee's health care costs onto the public is a very good deal for the private sector.) That is why I turn now to David Harvey's theory of the internal contradictions of capitalism. Harvey's work helps illuminate the macroeconomics of academic hiring, and he proposes some ways to address capitalism's excesses which are relevant to academia. So let's start by defining another term that is important to my argument.

What is a Crisis?

The MLA says the Humanities are in *crisis*. What is a crisis anyway? Harvey explains that a crisis "is nothing less than a massive phase of dispossession of assets." This definition is important because it illustrates that the problem is not a *reduction* in the number of assets, which is the lie we are endlessly fed in our age of austerity. Rather, a crisis occurs when certain sectors of society are dispossessed of assets they once claimed. Dispossession happens, in other words, when bankers and politicians use so-called budget deficits to raid public pension funds for speculative investments, when land is seized by eminent domain, or when public schools are labeled "failing" so that they can be privatized by profiteers at Goldman Sachs.

This system works fine in theory, though, as Terry Eagleton writes, "the [capitalist] system has also proved incapable of breeding affluence without creating huge swathes of deprivation alongside it." In addition to the minor issue of plunging hundreds of millions of people around the world into daily poverty, capitalism is also crisis prone because it must never stop accumulating resources, including money and land, to further its expansion. "Capitalism," Harvey writes in *The Enigma of Capital*, is a "process in which money is perpetually sent in search of more money." This insatiable need to gobble up more stuff ensures that capitalism will always run into barriers to growth. Capitalists earn profits, which they reinvest to earn bigger profits, which they reinvest again. This cycle continues as long as those reinvestments result in a compound growth rate of at least 3 percent per year. Once the growth rate falls below three percent, Harvey says, a crisis ensues, like the kind that precipitates a massive bailout of Wall Street banks at public expense, for example. But remember, a crisis is not a reduction of assets; it is a period in which assets are taken from one place and moved to another, presumably more profitable, location.

The problem is that, since the 1970s, capitalists are running out of places to invest their surplus capital. In a globalized world, the economic system cannot reproduce itself forever. Barriers to growth include technology, the environment, and access to lines of credit. Capital constantly needs to circumvent these barriers to assure its survival. For example, if laborers get together and demand higher wages and better treatment from their employers under threat of a strike, this represents a barrier to capital accumulation that must be surmounted at all costs.

Adjuncts and the Global Economy: Circumventing the Labor Barrier

Where does academic contingency come in? First of all, we must understand that the problem of academic hiring is *not* a lack of jobs per se. That is the symptom, not the disease. A pool of contingent laborers has been created by global capitalism as a way to get around labor barriers to expansion. A reserve army of the unemployed, as the saying goes, is required for capitalism to survive, which in academia translates as *cheap teachers*.

Let me further explain the connection between academic labor and global capitalism. Colleges, like any business, are entities in which the majority of workers do not own the institutions where they are employed. Rather, higher education workers exchange their labor power for wages. One barrier to the growth of academic capitalism, then, is solidarity among workers, or what Harvey also calls the "culture of the workplace." In order for the American higher education system to grow, as it has done for many decades, increasing numbers of workers are needed. From the point of view of capitalists, the majority must labor for low wages and on contingent contracts in order to ensure maximum flexibility for capital. This is why some critics have called academia a "pyramid scheme" in which privileged tenured faculty, and those William Deresiewicz calls the "immiserated proletariat," are both necessary for capital to function. Here's how Harvey explains it:

> "[I]n a desperate bid to exert and sustain control over the labour process, the capitalist has to mobilise any social relation of difference, any distinction within the social division of labour, any special cultural preference or habit, both to prevent the inevitable commonality of position in the workplace being consolidated into a movement of social solidarity and to sustain a fragmented and divided workforce."

In other words, one strategy that capitalists employ to control labor is the enforcement of a tiered system in which workers are encouraged to see themselves as fundamentally different from their colleagues (that is, if they see each other at all). Trimbur's and Brereton's comments (or lack thereof) illustrate how successful academic capitalism has been in exploiting "relations of difference" amongst academic workers. As I explained above, Trimbur and Brereton are not mean people who don't care about adjuncts. Rather, we can see their lack of awareness as a reasonable outcome of what Harvey calls the "tactics of capital" to control labor via fragmentation and division.

> There are always ways to subvert the system, and tenured faculty must do more in their own institutions and professional organizations. At the very least, they must be honest about the problem.

This is not about the blindness of a few elite professors (or, for that matter, the willful naiveté of PhDs who believe they will win the academic job market lottery by being more deserving than everyone else). In fact, as Harvey notes, "class is a role, not a label that attaches to persons." Indeed, many full-time professors in low-status institutions are far from the privileged beneficiaries of the upward flow of capital. Rather than try to identify who the individual culprits are, then, we need to continuously assert that this is a systemic problem that originates in the necessity of capital to control labor by ensuring that a few people get everything, most get nothing, and those two groups don't talk to each other very much, or even see themselves as part of the same profession.

guest columnist

Veterans Say No to NATO

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Adjuncting

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Guest Editorial

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Addressing these potential consequences would seem to be in the interests of all the parties involved. At this point, it's clear that Pathways lends itself to schizophrenic predictions about the future of CUNY education. At least some of these diverging perspectives are due to significant and emerging cultural differences; some will argue that these differences are rooted in class perspectives, but it is more complicated than that. But clearly what is at stake is how education in our country is supposed to work and also, inevitably, who should pay for it. These stakes should give CUNY administrations, faculty and students real reasons to pause. The time seems appropriate to have proponents and opponents offer sustained responses to rationales and criticisms on both sides. No matter what happens, this would be a step toward mutual respect, cultural compromise, and a future where we find creative and just solutions to our differences. Ⓐ

Contingency is Composition: Where Do We Start?

Academic contingency is a systemic problem, but that doesn't mean that we can let Trimbur and Brereton off the hook. In fact, getting comparatively privileged members of our profession on board the anti-contingency train is a crucial battle strategy. At the very least, senior scholars must be responsible for not spreading misinformation. Harvey says that we can't fix capitalism by "tinkering around the edges." We must address the inherent risk in a system in which a surplus of low-wage workers is necessary for our global mode of production to survive. "We can't address the problem of poverty," Harvey writes, "without addressing the problem of the accumulation of wealth." Another way to put it is that we can't address the problem of contingency without insisting that the elite among us get the facts right and figure out whose side they're on.

How does getting more senior scholars to speak in favor of equality help the cause? Harvey explains that a new anti-capitalist (read: anti-contingency) movement should be a "co-revolutionary moment, not a storming of the barricades." If you're a full-time faculty member in an English department, your adjunct co-workers are not going to come and beat down your door and beg for your support. They shouldn't have to. They are too overworked and nervous about getting invited back the next semester. Tenured and tenure-track faculty, especially those in the most privileged locations, must become *active* allies in the fight for better working conditions and pay for all teachers. "The disconnected and alienated," Harvey argues, "[must] have an alliance with the deprived and the dispossessed." There are always ways to subvert the system, and tenured faculty must do more in their own institutions and professional organizations. At the very least, they must be honest about the problem.

Another step in forging an alliance between the discontented and the dispossessed is to reward those academics working to illuminate the grotesque conditions endured by part-timers. For example, Megan Fulwiler and Jennifer Marlow have made a documentary called "Con Job" which highlights the plight of adjuncts. The film makes the crucial point that contingency is not a qualitative distinction. Rather, it signals *only* a differential status of employment. That is to say, these filmmaker-scholars shatter the myth that adjuncts deserve their fate when they are actually human cast-offs of the churning capitalist expansion machine. "Con Job" should be as widely circulated as possible. And it should be treated as intellectual scholarship, which is exactly what it is.

In addition to promoting and rewarding anti-contingency work, our professional organizations must insist that our field's journals devote a larger number of their pages to the study of how contingency affects the teaching of writing. Brad Hammer calls this new arena of scholarship "Contingency Studies." Hammer explains that such a move is necessary because "our professional discourse has moved away from pedagogy to embrace the work, theory, and writings of the minority elite within composition." Scholarship on the relationship between adjunct labor and global capitalism can no longer be an academic sideline project granted a few pages of "newsletter" space in CCC. Furthermore, groups like the CUNY Composition and Rhetoric Community have done a commendable job providing support and a sense of belonging to Composition and Rhetoric students and other members. But until the CCRC also becomes a labor movement, it will be of limited usefulness to the vast majority of teachers of writing at CUNY. Organizations like CCRC must do more to ensure that Contingency Studies becomes the central *intellectual* work of the field because, as I argued above, reproducing and legitimating a tiered labor system is already the field's central disciplinary function.

Finally, I'm convinced that change can only come if Composition's intellectual work is not allowed to further descend into what Marc Bousquet calls "management science."

'Meet The New Boss, Same As The Old Boss'

As scholars such as Joseph Harris, Leo Parascondola, and Tony Scott know, Composition and Rhetoric PhDs are often hired as bosses for academic capitalism. In fact, there is now a de facto rule that most Compositionists will spend at least part of their careers managing and supervising adjuncts and other low-wage higher education workers. We must ask ourselves if this is what Composition and Rhetoric scholars ought to be doing with their hard-earned degrees and big brains. Marc Bousquet explains how our field's intellectual endeavors serve the interest of capitalism, which, again, requires a reserve of low-wage workers to survive and perpetuate itself.

> "Clearly, the emergence of rhetoric and composition into some form of (marginal) respectability and (institutional-bureaucratic) validity has a great deal to do with its usefulness to upper management in legitimating the practice of deploying a revolving labor force of graduate employees and other contingent teachers to teach writing. The discipline's enormous usefulness to academic capitalism [includes] delivering cheap teaching, training a supervisory class for the cheap teachers, and producing a group of intellectuals who theorize and legitimate this scene of managed labor."

As a dynamic and creative force, academic capitalism has absorbed the intellectual work of Composition in the service of the continued exploitation of teachers of writing. Our field is useful in this scheme because earning a PhD in the field is perceived as a credential for managing the low-wage labor of those who occupy the academic pyramid's bottom levels.

What can be done? Rhetoric and Composition scholars who direct programs must do more to insist that a majority of those they hire and supervise are full-time workers who earn fair wages and benefits. I know this is a difficult proposition, and perhaps impossible in some settings. But what kind of field will we have if Compositionists continue to allow their labor to be co-opted by those who perpetuate the oppression of the majority of writing teachers? Many writing program directors are not in a position to make change alone. That is why our discipline, and our professional organizations, must vigorously support them if they choose to take such a stand.

Finally, my experience at the Brereton/Trimbur event has convinced me that those who occupy places of relative privilege in academia's decreasing number of tenured positions must educate themselves about academic contingency and do more. A lot more. Higher education must have a new labor movement that is anti-capitalist in orientation and that seeks to build coalitions with precarious workers in other sectors of the economy. The emergence of Occupy Wall Street has opened the door. We must not let the moment pass us by. As Nate Brown explained in his speech protesting privatization at the University of California, "the *only* way the university struggle can isolate itself is by failing or refusing to acknowledge that it is *also* an anti-capitalist struggle, that it is *also* a class struggle."

I admit that I am not optimistic.

The Academic Curiosity Shop

Let's face it, many of our field's eminent scholars ignore the class struggle in higher education and the low-wage teaching trap that ensnares many bright and deserving students and graduates because Composition needs those teachers to reproduce the game for the next round of players. Established faculty who have the power to get their words in top journals and win places on popular conference panels can no longer be let off the hook for declining to advocate for workers in the academic basement. At long last, elite faculty must acknowledge that much of their scholarship is deeply and shamefully irrelevant to the daily work of most college writing teachers.

A recent *College English* article, by Jim Cocola, frames the issue as a growing divide between the haves and the have-nots. The result is not pretty for traditional faculty.

> "For if the American professoriate has never been a closed shop in the traditional union sense, it remains a guild, albeit a diminished one, whose tenured and tenure-track members are increasingly old and, increasingly, curiosities, occupying a dubious position somewhere between a self-propagating administration, on the one hand, and a rapidly proliferating casualization, on the other."

Established scholars who do not vehemently challenge the labor system that funds their own privilege are the "curiosities" that Cocola describes. But there is a way back to relevance. Harvey's theory of capitalism's road to crisis suggests a new task for us all, but especially for those who are in a better position to demand change. It is "the task of the educated discontented," he writes, "to magnify the subaltern voice so that attention can be paid to the circumstances of exploitation and repression." The well-known voices in our field—and in higher education more generally – must magnify the voices of their oppressed colleagues. A real "Contingency Studies" ought to start with a robust commitment from the field's veterans, and it must include taking action at the local and national level. As prominent members of the profession, it's their *responsibility* to advocate for the next generation of scholars and reclaim the soul of higher education. These emissaries guard the gates of an academic discipline that is disintegrating. It's time they recognized it. Ⓐ

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GC Advocate Poetry Competition

The *GC Advocate* is pleased to announce the winners of the Second Annual *GC Advocate* Poetry Competition. Out of the many dozens of excellent entries received, our judge, the poet and writer Wayne Koestenbaum, chose four winners.

Matthew Burgess

First Prize and
winner of a $250 cash award

"This poet has a sharp ear, a tender eye, no sympathy for humorlessness, and a swift hand with enjambment. This poet knows how to end a line—with a bang, or a tease, or a curve. Amid these swerves, an air of insouciant recklessness mingles with a wistful fondness for misfits, for errant paths, for the eroticism of everything that's lost, faded, remote, and wrecked. A recognizable speaker articulates these lyrics, but the 'I' is held in check by wit, vagueness, surgical splices, and flirtatious evasiveness. A phrase like 'a collage of phalluses / to squeegee before father returns' sets my internal thermostat to a temperature resembling joy."
—*Wayne Koestenbaum*

In Mittens

I finally have a cracker to toss
into the mix, no longer a chick
atwitter in liquid shoot, not yet
a wombat. As digits in corsets tug
for air, exes and exclamations.
Woah doggie, down. No one
wants to promenade pushing pram,
nor do we sit starshot with stein
of weizen. For the record

I saw the seer, I steered it, I spit
the deadserious with emphasis.
Blunderbusses wilt in instants
behold this spanking palm, these
infinite fisticuffs. Follow me
solemnly, I do swear to imprint
your pine-scented neck, o pioneer.
You twitch such-and-such so
winningly. Come near, come

with theories of honeybees. You
can nap or do a puzzle, occupy
the entire table, nibble on these
fanned sweetmeats. Never before
have such angles tweaked me,
not one single single so ravished
the dunked teenybopper. This
then is our itinerary: a collision
of hips, our threaded boyhood.

Repeat As Desired

When a name and a nose conspire
to make a boy a bird, why not wing
away to a loftier elsewhere? Where
and how to land is another question.
Unscramble the anagram, examine
the blurred branches for a hammer,
chew ribbons of gospel. Gazelles
appear occasionally, figs and lattice
windows through which lovers let

down their hair. I never knew what
a pomegranate was, never flunked
classes or slapped faces like Crystal
on Dallas. In the air over Reykjavik,
I unwrap German crackers, wonder
if this eyelash in the plus equal key
is yours. Away I hurtle. Words slash
the surest path across boondocks,
sketch a tarmac, arrow our achtung

even in sadness. There I wrote it.
I am the fallen ice angel who reads
your mind. These fingertips pursue
your scent, O Persian prince, you've
been here since Greece. So now we
caravan up the Alp, puzzle snowcap
to a chunk of Austrian sky. Click
into place. Sweet the search was not
for naught. And there is the bird.

Daily News

The devils who shook me awake
came to claim me mid-holiday.
I had strayed into plaid pajamas,
sipped the somnambulist's soup.
Small footprints gently impressed
the blanketed hillside and every
buttered window flickered hello.
In glittering drifts I leaned toward
a furred igloo or a prick to make

the sky sigh. No, not so much.
A valley yawned to be spanned
still, teenagers idled on the stoop
pissed off with day-glo eyewear.
In the deaf interim, in the absence
of magi, we must fish for yeses.
Hieroglyphs will quiver a calling
via owl or balloon launch—all
sourpusses banished, this is do

or die time. The *or else* within us
delivers its bitchslap then softens
into shepherd with eager shoulder.
On now, I trace the ventriloquist's
silhouettes, a collage of phalluses
to squeegee before father returns.
Only then the fun ends—not yet.
Hold tight now. Into effervescent
wreckage, we two dive tenderly.

Dot Dot Dot

Warning: may
contain sudden
histrionic exits,
rifled archives,
dark moods
sinking good
hours. May
exhibit fierce
jealousy: glances
must cease
unless sexless.
Terrific elation
too, a boon
bomb tick tick
so you like
a lit wick?
Therein lies
the lie: lions
tigers and bears
oh my. Try
try again
and then try
again. Now
listen: you
cannot get
his witch's
damn broom.
Home is where
terror was
familiar—
click
your slippers
for elsewhere.
And your little
dog too.

All About Nothing

Lost in tenebrous immensities
a lot of frost people twist syntax

to shed a little light, to hail a tree's
approach: please don't chase, just

call. In my lullaby Alice rides
a nameless faun and no whisper

gets blurred, no mediating utterance
clashes with the original response

of a silent wavelet. One question is
how to disappear sufficiently to say

the unsayable. Another is what
the peptides spell about insoluble

mysteries. Earlier stories crumple
or doodle in the dust—still I shiver

in its slight asymmetry. The raspy
man in a Santa hat sings Tracy

Chapman's riff for instant dough;
then, we go on living on the G.

Quieter now, be not inhospitable
lest he be some strange angel.

And if we become molecularly
ablaze, seize the demiurge as

someone who sorts stuff out.
Mercifully if we're lucky.

Sara Jane Stoner

Second Prize and
winner of a $75 cash award

"This poet-in-prose sets spinning a vertiginous agenda with a melancholy, odd charm, not unlike Jane Bowles recording a train ride in the last third of *Two Serious Ladies*. All's amiss; all's hyper-intelligent, dangerous, and 'high,' in the street sense. With a sentence like 'And so I always end up fucking myself or eating myself in the process,' this innovative poet cuts to the center of what matters." —*Wayne Koestenbaum*

THE MONSTROSITY OF FALSE ORDERS

1.

They're tearing down the old depot as the township lacks the money to pay taxes on it to both itself and the state. The crux here, in the peep show of the landscape between freight cars, is that I have to believe in the false orders in order to hate them, my mind a forgery of the cinema of capitalist projection. We spoil the air just to see the ocean and that my predictions are their installations then become productions of their shapes. The one-armed man and the one-legged woman sit across the aisle with their two Bibles. They're working hard on my desire to persuade them therefore leading me to the poisoned water which I sometimes can transmute, and sometimes not, sometimes I fall down a quarter dead and weep my way to the toilet. I mangle the language to protect you from my persuasiveness, from my knowledge of the monstrosity of false orders. Dedicated hobbyists and young parents of young children are working hard tracing schematics and spanking their young children. The crux here is that to write something is to claim to know it and to deliver it to others signifies a gift of a new false order, a new monster ordering the text. The air over Louisiana is full of patient eagles banking sun through their wing feathers. And so I always end up fucking myself or eating myself in the process.

No one has the no, no enema for your cinema. This life is really about wanting to save people and how fucked up that is. So great that you're here, Shakespeare. To make freedoms I don't believe in. To leave me dead leave me dead with the dead man and your smug tremble of a breath. Those filed, piling, and unifying cuffs, the mask of the face of the woman at the door slipping down in the movement of her turn away from the gaze of the camera. I kept seeing the piling of bodies everywhere, coalescing into one thinking body, concerned with its own pursuit of sex and power. It's really about how nothing they've prevented you from seeing is actually scary at all. The pressure of multiplying registrations of the movements of multiple bodies moving. About stealing my brother away from the false order. About Freud's desire to blind Jocasta. The cruel impossibility that we might be "portraying the development from a material to an immaterial world," when the answer itself was matter and the transcendence was in the paint and through it. It's really about that tender kid who dropped out of my class. The kid who trembled when I told him to write.

2.

What kind of bald memory will let you live through the thunder of the great need and answer. My anxiety is as big as Credit Suisse. What sort of bald voice makes the money give itself over beyond the purpose. As big as the guy on the steps of the depot, as big as his fantasy house, his hunger—my anxiety. What life of bald mind will rive the customs of sense that torque the losses into good grief. My anxiety is as big as the last time I saw you drink. I tend toward the loving of the unsavvy like a spoonbender in the presence of a mouth and good honey. My father, an ex-wife called him "Daddy," taught me that play isn't play without fuckers and kittens. The future is a picture of the two of us in Las Vegas. A show in which nothing is forgotten. Still I'd rather not tag along to the pay-to-play car for the unfree meal or the company of the well-eyed. I didn't want to see your ass in the first place. Nothing rhymes with continuity like cunt, but the cost has always been somebody gets high.

There is a spontaneous question from the audience, passengers. The student cries out. Reading costs time and money, and the windows are bricked over with the shapes of windows. We say, did I humiliate myself? And she says, No you did not humiliate yourself you emptied the contents of your desire into the soiled pockets of an urchin; you heard that bell ringing behind the house on Avenue H every time you passed it, which could mean it rings every day; you ate the cleanest filth you could find; you heard a mirror in the trash can singing, "hey you, hey"; you slowed things down as much as you could so that we could study you, and we watched you got an animal to talk for a few minutes you performed an interpretive dance entitled "The End of Academic Hypotaxis" for a room full of desperate then laughing humans you spent four hours parsing the latest educational empowerment jargon to get to a base feeling you ate lunch with the man whose lover died ten years ago who took the edge right off the man's voice in his dying you uttered a good sentence you arranged a firing squad when we needed it most you claimed a generation was you fell in love with every sorceress you met in the hopes of becoming one you failed to find the armholes and left with your breasts out. At that moment, the white convertible pulls away, parallel to the still still train.

We held her hands and said thank you and that I wanted to give her everything, everything that I owned. That I wanted to say that she seemed to be carrying it all already. There were sparkling cormorants on the rocks above the river looking into Berwick Bay. She started talking about the darkness. She spoke about the darkness as place of progression. She said, To meet the clay between the hairs that's been there since the day you were born. We were looking into each others' eyes and having a conversation about pursuing the darkness into the eye. A pupil is a hole forced to dance by light; it is dark because of the skillful consumption of eye tissues. It shoulders up the wavelengths and cords them like wood for the fire. She let go and threw her hands into the over-air and pushed her pelvis into mine. This binds my feet and kills the inside-out man I practice becoming. I entered her eyes again beneath their fallen lids. I felt the warm dryness of the soil in her center. I saw the similarities in our colors. It is a portable token, a currency, marked with the image of the world on it. For how much had she taught me about time.

Lara Mimosa Montes Flores

Third Prize and
winners each of a $50 cash award

"These taut, strung-out beads of phrases attest to a sensibility highly refined—a mind comfortable with an arcane, and often devalued, realm of cultural trinkets. This writer's *Fielding Dawson*, among other minimalist provocations, shines with a tone-sure rightness of touch."
—*Wayne Koestenbaum*

EULOGY FOR ZELDA

TODAY IN THE TIMES THEY SAID YOU FLOPPED
OVER AT 95

MAYBE YOU WERE OVERWHELMED

MAYBE YOU WERE THE REAL MRS. MALLARD

BUT WHEN THEY REPORTED YOUR LEAVING
THEY LIED

LAST NIGHT AT THE JANE I SAW YOU SCORING
SOME CRYSTAL FROM A FORMER LIMELIGHT DJ

ZELDA, I KNOW IT WAS YOU
I COULD TELL BY THE WAY THE LIGHT HIT
YR SILVER-PALLADIUM FILLINGS
DRILLED SOMETIME BEFORE THE SECOND
WORLD WAR
IN A DENTIST'S OFFICE OUTSIDE PATERSON
KNOCKED OUT ON TOO MUCH NITROUS
TOUCHING ANOTHER TIME

(AS WCW SAID IN *PATERSON*
"TOUCHING AS THE MIND TOUCHES")

SO ZELDA, OLD JOY, SEE YOU LATER
SEE YOU AFTER MIDNIGHT AT THE AFTER PARTY
AND DON'T FORGET YR KITTEN HEELS

MANHATTAN SADDLERY

I'm the kind of person who likes to fuck on company time

I put on *LA PERRUQUE*
Genderless, I wear it well

That's me
That's what I do

Like a toy donkey
(*HEE-HAW*)

Like when I walk to the bridle shop
but
(*HEE-HAW*)

the man behind the counter asks me
if I like to ride horses—*No*
but I want him to know
I am not here
because I like to ride horses
(*HEE-HAW*)

the sound of my donkey
clocking in
(*HEE-HAW*)

The sound of my baby arm
reaching out

HEE-HAW
HEE-HAW

HEE-HAW
HEE-HAW

15$, 35$, 55$ …

Too poor for pleasure

but it doesn't stop me
HEE-HAW WANTS THE SUEDE HANDLED ONE FOR
55 !
"SHE SAW…, She-saw…."

John Berryman, is this a dream song
or had we built you and I a
SEE-SAW?
(*HEE-HAW*)

FIELDING DAWSON

Fielding Dawson wrote a book called *Will She Understand?*
FIELDING DAWSON
Some sort of signifier
that he could put in the closet because he could not
code it
it being anonymous, but palpable

essentially, *it* is gay longing
longing to be

I know because I was
convinced that the name of this Fielding Dawson book
was *How Will She Know*?

Know what?

Know how to code me contemporarily

Oh, Fielding Dawson, "black mountain"
but I scoff at that

Or is that 15-year-old-boy-longing?
Like if I were longing for a 15 year old boy
and I was a man
I'd make him bend for me like a

FIELDING DAWSON

LAURA MARS

Laura
when yr Faye
wear it
IN YR EYES

Don't let the poseurs or the po-po tell you what to do
like when you tell Lulu what to do

LULU: LAURA, I DON'T LIKE THE PINK!
LAURA: LULU, IT LIKES YOU. . .

When I wear pink, Laura
It's like I'm Lulu for you
Less than Lara bereft and losing
now whatever's left of you

but I suspect you left it here for me
you wanted to tell me the truth of the times
that it's all downhill from here
murder money poems

the rose chiffon E S P . . .

today the truth broke in
me like a bad pony

Phillip Griffith

Runner-Up

"I can't stop thinking about the repeated phrase 'the monuments,' which functions, in this poet's twinned works—each called 'the monuments'—much the way Yeats's widening gyre functioned: a talisman to arrest consciousness. The author of *the monuments* and *radiolucency* controls language with a searing fineness, a rhetorical shipshapeness that melds eloquence and estrangement."
—*Wayne Koestenbaum*

radiolucency

other than photography
the lung
shows its lobe

the eared image
adhered
evening light

the spongy exchange of blood for oxygen fractures the density of the organ into vesicles vestibules phatic cul-de-sacs of tissue

——can we sing now
clouded through windows
or water

——whetted *piscine*

knife-
light
sharp sight
lustrous metallic
gray
i
odine
viol
et as a gas
rising
over the hill

fields concerns that lower in the casing available oxygen drops spreading through the white capillaries scleratic expiration of nonverbal communication

——marbled refraction brimming
intervisibility lit
urgically in the cant
icles

violet stoppered
stoppage
in and of——

flattening the diaphragm
in spasms

a series of cinemagraphs were taken with radiopaque material being injected into different chambers of the heart

or foreign bodies (in the eye)
classified impervious vault——

copper caisson

where
air in the lumen

first
sounds

then
appears

as dark area——

the monuments

the monuments arrives by night last flight into mexico all into the back of a van the monuments calls to each of the other monuments safely through customs snow lightning like neons on the snow to leave the airport on time at night in mexico the monuments dreams of a fire in a schoolbuilding squatter in the schoolbuilding the monuments does not know on first encountering the fire to flee or to group possessions in small piles of importance to successive styles of daily living but the fire advances in the ceiling expanding ceiling tiles so that the fire punches through as it approaches with the frantic urgency of machine gun fire the monuments flees the classroom with its piles of possessions and is separated from the monuments wandering out the monuments follows a quiet series of roads through the center of town mexico to the wedding calle dr coss to allende to calle ibarra the plaza chica where gertrudis bocanegra specializes in woolen goods and kitchen implements church of jesu cristo of saints of the final days the monuments coming closer the still watching the child and below the movement the monuments watches the child through the center of town mexico when the monuments looks to the map for the location of all the other monuments the lake is a white mass north of mexico at night is cold and opens to the sky the monuments sinks further into muslin albedo another streetcorner mexico la iglesia de jesu cristo de los santos de los ultimos dias built in a way the monuments searches each room of mexico doubling back but the soft rustling from the room just searched is only the monuments in mexico the monuments instead is tying bundles of wooden spoons each of the monuments wakes after a dream to the wedding and at the wedding what other guests have

the monuments

the monuments watches the hallway waiting with the wasps
the monuments makes the judas a smaller cinothèque wasps the paving stone tile
to the stairwell the monuments cleans the hallway out
clutters the permanent collection of celluloid pellucid
monuments the monuments answers the sound of no one
at the door waiting silently the monuments waits the monuments in the doorframe
jambs
the monuments taking out the other monuments tied in tight plastic bags the
monuments puts one foot forth another foot forth another foot
forth the monuments descends the stairs quickly the monuments watches from the
door the lights click in time like reels of light in time like reels of light
like in time like reels of light until the monuments reactivates
from below the monuments takes that which passes in the dark returns
the monuments without
the monuments keeps an eye to the end of the corridor and others elsewhere
*
the monuments limits telephotography is limited to the horizon night travel of perspective haze and color black as night
breathing in the strait contours and narrow helps out the lanterns puts out the torched pages in degrees following wider
gaps into unknown territories countries fields of vision lets up where a rise in the road lifts the light up a glance's worth of
tree fingering out the monuments blinks together still there the monuments blinks together still there the monuments
*
the judas winks a smaller cinothèque
the monuments gathers to mouth the pellucid jellies
like reels of light in time like
jambed
*
wasped out
the monuments trains
sidereal eye not on the sky
but on a distance where light begins to come undone

Summer Books Issue

Anarchism for Idiots

▶ Gornick, Vivian. ***Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life***. Yale University Press, 2011

JAMES D. HOFF

Imagine Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* set in the Lower East side of New York City at the end of the nineteenth century, and you will have a good sense of the emotional and intellectual depth of Vivian Gornick's *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life*. Like the narrative of *Midnight in Paris*, which is structured around a series of encounters with the great writers of the "lost generation," Gornick's biography is propelled forward by a wave of almost interchangeable cardboard radicals—from Johann Most and Alexander Berkman, to Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and Big Bill Haywood—who appear as little more than caricatures of themselves, and then disappear again into the shadows cast by the often wildly contradictory rendering of Goldman that occupies the center of the book. The major difference between the two works, however, is that while Allen's film is a light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek comedy of Bohemian Paris, Gornick's shallow, pop-culture rendering of the heroes of nineteenth century American radicalism is seemingly accomplished without any irony. For example, about Johann Most, the editor of the radical *Freiheit* newspaper, we learn that "for him, it was in-your-face rebellion all the way." And of Alexander Berkman, Gornick declares that "he was a man in whom emotional understanding had penetrated flesh and bone and reached the heart." One might expect this kind of boilerplate effusion on a radical walking tour of the Village, but in a Yale University Press biography such empty phrases are, to say the least, embarrassing, suggesting an editor either too lazy or too timid to strike out such nonsense.

To be fair, Gornick's life of Goldman is an intentionally short book, (indeed its brevity is one of its true strengths), and a more generous reader might be willing to excuse the overall lack of depth as the by-product of a planned expediency or concision. What one cannot forgive, however, is the intense condescension with which Gornick tells her story; and it is ultimately this condescension, masked as a paternal form of political level-headedness, that makes Gornick's biography so enervating, and at times unreadable.

The central premise of Gornick's book is that Goldman—whom the author irritatingly insists upon calling Emma—is the prototype for a distinctively radical personality, a "born refusenik" whose life, victories, and failures were all driven by an absolutely defiant and uncompromising temperament. So far so good, right? Goldman, after all, was an argumentative intellectual and a radically individual thinker, who not only attacked American capitalism and imperialism, but also had the courage to declare that "there is no communism in Russia" at a time when other Left revolutionaries refused to criticize the Soviet Union. Goldman's life was marked by a passion for political action and a belief that revolution could and should come from the ground up; and for at least the first dozen or so pages Gornick does a commendable job of capturing this rebellious spirit and hatred of authority. Though there are few scant pages given over to it, some of the most insightful passages of the biography come early and concern Emma's rebellion against the authoritarian abuses of her father Abraham. As Gornick describes the relationship:

> Determined to subdue her, as she grew from infancy to adolescence [Abraham] resorted to ever increasing despotism, either hitting her with his fists or making her stand in a corner for hours on end, throwing her against the wall or having her walk repeatedly across a room holding a glass of water for which she would be beaten if one drop were spilled. The more despotic Abraham became the more resistant Emma grew.

Although Gornick seems at first to want to celebrate this uncompromising attitude, her later asides and criticisms of Goldman's actions and political views as childish, adolescent, or overly idealistic undermine an otherwise noble attempt to capture the complexities of an admittedly difficult character. By the end of the book one is left with the sense that Goldman was little more than an emotionally immature and politically irrelevant romantic, continually distracted by sex and love, and destroyed by her inability to compromise.

Such suspicions are reinforced by passages like the following in which Gornick writes, with stereotypical condescension, about one of Goldman's last romantic affairs:

> Eight years later (she is now sixty-five years old), after years of lobbying by influential friends, she is granted a ninety-day legal visit to the United states, and meets Frank Heiner after one of her lectures in Chicago. Frank, a former osteopath, is thirty-six, married, and blind. He also has the emotional maturity of twelve-year-old, admitting openly that he is in love with a fantasy of Emma he has carried around with him for years. She responds instantly, and before anyone knows what's happening, is once more head over heels in love. The role of the "other woman" is not one she would have chosen—especially not with a blind man whose wife must read him her letters—but, hey, here we are.

Above: Emma Goldman, Philadelphia Police Department mug book, 1893.

There are no direct quotations from either of the two lovers here and no sources—as throughout the book—are provided, so it is hard to know exactly how Gornick comes to such conclusions about Goldman's feelings or Heisner's lack of emotional maturity. Such a lack of scholarly apparatus is hardly the worst of it, however. The real problem here, as with so much of the rest of the biography, is the snide and dismissive thrust of her language—"but hey, here we are"—which makes the reader bristle with annoyance. And such moments are all too frequent. About another of Goldman's many love-affairs, this one between herself and the "hobo-doctor" Ben Reitman, Gornick writes: "Emotional tumult, baby-talk porn, the melodrama of self-abasement, these were the major characteristics of an affair that took ten years to wear itself out." Such puerile depictions contribute little of any value to our understanding of Goldman's personality and politics. Indeed, these several sketches of Goldman's sexual life have the unintended consequence of painting Goldman as a perpetual teenager rushing from one crush to the next, "made gaga," as Gornick puts it, "by liberated love."

This interest in Goldman's sexual life is a result of the fact that Gornick enthusiastically embraces the idea that the personal is political, and her biography is founded in part on the principle that Goldman's life-choices were an important part of her politics and vice versa. As she explains, Goldman's "lifelong devotion to sexual radicalism… is perhaps the single-most important reflection of what her life as a professional revolutionary signifies." Such correlations between everyday ordinary experience and revolutionary practice were indeed a vital part of Goldman's political philosophy, so it is especially disappointing to see them so poorly interpreted in *Revolution as a Way of Life*. In Gornick's hands Goldman's "lifelong devotion" to sexual and political revolution becomes just "one failed passion after another." By the time one reaches the end of the book it is clear that this is in fact the author's final verdict upon Goldman's life—that it was little more than a series of passionate failures. Although Gornick's impulse to connect Goldman's personal life to her bigger political views is absolutely right, her preoccupation with Goldman's sex life distracts the author from the more explicitly political aspects of her life's work. Worse, Gornick's infatuation with Goldman's sexual history eclipses not only the politics, but the fiercely independent woman behind them. Indeed, one has to wonder whether a man with Goldman's same healthy sexual appetite and emotional intensity, such as, say, Hemingway, would have been judged so harshly by Gornick for his sexual escapades, or if his exploits would have even received so much scrutiny as she gives to Goldman's many affairs.

As much as Gornick wants to make such connections between the political and the personal the centerpiece of her biography, the thematic structure of the book (which is divided into four chapters: "Temperament," "In the Life," "Exile," & "Legacy") actually works against this impulse by separating her love life from her political life. At times it feels as if Gornick can't decide whether she wants to write a biography or a work of cultural history; for not only does she organize the book thematically rather than chronologically—sometimes covering the same events of Goldman's life in more than one section—but she spends whole paragraphs and whole pages attempting to introduce and summarize, but rarely contextualize, such topics as Kropotkin's anarchism, the Haymarket Riots, The Spanish Civil War, and Second Wave Feminism.

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Gornick's criticisms, however, like so much of the book, are highly subjective and anachronistic. We live in an incredibly timid and obedient political climate, where even the *radical* left, or what remains of it, hysterically denounces any form of political violence. To judge the actions of Goldman and Berkman from this ideological perspective is to miss entirely the context and history that made *Attentat* such a powerfully seductive tactic in the late nineteenth century. Such frequent moralizing in the midst of what could have been an otherwise fascinating story of a deeply complicated woman leads one to wonder whether Gornick was really the right choice for a biography of Goldman, for, despite her radical working-class upbringing, she is incapable of articulating the emotional depth of Goldman's commitment to social justice. In comparison to Goldman's own writing, Gornick's rings hollow and false, providing neither the objective respectability of scholarly erudition nor the passionate enthusiasm of an admirer, and by the end of the book one wishes only to be free of her hectoring prose, longing instead for the intensely forthcoming and sympathetic voice of Goldman's own *Living My Life*, a better written and surely more inspiring work. Ⓐ

Above: A 1916 rally in support of Goldman.

Hannibal Lecture

Finding Relevance in Rome's Nemesis

- Barry Strauss, ***Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and the Genius of Leadership***. Simon & Schuster, 2012.
- Andreas Kluth, ***Hannibal and Me: What History's Greatest Military Strategist Can Teach Us About Success and Failure.*** Riverhead Books, 2011.
- Larry Kelley, ***Lessons from Fallen Civilizations: Can a Bankrupt America Survive the Current Islamic Threat?*** Hugo House, 2012.

MARK WILSON

In a way it's odd that Hannibal Barca, that famously hate-driven Carthaginian general, should be better remembered than Pyrrhus or Silo or any of the scads of other generals whose defiance of Rome followed the same heady trajectory: early victories, a Roman rally, crushing defeat, total subjugation. Hannibal's lifelong mission to eradicate the menace of Roman dominion ended in failure and ignominy. So how is it that—for two thousand years running—the Goat of Carthage gets more praise than nine out of ten victorious Romans?

The admiration began among the Romans themselves, and therein lies part of the answer. By and large Rome's enemies were as Christians to the lions: even if they scored an early hit against the beast their function, and destiny, was as meat to strengthen the hungry carnivore. Pyrrhus had to be fought, but superior Roman manpower, resources, and determination assured the conquest of the Italian Greeks he championed. Samnites, Mithridates, Jugurtha, Antiochus, even Cleopatra—every turn in the arena, however harrowing, was another exercise in finding a means to bring Rome's advantages in power, ingenuity, and obduracy to bear on hapless, effete despots, wild-eyed, desperate rebels, and jumped-up hedge lords. But Hannibal was different. Alone among Rome's enemies he was a warrior in the ancient Roman mold: tireless, brilliant, austere, strong and hard, far more at home on a soldier's pallet than a king's soft bed; a general the Romans would have prized, and feared a little, had he been one of their own. He was not prey but peer. Only in Hannibal did the Romans see another lion.

Romans—starting with his opponent and eventual humiliator, Scipio—studied Hannibal, incorporating his tactics into the Roman military repertoire. He came to attain status as a general on par with Rome's most iconic archetypes of soldierly success, Caesar and Alexander. It did not matter that he had lost; Hector had lost his war too, and yet all educated Romans knew that as a warrior Hector was more worthy of study than Agamemnon or Achilles. As a worthy hero on the losing side Hannibal may have drawn the wistful affection of those self-styled sons of Aeneas; but the appeal was practical. Hannibal could speak to the budding warriors of Rome's martial aristocracy as could no other enemy of Rome.

The flood of two thousand years has reshaped the mind and society of man almost beyond imagining. Mass culture and teeming electrons, not legions, raise and tumble today's empires. Yet we Americans feel the Roman legacy. We have inherited the cultural mantle of Greco-Roman society, and the world wars of the twentieth century gave us unlooked-for the kind of trade dominance that made the Romans easy masters of what they saw as the civilized world. We stand astride a changing Earth wondering uneasily how far the metaphor will extend: our victories come less easily and more costly with every decade, our reputation erodes, our economic strength is drained to distant shores and undermined by innovations we once were capable of, our ability to choose our own direction fractured by internal vendettas, our very moral fiber unexpectedly in question. The awe and admiration that our name had conjured half a century ago is stained now with hatred and scorn. If we are the Romans of a modern world, a twisted image of the ancients, can we still learn anything about ourselves from them? Does Hannibal Barca still speak to us?

Three recent books have sought Hannibal's wisdom for our age, in testament perhaps to our Amer-Romanitas and to Hannibal's colossal stature among the more red-blooded of the ancient worthies. As the scars of enemy swords and spears are no longer the measure by which we judge our leaders, our modern conversation with Hannibal is about attitude: how to win, and how to lose, too.

Barry Strauss's book, *Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and the Genius of Leadership*, sounds from the title like a how-to for conquest. But with this book Strauss, a Cornell classics professor who's previously held forth on the Peloponnesian, Trojan, and Spartacus wars, is looking beyond merely explicating military history. Strauss is seeking in these three storied captains to distill a more relevant question: what qualities make an effective leader, and, by extension, how do we recognize them in our military, political, and corporate captains, and perhaps ourselves as well.

(This from-then-to-now applicability is certainly the way the book is being marketed. A jacket blurb by Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations promises lessons "not only for budding military strategists but also for 'great captains' of the boardroom." Another, from author Robert O'Connell, says that "Just as Asian corporate planners read Sun Tzu, Western entrepreneurs and strategic thinkers will want to read *Masters of Command*." Wait, Sun Tzu is only for Asians? Was I not supposed to have read—? Criminy, nobody tells me these things.)

Strauss allows himself to briefly address modern relevance before allowing it to subside into subtext. "Ancient heroes serve many and various modern agendas," he allows: for us today Alexander is a liberal visionary, or a civilizer of barbarians, or a unifying Christ figure; he's a male fantasy in all intonations of that phrase. Caesar is the master Machiavelli, self-propagandizer, dictator or populist. And Hannibal? As a loser—a self-made loser, if you hang everything on his failure of nerve in failing to attack the city of Rome itself—he appeals to underdogs and champions of lost causes. In victory he was reserved, and in defeat he not only retained his dignity but reinvented himself as a statesman (and, later, an overseas instigator) to suit his new lot; he died beaten, but (in this sense,

Above: Hannibal as depicted in a statue by Sébastien Slodtz, 1704, now in the Louvre.

There are no direct quotations from either of the two lovers here and no sources—as throughout the book—are provided, so it is hard to know exactly how Gornick comes to such conclusions about Goldman's feelings or Heisner's lack of emotional maturity. Such a lack of scholarly apparatus is hardly the worst of it, however. The real problem here, as with so much of the rest of the biography, is the snide and dismissive thrust of her language—"but hey, here we are"—which makes the reader bristle with annoyance. And such moments are all too frequent. About another of Goldman's many love-affairs, this one between herself and the "hobo-doctor" Ben Reitman, Gornick writes: "Emotional tumult, baby-talk porn, the melodrama of self-abasement, these were the major characteristics of an affair that took ten years to wear itself out." Such puerile depictions contribute little of any value to our understanding of Goldman's personality and politics. Indeed, these several sketches of Goldman's sexual life have the unintended consequence of painting Goldman as a perpetual teenager rushing from one crush to the next, "made gaga," as Gornick puts it, "by liberated love."

This interest in Goldman's sexual life is a result of the fact that Gornick enthusiastically embraces the idea that the personal is political, and her biography is founded in part on the principle that Goldman's life-choices were an important part of her politics and vice versa. As she explains, Goldman's "lifelong devotion to sexual radicalism… is perhaps the single-most important reflection of what her life as a professional revolutionary signifies." Such correlations between everyday ordinary experience and revolutionary practice were indeed a vital part of Goldman's political philosophy, so it is especially disappointing to see them so poorly interpreted in *Revolution as a Way of Life*. In Gornick's hands Goldman's "lifelong devotion" to sexual and political revolution becomes just "one failed passion after another." By the time one reaches the end of the book it is clear that this is in fact the author's final verdict upon Goldman's life—that it was little more than a series of passionate failures. Although Gornick's impulse to connect Goldman's personal life to her bigger political views is absolutely right, her preoccupation with Goldman's sex life distracts the author from the more explicitly political aspects of her life's work. Worse, Gornick's infatuation with Goldman's sexual history eclipses not only the politics, but the fiercely independent woman behind them. Indeed, one has to wonder whether a man with Goldman's same healthy sexual appetite and emotional intensity, such as, say, Hemingway, would have been judged so harshly by Gornick for his sexual escapades, or if his exploits would have even received so much scrutiny as she gives to Goldman's many affairs.

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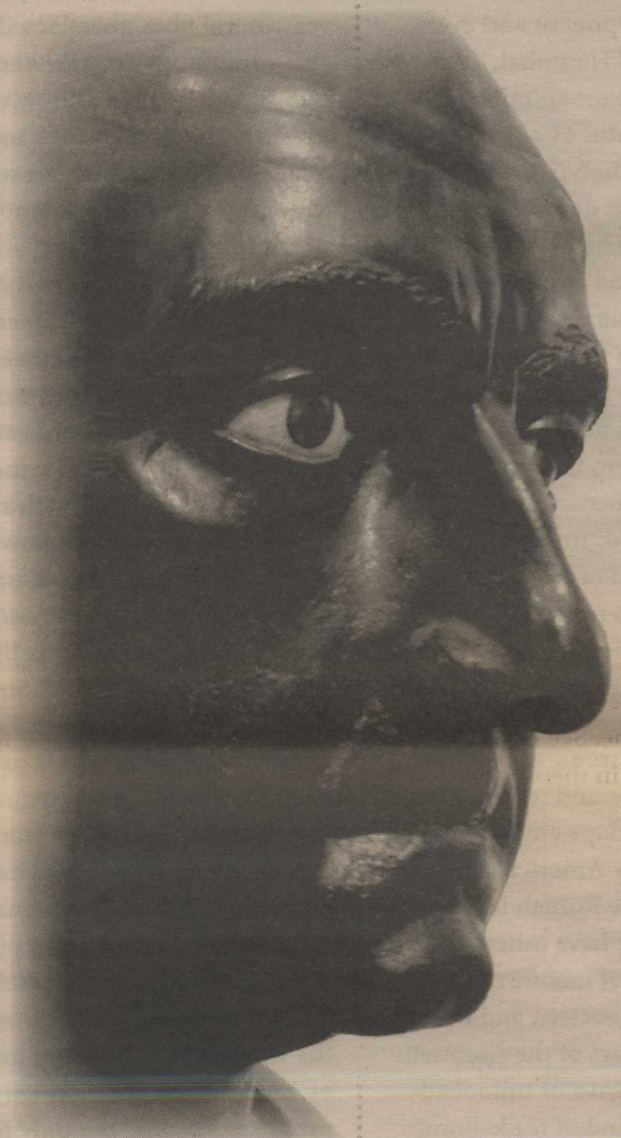
Above: A 1916 rally in support of Goldman.

like Cleopatra) also on his own terms.

Strauss is under no illusions about Hannibals amongst us: the modern world fears the combination of military greatness and supreme political skill for which Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar are revered. Yet that dual aspect is of singular importance. Hannibal succeeded in Italy not merely through tactical brilliance but also by trumpeting "Italy for the Italians," co-opting the loyalty of Rome's chary subjects as effectively as Alexander did Persia's, or Caesar the Romans themselves. "No one ever understood better than these three that war is politics," Strauss writes; and yet for all three, at the giddy moment of each man's supreme victory, "no one ever forgot the rule that war is politics as completely—or as disastrously—as they." The ugly final act in each of these heroes' stories, Strauss argues, was wrought not by their enemies but by headstrong vanity, and that counterexample is perhaps the most important lesson they have to teach us.



Strauss guides his reader, perhaps a would-be general in whatever theater may pertain, through the ten qualities of successful commanders, as elucidated in his three exemplars: ambition, judgment, leadership, audacity, agility, infrastructure, strategy, terror, branding, and—um—divine providence. Apart from the wry impression that if you can cultivate all of those qualities, you'll have the opportunities of a Hannibal (is there an online application form somewhere for celestial felicitas?), there is the sense that pursuing the kind of greatness manifest in Hannibal et al. involves applying the principles of war toward whatever end is before you. The chapters of Strauss's book, exploring these three captains' greatness, follow the arc of a military engagement: the attack, meeting resistance, the clash, closing the net, and knowing when to stop (always a problem when you have both ambition and success).

Is the formula that war is politics commutative? Are politics war? Is business? Strauss's litany of what won Hannibal his greatest victory, Cannae, sounds like universals for success: Hannibal won by virtue of "his agility and good judgment, his tactical sophistication and refinement, his timing and rhythm, his mastery of deception, his superiority in infrastructure, his knack of choosing the right officers and of holding them on the proper leash—loose enough to leave them on the initiative but tight enough to follow his plan—and his skill as a morale-builder for his entire army." These are the attributes that a Romney or a Jobs might strive for as earnestly as a David Petraeus, but the divisiveness of political polarization and corporate greed seems in some way more perverse than war.

The lesson of Hannibal as applied to politics or business may not be the simple substitution of bared swords with bitter talking points or boardroom machinations. Strauss emphasizes these generals' successes as unifiers, drawing together all the opponents of a single demonized enemy. The effect, however, is to intensify the Us and the Them, driving everyone into opposing extremes: useful in total war, but with permanent damage to the social psyche, and to my mind inexcusable in the conduct of intramural activities like trade or politics, where the goal (even amongst greedy capitalists, if you believe Adam Smith) is *supposed* to be the advancement of the common good.

Alexander and Caesar may have seen themselves as opposing despotism (by Persia and the senatorial elite, respectively), but their goal was to replace it with a more populist culture, of benefit in theory to conqueror and conquered alike. Hannibal, however, just hated the Romans and leapt on their mild intrusion into Barcid-claimed Spain as an excuse. He presented himself to potential followers as "a liberator, a populist, and a strong man—a new Hercules" (though wouldn't Herc have had the guts, or audacity in Strauss's wording, to attack Rome?). But it was his enemies that truly had "solidarity and patriotism"—something to fight for, not against. What you're championing is the one element that's missing from Strauss's delineation of the perfect champion. Perhaps the wiser course is to emulate Hannibal's greatness not through his blood-soaked aggression but in some more abstract, metaphysical way.

Andreas Kluth's *Hannibal and Me* isn't about becoming an annihilator of armies, but about facing two things Hannibal came to know intimately: success and failure. Kluth, a veteran correspondent for *The Economist* whose articles normally involve politics and society in the American west and, consequently, rarely veer in the direction of elephant-wrangling generalissimos (though now I'm trying to shunt aside the irresistible image of Jerry Brown atop an armor-tricked pachyderm), draws Hannibal's story—one which, he emphasizes, started with such wild success only to promulgate not only a defeat but the eventual *eradication* of the city he'd started a war to preserve—as a metaphor for the suspenseful and revelatory twists and turns of life in general.

Kluth divides Hannibal's life into episodes, each of which he explores by convening a colloquy with samplings of similarly telling moments from the lives of other famous people whose edifying experiences now furnish fodder for lessons in folly, perseverance, or self-control. Hannibal's experiences form a context for larger life questions as encountered by the famous and the ordinary, and Kluth spins Hannibal's trials now as salutary, now as cautionary.

In the chapter "Do You Need a Goal?", for example, Hannibal's burning, Rome-defying hero-quest is orbited by tales of others who found success in starkly different ways: on the one hand, the resolute explorer Meriwether Lewis, on the other, the wanderers and dabblers like Harry Truman and West German chancellor Ludwig Erhard (whom the well-connected author knows as "Uncle Lulu"). Kluth's point in this section is that those who hunger to convert dreams to action find their success, if it comes, early and explosively; but "the temperament of a Truman or an Uncle Lulu slowly and gradually matures to become integrity," leading to success that, if it comes, will be slower and later. Pondering these two trajectories—"one of towering peaks, the other one of gently rising hills"—Kluth muses that "towering peaks can be deadly."

In each chapter a Hannibalic turning point serves as a reference totem for decisions and deeds by other ancients—Cleopatra, Caesar, Hannibal's enemies Fabius the delayer and Scipio the conqueror—and a satisfyingly eclectic assortment of unexpectedly relevant moderns ranging from the likes of Paul Cézanne to Eleanor Roosevelt to Elliot Spitzer. Each vignette is explored conversationally and in enough detail to be seen respectfully and on its own terms. Within each topic they represent glimpses of possible paths: What might happen, they ask, if your attitude toward success were something like *this*?

Kluth, who's conventional enough to provide one of those requisite book-ending top ten lists of action points but iconoclastic enough to give it only

Above: Are you a Scipio—or a Fabius?

nine items, perceptively argues that the seminal lesson to draw from Hannibal's interactions with triumph and failure is the value of equanimity. Hannibal's stunning military victories, like those of an aikido master, followed from maintaining balance and calm and eliciting unbalance in others. Disaster may require standing back like a Fabius, until the situation changes enough that the bold action of a Scipio is best. Hannibal was able to differentiate men's opposing goals from hatred, recognizing and admiring Scipio even on the eve of battle. And he pursued a purpose larger than himself, blunting the immediate fear of personal failure with a broader goal and need. It's easy to overreact to both success and failure; Hannibal's story teaches us composure and steady thinking in any extremity.

Kluth's brisk and engaging style and his steady, clean focus on providing models and possibilities without didacticism and diatribe is sorely missed in the third recent book to plumb Hannibal's life for answers, Larry Kelley's *Lessons from Fallen Civilizations*. In the first two sections of the book, Kelley, who according to his jacket bio was an ex-surfer and high-tech sales guy when 9/11 turned him into a magazine writer on "terrorism and resurgent militant Islam," seeks to show that our declining American society mirrors, and can be rescued by learning the lessons of, the collapse of has-been civilizations from pressures imposed by outside forces: the Greeks succumbing to Macedon, Carthage to Rome, Rome to the barbarians, the eastern empire to the Muslims. The last part of the book elaborates on the threat posed by "resurgent militant Islam" to us, the latest endangered civilization.

I was hoping for sober analysis of how our Amer-Romanitas stacks up against the actual crises of the ancient world, but this book is not a work of sober analysis. It's polemic, pure and simple.

I could dismiss *Lessons from Fallen Civilizations* merely by noting that the American wrong-headedness that seems to actively cultivate the imperial collapse suffered by the Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans seems to date very specifically from January 20, 2009—as if we somehow jumped from Augustus to Romulus Augustulus in the time it took for Chief Justice John Roberts to botch the inaugural oath.

I could laugh *Lessons from Fallen Civilizations* out the door with a few of the more pungent examples of Kelley's shoddy research. My favorite is where he introduces Herodotus's *Histories* as the source of "the details surrounding the battle of Thermopylae popularized in the film *500*." They made a movie about the Athenian *boulē*? Awesome. Or is that the Proclaimers documentary? And then there's this blithe assertion: "One of the shibboleths of the American Left is that President Kennedy was assassinated in 1962 by sinister forces within the government." It is? Holy shit—so *who did they shoot* in Dallas in 1963? Kennedy's secret clone?

But that's letting Kelley off too lightly. There's something fundamentally sinister about books like this and the corresponding level of political discourse to which we have descended.

First, let's look how Hannibal factors in. Kelley describes the whole history of Rome's relationship with Carthage, establishing Carthage as starkly weakened and diminished in power by the First Punic War and Hannibal as a master tactician eager to avenge his city, leading to the fatal decision to attack the Roman empire. He credits to Hannibal's greatness and the magnitude of his threat to both (a) the Romans' determination and confidence to rule the Mediterranean world and (b) the destruction of Hannibal's own city. With this episode Kelley seeks to support several of his ten "immutable laws that govern civilizations," in which a fall is predicted if (#1) the citizens don't see their own culture as worth saving (here inverted to describe the uberpatriotic Romans), or (#6) immigration overwhelms assimilation (again, inverted to describe the Romans), or (#10) ascending civilizations have superior firepower over a declining one (the upstart Romans stole sea supremacy from the older city of Carthage, and fought smarter on land as well).

These observations on Carthage's folly are then correlated to mistakes in American policy: the cancellation of the F-22 fighter and "ambivalent" missile defense under Obama, weakening our firepower (#10) and appeasing the enemy (#3); and "America's war against its own intelligence community"—you know, all that dangerous talk about the immorality of waterboarding, Gitmo, etc. That invokes the "immutable" about internal warfare eliciting new orders imposed from without (#3). Wait, how is that related to the story of Hannibal? Well, Kelley explains, during the war covert Roman provocateurs instigated insurrections against Macedon, preventing its king from doing more to help Hannibal against their mutual enemy Rome. See how it goes? Covert ops, good; lefties getting in their way (by, say, trying to hold them accountable), bad.

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The real subject of *Lessons from Fallen Civilizations* is the Islamic threat to an America made vulnerable by liberalist government. Throughout the book Kelley constantly returns to the threat from "resurgent militant Islam," a phrase that seems to imply that he believes the threats to American society are posed by an extremist subset of the world's billion and a half Muslims. But even a casual reading makes clear that Kelley hates and fears *all* Muslims, and sees them all as the enemy of Western civilization. "The enormity of the 9/11 events convinced me," he writes, "that massive battle lines had been drawn. And what had just begun was nothing less than a tectonic struggle, a fight to the death between barbarity and civilization, and between Islam and Judeo Christendom." It's the Muslims at large "who, from birth, have been taught that it is their god-given destiny to one day rule the infidel." Clearly the phrase "resurgent militant Islam" is meant to include anyone who's ever prayed to Allah.

Every Muslim is suspect, an enemy subversive working to destroy us. Nefarious conspiracies link unassimilated Muslim population centers festooned across America and Europe where Jews and Christians fear to go. Citing a notorious anti-Muslim extremist book called *Muslim Mafia* by Paul David Gaubatz and Paul Sperry, Kelley explains that "many" American imams have been strategically "posted" to major mosques across the country as secret Muslim Brotherhood agents, already well along in their elaborate multi-phase plot to overthrow America. He indicts as "compromised" by their conciliation with Islamic groups Robert S. Mueller, the FBI director; Brian Humphrey, head of border protection; Muslim congressman Keith Ellison (D-IL.), who was sworn in using a Qur'an instead of a Bible (gasp!); and Attorney General Eric Holder.

But the chief target is President Obama, whose undermining of the wealthy and the middle class through Progressive tax policies and Obamacare (creating a Rome-like decline of a great society) and appeasement of the surging tide of Islam (the implacable outside force that completes the decline) invites and surrenders to the kind of polity-overwhelming tsunami that created the Islamic world in the first place 1300 years ago. Only by knowing we are at war—and fomenting democratization and internet-fueled mass-scale apostasy in the Islamic world—can America be saved. "Who can doubt," Kelley writes, "that, for the West and Islam to avoid a cataclysmic clash of civilizations, Islam must either undergo a reformation or go the way of paganism?"

The answer to that question is "many." Many can, and many do, doubt that branding the entire collective population of Muslim adherents as the enemy of all that is Right and Good is anything but immoral and, for that matter, unChristian—not to mention catastrophically counterproductive. It's exactly the kind of hatred that provokes hatred—that, in particular, breeds extremists. Osama bin Laden didn't decide one day to hate Americans; he became irrationally convinced that Americans hated him, because of who he was and what he believed, and this conviction twisted him into gruesome violence. Western Islamophobia creates an us/them mentality that is not, and has never been, an element of the inherently heterogeneous, culturally tolerant Muslim religion—though it certainly was a major keystone of medieval Christianity. Anyone who's studied the Crusades knows that anti-Western Islamic extremism is the product of, and response to, the brutal massacres and barbarous behavior of the Franks. You want lessons from fallen civilizations? Let's start with Outremer, which fashioned its own destruction out of hatred.

Hannibal knew the dangers of preaching extremism as well as anyone. He could have taken the point of view that all those living under the Roman aegis were his enemy. That would have meant that they had to convert to the Carthaginian–Phoenician culture and religion or else—well, there really isn't an "else" in that kind of phraseology, is there? But Hannibal's enemy wasn't Romanitas, it was the specific group of old men who, he believed, wielded Rome's economic and political power deliberately toward the end of diminishing or destroying Carthage. He marched through Spain, Gaul, and Italy embracing the peoples and cultures he found. He wasn't there to force them to abandon their ways or renounce Roman beliefs at swordpoint, but to find common cause against the villains leading the senate.

Like the West, Islam, too, has villains, but not 1.5 billion of them, unless they come to be of our own making. It's not the Qur'an that teaches them to hate us, it's people like Larry Kelley. The double tragedy here is that in reinforcing and deepening the caustic political invective that's tearing our country apart, Kelley and people like him bring about the vulnerability they decry. Ⓐ

Summer Books Issue

Bolaño Posthumous

▶ Roberto Bolaño's *The Skating Rink, Tres, The Third Reich,* and *Between Parentheses: Essays, Articles and Speeches, 1998–2003.*

TIM KRAUSE

Since the publication in English in 2008 of his masterpiece *2666*, bits and pieces of Roberto Bolaño's untranslated oeuvre have straggled into print, at the rate of two or three a year, each newly-translated Bolaño text another fascinating, resistant, knotty chunk of scoria or tuff for his survivors to pore over, ponder, assess, and add to the ever-growing collection of Bolañoiana. The texts under review are all from this later period in Bolaño's Englishing, the post–*Savage Detectives*, post-*2666* explosion into the largely monoglot *gringo* American marketplace: while some of them are early works, composed at the beginning of Bolaño's meteoric career, they now appear in English translation, not as forebears and harbingers of the great later works, but as pendants to the same, adjuncts to and offshoots from the middle and late works that have become synonymous with the author's work for his English-speaking audience. Think of them less as the sprawling, wintry tomes that define Bolaño's highest achievements in the novel, and more like a diabolically perverse form of summer beach reading—it's worth noting that so many of Bolaño's texts take place in liminal spaces like beaches, soon-to-be-abandoned summer campgrounds, moribund resort hotels, and the like—short books that not only set the longer works in relief, but that have their own strange worth, their own individual charm.

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Bolaño's tragicomic polyphony is the chief delight of this short, fast-moving tale, with the trio of self-deluded men and their sometimes harmonizing, sometimes clashing obsessions recalling—or, rather, prefiguring, if one reads the book with an eye to its early place in Bolaño's output—the symphonic, choral treatment given the friends and colleagues of Arturo Belano and Ulisses Lima, whose memories of the pair form the triumphant second part of *The Savage Detectives*, probably the best thing Bolaño ever wrote (*pace* my personal favorite, the gripping, sordid fourth section of *2666*, "The Part about the Crimes"). *The Skating Rink* plays out like a fever dream of the crime novel, sharp, frequently silly, and unexpectedly bittersweet.

A longer, earlier work, *The Third Reich* (written in 1989, unpublished during Bolaño's lifetime), provides another fascinating sidelight onto the author's later work. More straightforwardly conventional in narrative structure than Bolaño's later works, the novel centers on Udo Berger, Germany's champion player of The Third Reich, a World War II–board game that involves fiendish levels of preparation and tenacity in its participants, who oversee respectively the Axis and Allied powers during their war for Europe in the 1940s. Udo has come with his girlfriend, Ingeborg, to the seaside resort on the Costa Brava where he had vacationed with his family as a child, and it is the resort—part Proust's Balbec, part the summer resort frequented by Mann's Buddenbrooks family at Travemünde, by turns claustrophobic and nostalgic, alive with memories of summers past and redolent with repressed desires and furtive sex—more than the characters or story, that is the real point of the book, at least for this reviewer. Udo's plans to work on his mastery of the game falter when he and Ingeborg meet another young couple, Hanna and Charly, and are confounded after Charly disappears and is presumed dead. Increasingly Udo, another of Bolaño's obsessives, focuses all of his time and attention on one El Quemado, an owner of a paddle boat–rental business on the beach who, horribly disfigured by a fire, is solitary, reclusive, and untouchable, living out on the beach in a nest of empty boats stacked around him in a circle. When El Quemado shows, first an interest, and later a talent, for playing The Third Reich, Udo's fascination with him becomes dangerous, with Bolaño's typical emphasis on mood, atmosphere, interiority, and detail over plot, events, and emotional investment in the characters: Udo is less a three-dimensionally realistic character than a set of points on a graph, the sum of the vectors and concentrations of troop deployments in his beloved board game. When his comfortable isolation in his unique, inconsequential superiority is threatened by El Quemado's mad atavistic gift for the game, the effect is less moving than ironic, not the downfall of a tragic soul like ourselves but the predetermined result of certain morbid latencies in the West—its glorification and deep trafficking with violence at all levels, its isolating and atomizing of its citizenry, its worshipping of expertise and specialization—given life through a voice created by words on a page, a la the novels of Thomas Bernhard or Horacio Castellanos Moya or César Aira. Still, it's a fine, diverting novel on its own merits, even though it's perhaps ultimately most interesting as an example of the direction Bolaño failed to take, an early, strange stopping point on his long journey into much stranger territories.

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theater REVIEW

Downtown Aesthetics on Broadway

▶ *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Written by Rick Elice. Directed by Roger Rees and Alex Timbers.

DAN VENNING

Peter and the Starcatcher, which opened on Broadway at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on April 15, would be an extraordinary and unique theatrical experience on any stage, but is especially so on Broadway. The show brings DIY aesthetics and offbeat humor commonly seen in downtown off- and off-off Broadway theatre into the mainstream, showing how avant-garde theatre can excite everyone, from tourists to families to aficionados of the usual Broadway spectacle. The show accomplishes this by using experiential techniques to riff on a familiar story (*Peter and the Starcatcher* is a prequel to J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, explaining how Peter gained his magical powers, became the leader of the Lost Boys, and how his rivalry with Captain Hook began) that can appeal to all audiences without flinching from challenging its audience artistically, politically, and linguistically. The show's aesthetic of overt theatricality, which seems more at home to intimate theatres downtown, nevertheless serves to create a genuinely emotional evening sparkling with humor and rough magic for the Broadway audience.

Much of the credit for the show's success belongs to the artistic team of directors Roger Rees and Alex Timbers, and movement designer Steven Hoggett, whose experimental sensibilities are visible throughout the show. All three have significant downtown cred. Notably, Timbers is the artistic director of Les Freres Corbusier, an offbeat "downtown company" (as Timbers notes in his program bio) that challenging and intellectual theatrical experiences. Timbers' previous work includes the hipster-emo rock musical *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, the much-discussed *Hell House* staged at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, and other shows including the Obie Award-winning *A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant*, a farce on the life of Robert Moses entitled *Boozy, Heddatron* (a mashup of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* with a sci-fi story about alien robots), and *Dance Dance Revolution*, based on the video game. Hoggett is also the co-founder and co-artistic director of an avant-garde company, Britain's Frantic Assembly, a company known since 1994 for devising energetic physical theatre. Hoggett's work has recently been seen in New York in *Beautiful Burnout*, a Frantic Assembly production about boxing staged at St. Ann's Warehouse in 2011, and the award-winning *Black Watch*, which came to St. Ann's in 2007, 2008, and again last year (reviewed in the May 2011 issue of the *Advocate*).

Rees and Timbers' adept direction and downtown sensibility is present in nearly every moment of the *Peter and the Starcatcher*, from the show's strong ensemble to the design elements overseen by the directors. From the start, the audience realizes they are in for something new as the show opens without the traditional Broadway preshow announcement about cell phones, cameras, and unwrapping candies; all twelve performers come onstage and simply begin the show. Throughout the show, all the design choices avoid mimesis and remind the audience in a fun-spirited quasi-Brechtian manner that the audience is watching a play in New York in 2012. Some of these design elements included a red curtain that remained visible throughout the production at the edge of the proscenium, handheld model boats that were used to represent ships, or the fact that in the second act the many lighting units were completely visible above the stage. When Peter refers to the warmth of the sun, the audience sees the warm red, orange, and yellow lighting units turning on, reminding the audience members that it is not the sun at all. The overt theatricality in the design choices is reinforced by Rick Elice's witty script, which includes actors breaking the fourth wall to note that they can't take all night because audience members have "paid for parking and nannies," or with winking contemporary references such as "can you hear me now" played out over magical cell-phone-esque lockets. However, the greatest praise is due to Hoggett, whose movement direction formed the core of this theatrical experience.

Christian Borle and the cast of *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Rees, Timbers, and Hoggett are ably supported by their team of talented designers. The stage is shallow and Donyale Werle's set is beautiful but conspicuously ramshackle: moveable ladders, rope, umbrellas, small painted flats, and two large crates form most of the set pieces. Paloma Young's costumes similarly mix Victorian-era costumes with shirts and vests that look like they came straight from a Williamsburg hipster yard-sale, and, in several fantastic sequences, kitchen utensils such as colanders that serve as bustiers for men in drag. Jeff Croiter's lighting, which serves to create extraordinary stage pictures filled with luminescent color. Darron L. West's sound design is similarly crucial to the magic of the production—one "character," the crocodile, is created almost entirely through sound effects. Together, the designers created a production that genuinely invoked the magic of youth without being precious or overly sentimental, a theatrical success aided by Elice's devilishly sharp script. It is worth noting that although Wayne Barker composed several exciting songs for *Peter and the Starcatcher*, such as the masterful Ziegfeld Follies-style mermaid number (in drag) that opens the second act, the show is not a musical. The songs are incidental, and the band consists only of a keyboardist (Randy Cohen) and percussionist (Deane Prouty). *Peter and the Starcatcher* is more of a play with music, in which the music serves to enhance the physical and textual aspects of the show.

Elice's script is filled with wit, alliteration, rhymes and constant linguistic play, from silly lines like Smee's: "Aye, sir, I, sir, me, sir, Smee, sir," to complex puns, groan-inducing double-entendres (the giant crocodile is said to be "chewing all the scenery"), and a marvelous sequence in "Norse Code" (Morse code in Norwegian, then translated into English—a clever commentary on what can be lost in translation). I was somewhat worried when I saw Elice had co-written *Jersey Boys* and *The Addams Family*; while *Jersey Boys* won a Tony for Best Musical, I found it to be a dramaturgical mess with an unremarkable book, and, although I did not see *The Addams Family*, it was panned by New York critics and its book significantly reworked before its national tour. No such issues were present in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, which positively sparkled.

Peter and the Starcatcher takes place in 1885, as two ships set sail from Victorian England to the fictional island of Rundoon, both carrying identical trunks which are switched before the ships set sail. On the faster ship, the Wasp, Lord Aster takes what he thinks is a precious chest full of magical wish-granting "starstuff" that must be tossed into a volcano on the island of Rundoon, lest it fall into the hands of a villain who might abuse its magic. Unbeknownst to Aster, the chest full of starstuff has been exchanged with a chest full of sand; nevertheless the villainous pirate Black Stache (so named for his facial hair) commandeers the Wasp in order to take the treasure. Aster has put his daughter, Molly, aboard the slower ship, the Neverland, in order to protect her. As it turns out, the vicious Captain Slank of the Neverland has exchanged the chests and hopes to sell both the starstuff and three orphan boys, Prentiss, Ted, and a nameless Boy (who will become Peter) to the king of Rundoon. On board the Neverland, Molly teaches the Boy about selflessness, leadership, and bravery, before seafar-

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ing skirmishes land everyone on Mollusk Island, which is populated by savage natives who speak both English and a pseudo-Italian nonsense language that mainly consists of names of traditional Italian foods such as "prosciutto," "lasagna," and "salami." In fact, this over-the-top cultural ridicule, which audiences can only read as ridiculous, serves as one of the many ways in which the show deals very intelligently with the failures of Victorian England and its colonial project (at another point, the British Empire is compared to the unintelligent and soon-to-be-extinct dodo).

In the second act on Mollusk Island, the Boy, renamed Peter, comes into contact with the starstuff. He gains magical powers and is granted his wish to remain a child for some time. As it turns out, Captain Stache seeks, more than any sort of treasure, a worthy hero who he can oppose in an iconic eternal struggle between good and evil. Stache chooses Peter to be that hero. Stache, however, is a foppish idiot: it's not Peter who cuts off his hand, turning him into the future Captain Hook, but Stache himself, in a riotously funny accident. More notably, neither Stache nor the Lost Boys nor even Lord Aster himself realize that it is Molly, the titular Starcatcher, who is the truest leader and hero of the show. Because she is a girl—which is highlighted by the fact that she is played by the only woman a cast made up otherwise entirely of men—Molly is ultimately ignored by the Victorian society in which she lives.

The cast of twelve actors are universally superb. Arnie Burton is particularly funny throughout in his drag performance as Mrs. Bumbrake, Molly's nanny, and Kevin Del Aguila (who wrote the book for the off-Broadway musical *Altar Boyz*), portrays Smee with a warm and clever style, reminiscent of another downtown performer, the writer/performer/drag artist Taylor Mac. But particular praise is due to the three leading actors, Christian Borle (Black Stache), Adam Chanler-Berat (Boy/Peter), and Celia Keenan-Bolger (Molly). Chanler-Berat and Keenan-Bolger's performances form the emotional center of the show, while Borle's demonstrates virtuosic energy through his verbal and physical acrobatics.

Borle evokes Buster Keaton through antics that include countless near misses of slips, falls, jumps, and dives, all accompanied by hilarious dialogue equally complex with its malapropisms, switched syllables, and jumbled meanings. The performers' movement, their physical presence, is what forms the core of the show, a fact highlighted in the sheer magic of the final moment of the production, when Peter finally flies. Peter accomplishes this not through wires, as in the famous 1954 musical, but through the other performers, who lift him up and hold him aloft, creating a stage picture that activates the audience's imagination.

Peter and the Starcatcher may not be just an extraordinary piece of theatre, but also could be a sign that Broadway is transforming to engage with many of the textual and performative aesthetics of New York's downtown theatre. Broadway, with its huge commercial theatres, massive marketing campaigns, and audiences composed primarily of tourists and families, has long had both a reciprocal and adversarial relationship with the smaller downtown nonprofit theatres. Actors, directors, writers, composers, designers, technicians, and stage managers frequently work both on Broadway and downtown. Yet Broadway shows, which are almost universally more expensive, tend to be more "accessible" (if not financially) than the downtown theatre—which is known for being more "challenging." *Peter and the Starcatcher* was produced by both Disney Theatrical Productions (creator of *The Lion King*, which has been running on Broadway for almost fifteen years) and the New York Theatre Workshop (the off-Broadway company where *Peter and the Starcatcher* was presented in 2011), among others. The show's marriage of downtown aesthetics with Broadway populism, apparent even in the unlikely partners joining to produce the show, suggests that the aesthetics of Broadway shows may be shifting. This is, of course, not the first time this has happened: Jonathan Larson's rock musical *Rent* also premiered off-Broadway at the New York Theatre Workshop in 1994 before moving to Broadway in 1996 for its twelve-year run; many other recent shows have made this shift from downtown theatres to Broadway include *Spring Awakening*, *Passing Strange*, the revival of *Hair*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *The Scottsboro Boys*. Additionally, my opposition of the Broadway and downtown theatres may be at least slightly simplistic or reductive. Nevertheless, there seems to me to be a crucial difference in the case of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. In many cases, those other shows either failed with critics or audiences in their Broadway runs or, even in their earlier off-Broadway incarnations, reflected the musical spectacle and aesthetics more commonly associated with traditional Broadway shows. *Peter and the Starcatcher* is doing something new: it is taking the overtly theatrical, challenging texts and aesthetics of the downtown theatre to Broadway and succeeding wildly with both audiences and critics. Perhaps this is because the material on which *Peter and the Starcatcher* is based (Barrie's iconic *Peter Pan* story—which was also the basis for the revival of Mabou Mines' *Peter and Wendy* at the New Victory last year). I, for one, am very glad to see this success. Perhaps more audiences may start venturing downtown or into Brooklyn to see similarly challenging shows. Perhaps it may mean that Broadway producers could become even more adventurous, continuing to work with avant-garde artists like Rees, Timbers, and Hoggett, and eschewing Broadway's traditional spectacles for shows that demand, as *Peter and the Starcatcher* does, that audiences use their imaginations to connect with the live performers right there in the theatre. Ⓐ

Kevin Del Aguila and Christian Borle in *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Peter and the Starcatcher. Written by Rick Elice. Directed by Roger Rees and Alex Timbers. Music by Wayne Barker. Movement by Steven Hoggett. Sets by Donyale Werle. Costumes by Paloma Young. Lighting by Jeff Croiter. Sound by Darron L. West. Music Direction by Marco Paguia. Based upon the novel by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. Featuring: Christian Borle, Celia Keenan-Bolger, Adam Chanler-Berat, Teddy Bergman, Arnie Burton, Matt D'Amico, Kevin Del Aguila, Carson Elrod, Gred Hildreth, Rick Holmes, Isaiah Johnson, and David Rossmer. At the Brooks Atkinson Theatre. Opened April 15, 2012, currently in an open run. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 7pm. Wednesdays at 2pm and 7pm. Fridays at 8pm. Saturdays at 2pm and 8pm. Tickets $59-161; discounts for groups of 12+ or, subject to availability, at TKTS booth. See http://peterandthestarcatcher.com/ for further details.

Bigger Fellowships for Fewer PhDs

Looking back over the 2011-2012 academic year, the DSC has furthered its mission to promote an atmosphere of community for all students and continue to promote the democratization and transparency of CUNY. To that end, DSC elections for the 2012-2013 academic year have ended and all winners have been contacted. For more information on who your Program Representative is and whether your program is represented, please check with the Co-Chair for Communications (ccc@cunydsc.org) and refer to the DSC website in July, when new representatives will begin their term. The DSC had a record turnout in elections participation, and I think that is indicative of a more active and engaged student body in these challenging times.

At the April 27 and May 11 Plenaries, a number of significant business items were addressed. During the April Plenary, a resolution to change the FDA Policy and to move blood drives off campus until the law is changed was presented. Much discussion ensued and the resolution was not adopted. The resolution was reworked and brought back during the May 11 Plenary and was overwhelmingly adopted. The language of the resolution makes clear that CUNY routinely holds blood drives on campus grounds and that the FDA currently bans blood donations by men who have had sex with another man since 1977. The resolution points out that the FDA policy is unscientific and illogical—a number of regional and national organizations have called for the policy to change—and further points out that CUNY's actions to allow blood drives on campus implies a support for an FDA policy that stigmatizes and discriminates against students. As always, the full text of adopted resolutions can be found at http://www.cunydsc.org/resolutions. In other news, during the April Plenary, the Chemistry Program became the first science program to have a DSC Program Student Association ratified. This is an important step towards furthering the rights and representation of students in their programs as constituted by GC governance.

As you may remember, President Kelly addressed the April Plenary and announced that the GC will begin to offer incoming students in the Fall 2013 a number of new fellowships. Pres. Kelly said that Chancellor Goldstein made the money for these fellowships available and that an agreement had been reached. The DSC has been unable to get any official documentation in writing of this agreement or further details on the fellowships, but what we do know is as follows. The fellowships will replace the current Enhanced Chancellor Fellowships (ECF's). They will carry a $25,000 fellowship, in-state tuition remission for five years, minimal service in years one and five, and a reduction in the teaching load for years two through four to one course per semester (currently ECF's teach a two/two load). The catch: the Chancellor has stipulated that admission to PhD programs will be capped to those students offered one of the new packages. The net effect of this decision is a reduction in the number of PhD students at the GC by about 25 percent. It is well known that the administration has been and will continue to in-tandem push for programs to admit more masters level students, thereby creating a mechanism, sometimes referred to as a "cash cow," to fund a smaller number of total PhD students. While I think every student is in favor of better funding packages, there are long-term consequences to these changes. A cap on admissions perhaps threatens the mission of CUNY as an institution of affordable and accessible public higher education. Will only those students who look like traditionally qualified candidates on paper be offered admission? How will less traditional students be ranked in this new admission process? Will CUNY graduates be admitted to their own graduate school? These are questions that need to be publicly addressed by CUNY Central and the GC administration. The DSC will continue to gather information and report to students on this topic.

As always, for the latest information, you can follow the DSC on Twitter at @cunydsc or like our Facebook Page "Doctoral Students' Council, CUNY," and for the most up-to-date information visit our website http://www.cunydsc.org. Ⓐ

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Graduate Center Community Relieved James Hoff Finally Graduating

MATT LAU

Although the reports could not be independently confirmed as the *Advocate* went into print, rumor has it that the Grad Center's real-life Van Wilder, James Hoff, has in fact completed and defended what could generously be called a dissertation for the English Program.

"And he got a job?" Grad Center President Bill Kelly exclaimed after his fifth beer of the afternoon at O'Reilly's on Fifth. "I know," responded Johnny the Bartender, "What is the world coming to?"

"Well, at least I don't have to worry about being photo-shopped into a bikini anymore," said Kelly.

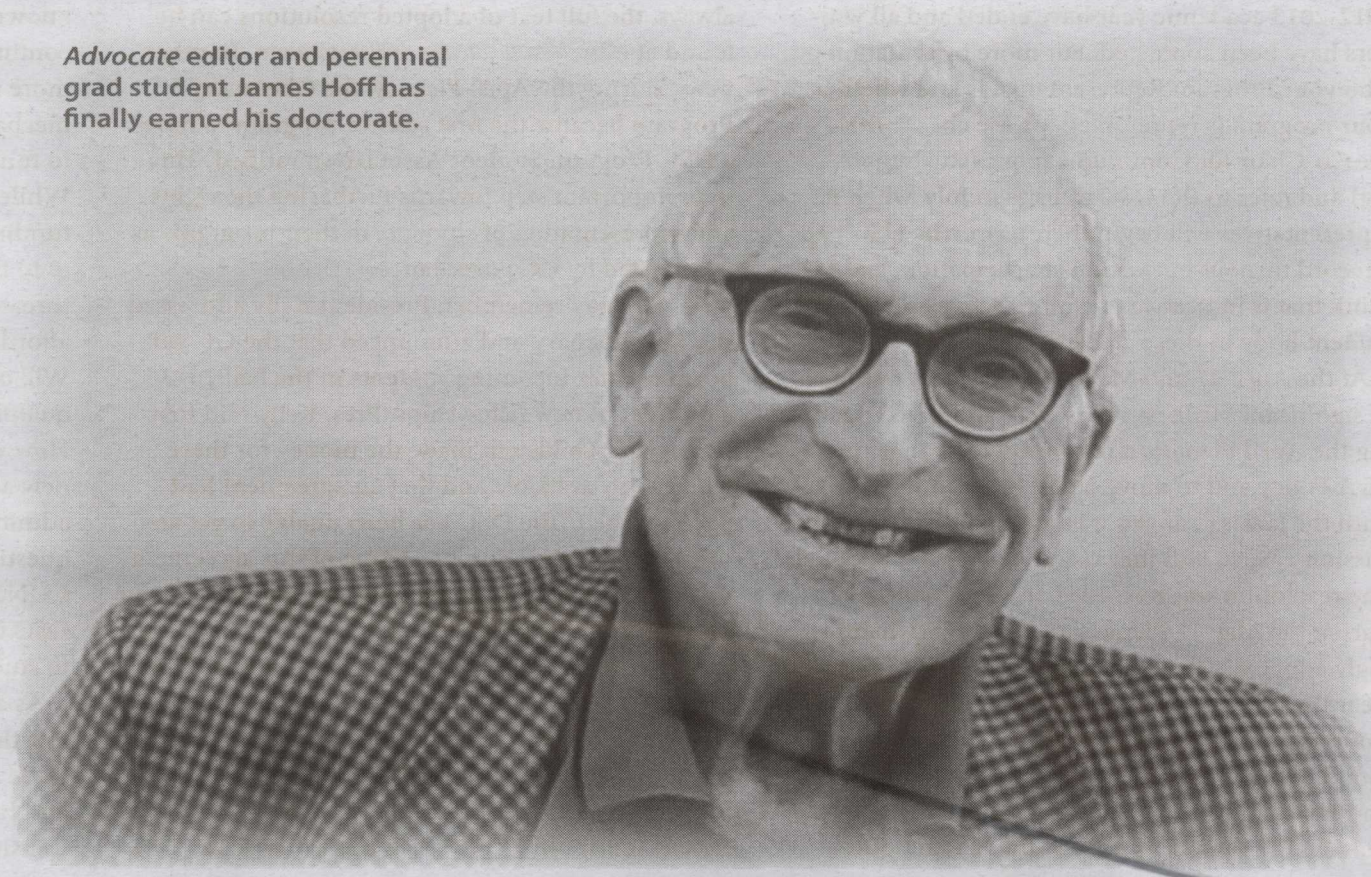
"I'll drink to that!" responded Professors David Harvey and Jerry Watts in unison. Both of whom had been, as usual, posted up in O'Reilly's since the buffet at Rick's Gentlemen's Club closed down around 3:00 pm.

"Hoff's dissertation on…oh I forget, but it had something to do with poetry and animals and the Dewey decimal system…was a little like the War in Afghanistan," said his dissertation director Joan Richardson, whose office was littered with unread copies of *Neuroscience Quarterly* and other scientific journals she pretends to understand in front of first-year grad students.

"Just like the war, it took him ten years to write it. And like the war, I didn't really support it at first. But then once you're there and you've caused all this havoc, it's not like you can just cut and run. That would be un-American. So then the only American option is to let it drag on for years while a bunch of people move bricks of opium on the side and then declare victory and withdraw.

"That's what James and I did. We called defeat victory. I signed a few papers, and then I slapped him on the ass like a coach is supposed to and told him to go out there and be somebody. I was gonna try and relate this story to brain science but I lost the thread. Who were we talking about again? Anton Borst?"

Advocate editor and perennial grad student James Hoff has finally earned his doctorate.



When James called his mother in Irvine, CA to tell her the news that he had not only graduated but also landed an academic post, her first response was, "Who is this? I think you have the wrong number." Then she hung up.

It was only when her special friend and James', Mark Schiebe, called her that she remembered who James was and what it was that he had been doing in Midtown Manhattan for the last couple of decades.

English Department guru Nancy Silverman, on the other hand, remembers James perfectly well. "Of course, yeah, sure, James. Hopefully we'll stop getting his Medicare and Social Security checks here now. Doesn't that guy have another address?"

"In all sincerity," said Ammiel Alcalay, the English Program's Professor in charge of job placement and therefore its most overworked faculty member, "I'm really going to miss James. As the department has gotten more funding and the admissions process more competitive we've lost the students who are real punk-rock bad-asses.

"Nowadays, everyone comes into the program with a website about their shitty poetry and excessively complicated gender identity. James will probably be our last student to get arrested about once a year on average for screaming at the cops or punching a random bar window in Alphabet City. I fucking love that guy, man." Ⓐ

ph.d. comics BY JORGE CHAM