Historian James Oakes tells what makes Lincoln a hero like none other

Immigration and Islam

Films and Fashions of the Sixties
FEATURES

THE GREATNESS OF LINCOLN

He is like none other, and this article by Distinguished Professor James Oakes tells not only what made Lincoln a great President but also why he holds such a special place in our hearts.

STYLES OF HIGH TIMES

The burst of creative energy that characterized the Sixties and still resonates today was captured in the multimedia exhibition FASHION + FILM: The 1960s Revisited at the Graduate Center’s James Gallery. On display were European fashions of the times, and such signature Italian films of the period as La Dolce Vita, Rocco and his Brothers, and L’Avventura.

IMMIGRATION AND ISLAM

The third program in the Great Issues Forum series on religion brought a quartet of experts to Proshansky Auditorium to consider how Western Europe will cope with rising concern about the region’s growing and restive Muslim population.

A TOP PRIZE IN MATH FOR ONE OF OUR OWN

For his innovative work in algebraic topology, Distinguished Professor Dennis Sullivan, who holds the Graduate Center’s Albert Einstein Chair in Science, shared the 2010 Wolf Foundation Prize in Mathematics, considered one of the field’s highest honors.
What makes our sixteenth President such an iconic figure? Why do we invoke his memory more than any other?

Why Lincoln? What makes our sixteenth President such an iconic figure? Why do we write more about him, read more about him, and invoke his name and memory more than any other secular historical figure?

In this issue’s major feature, James Oakes, distinguished professor of history, returns to the theme of his 2009 commencement address on the “greatness” of Lincoln, a greatness he ascribes to three factors: Lincoln’s capacity for growth, his political skill, and his legendary way with words.

No early abolitionist, Lincoln came to oppose slavery over time. The young lawyer Oakes calls a “party hack” of the 1830s—a man who’d then use racial demagoguery to attack his adversaries—would grow to become the bold champion of emancipation of the 1860s. To bring the nation along with him—to preserve the union, free the slaves, and secure their civil rights—while avoiding compromise and maintaining relationships with men whose motives he deplored, required an extraordinary set of political skills. Chief among these was Lincoln’s power of persuasion, a gift manifest in the rich heritage of his writings, from the celebrated Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural to the lesser-known Greeley and Conkling letters prized by historians.

In his essay, Professor Oakes argues that the attributes that made Lincoln a great President do not, of themselves, account for the deep affection of so many Americans. “Long before I had given much thought to the elements that made Lincoln great,” he writes, “I had come to admire him—for reasons that have more to do with his personality than with his policy.”

Far from being corrupted by power, Lincoln was humbled by it. He was a great wartime leader, but his humility in triumph separates him from others in that pantheon of national heroes whose eminence is secured by military prowess. The Lincoln we cherish is a deeply compassionate figure who took no pride in victory, but rather mourned the horrendous cost to both North and South.

We cherish Lincoln for his humanity, for the raw force of his ambition, the forbearance with which he confronted personal tragedy, for his humor and gentle kindliness. He is, as we perceive him—and few have been more scrupulously studied—an eminently accessible hero who expects only the best from us. And the depth of our affection, I suspect, says as much about our perception of ourselves as a nation as it does about our vision of Lincoln.

William P. Kelly
President
The Graduate Center
The Leon Levy Center’s Annual Conference Sees a Bright but Quite Different Future for Biography

“Biographical truth is not to be had.” So Sigmund Freud responded in 1896 to his friend Arnold Zweig, who had approached him for permission to chronicle Freud’s life. That biography was never to be written.

The elusive nature of biography, in print or other medium, is a problem that biographers, their readers, publishers, and critics still struggle with today, and it was a leading topic at the second annual Leon Levy Conference on Biography, held in the Graduate Center’s Elebash Recital Hall on March 19. The conference, provocatively titled “The End of Biography: Purpose, Promise, Prospects,” brought together an impressive array of scholars, authors, musicians, art and movie critics, poets, and publishers.

Following introductory remarks by GC President William P. Kelly, Shelby White, founding trustee of the Leon Levy Foundation, and Brenda Wineapple, director of the Leon Levy Center for Biography, the stage was turned over to biographer and literary critic Arnold Rampersad, professor of English at Stanford University, a MacArthur Fellow, and author of a celebrated two-volume biography of Langston Hughes. Acknowledging that the publication of multivolume works, such as the one he is known for, is “pretty much dead,” Rampersad nevertheless saw new forms of biography—such as film, poetry, and what he called “artifiction”—arising to take their place.

Emphasizing the close ties between biography and history, however, Rampersad cautioned biographers to take care that “small errors” do not inadvertently slip into their text—an occupational hazard for scholars striving to create a work worthy of literary merit. “A single deception,” for example, might range from making up the “fact” that a subject was born as the sun rose, as the sun set, or as the midnight bell tolled. “Making up little things is not such a little thing,” he declared.

Rampersad then went on to give a brief overview of African-American culture as depicted in American biographies. Until “the literary ice cracked” in the early 1970s, he pointed out, these life stories tended to be written by whites and were primarily about athletes and entertainers.

Picking up on Rampersad’s point about biography and ethnicity, jazz columnist Gary Giddins noted his own frustrations at the “cloud of myth” often obfuscating the real life stories of early jazz greats such as Jelly Roll Morton, Buddy Bolden, and Louis Armstrong. Much more is known about New Orleans’ Storyville, its saloons, longshoremen, and prostitutes, he contended, than generally made its way into early books about these famous musicians. Representing other “nonverbal” art forms in this panel on “Biography on the Nonverbal” were Jed Perl, art critic for The New Republic; Amanda Vaill, who has written extensively about choreographer Jerome Robbins; and the panel’s moderator, composer and music critic Eric Salzman. One consensus reached by this panel was that writing about “nonverbal artists” is perhaps even more satisfying than writing about writers. As Vaill put it, “A piece of writing explains itself. But it’s a challenge to describe the creativity of things that are not otherwise recorded or written down.”

In the first afternoon session, the life of Pulitzer Prize–winning poet James Merrill was seen from two complementary yet unique perspectives—that of Merrill’s close friend, the poet Richard Howard, and that of Merrill biographer Langdon Hammer. While Hammer shared excerpts of the book he is writing about Merrill, Howard read poems and told stories that helped flesh out a combined portrait of the poet who once described his own work as “chronicles of love and loss.”

Next, Ileen Smith, editor at large for trade books at Yale University Press, and literary agent Steve Wasserman took up the issue of “Biography and Publishing.” They were followed by a panel titled “The Silver Screen: Directors, Filmmakers, Biography, and the Sad State of the Biopic.” On this panel, which addressed the difficulties of dealing with life’s complexities on celluloid and the genre’s questionable sense of responsibility to a subject’s ac-

—Jackie Glasthal
President Kelly Talks with Ira Glass of Public Radio’s Popular *This American Life*

For the last fifteen years, fans of the celebrated public radio program *This American Life* have been tuning in to hear Ira Glass, the show’s award-winning producer and host, interview an eclectic mix of characters—everyone from Steve Malarky, creator of the world’s best-selling home video for cats, to Louann Mims, a 78-year-old retiree who found herself trapped on her Stearns and Foster mattress for eight days after Hurricane Katrina hit her New Orleans home.

But on May 17 in the Graduate Center’s Proshansky Auditorium, the spotlight was on Glass himself, as he went one-on-one with GC President William P. Kelly. Their conversation was part of the Extraordinary Lives series of talks in which Kelly speaks with public figures who have played a major role in shaping the fields in which they work.

Introducing his guest, Kelly referred to Glass as “the Scheherazade of the world’s public airwaves” and “the master of the caesura.” These are not the only accolades that Glass has received for his work on radio and TV. Dubbed *Time* magazine’s 2001 “Best Radio Host in America,” Glass is also a recipient of the George Foster Peabody Award and the 2009 Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s Edward R. Murrow Award for outstanding contributions to public radio. At present, close to two million listeners enjoy his radio show weekly on more than 500 public radio stations across the nation. During most weeks, the podcast of the program is the most popular in America. (To hear a sampling, go to thisamericanlife.org.)

During their conversation, Kelly tried to get at the heart of the show’s art, popularity, and staying power. While he was still in his twenties, said Glass, he worked as a tape cutter for some of National Public Radio’s daily news shows. It was there that he worked as a tape cutter for some of National Public Radio’s daily news shows. It was there that he realized “you don’t need a body lying on the floor bleeding to create suspense.” According to Glass, his program relies on a very old-fashioned kind of story structure—one with a lot of narrative motion. At the same time, he noted, a unique aspect of storytelling on the radio is that “somebody has to have a thought about what’s occurred—you actually have a character in the story reflect on the action.”

Glass finds that his show has the most impact when it mimics the way people truly converse with one another. “In really good interviews I feel such love for the other person,” he noted, “because both of us end up sort of vulnerable.” This approach, however, does hold some risks. As an example, Glass told of an episode a few years back in which he interviewed a group of reverse Internet scam-mers who spent their time retaliating against real Internet crooks. To do so, for example, they baited a Nigerian scammer into war-torn Sudan on the pretense of giving him money. “On their Web site they were pitching it as—isn’t this hilarious,” recalled Glass. “But I just thought they were monsters.”

Still, to do the story, Glass needed to sound sympathetic. That is, of course, a key to getting his subjects to talk. In hindsight, though, he worries that he may have been too easy on them. “After the story aired, I read on their Web site that they felt I had been very fair to them, which,” he admitted, “was not my meaning at all.”

By 2007 *This American Life* had achieved such a following that Showtime invited Glass to create a television adaptation of the program. Even in its short two-season run (2007–09) the TV version earned Emmy awards for Outstanding Nonfiction Series, Outstanding Directing for Nonfiction Programming, and Best Editing for Nonfiction Programming. In the end, however, Glass decided that it was just too difficult to do both shows. “The radio show that meant so much to us and to the audience, and that had such a bigger audience, was suffering for this thing that not many people saw,” he said.

In summing up the show’s impact on American culture, Glass acknowledged being in the worst position of anybody to judge. “I just want people to get from it what I get,” he said. “I view it first and foremost as a kind of class entertainment. To me, that seems like a proper ambition for it, and that’s what I want it to achieve.”

—Jackie Glasthal

Honoring Two Archivists from the Holy Land, an Israeli and a Palestinian

In a rare display of Holy Land comity, two archivists—an Israeli and a Palestinian—shared the seventh annual Archivist of the Year award, presented by the Scone Foundation, at ceremonies on January 25 in Elebash Recital Hall.

Yehoshua Freundlich, director of the Israel State Archives and Israel’s state archivist since 2006, and Khader Salameh, director of the Al-Aqsa Mosque Library and Museum, were honored for their efforts to preserve archives of the Middle East. Both men have been part of the Endangered Archives Programme, sponsored by the British Library, which has surveyed the archives and libraries of Jerusalem.

“Archivists play an understated but important role in our society and they should be honored,” said Stanley Cohen, founder and president of the Scone Foundation, as he made the presentation. Their work—preserving original and unduplicated documents and artifacts for scholars and the general public—plays an especially important role in Israel with its rich and multicultural history.

Freundlich presides over a vast collection of documents, maps, photographs, and other material in the Israel State Archives, including government records from the origin of the modern state in 1948 and the periods of Ottoman rule and the British Mandate. Pointing out how Israeli archival documents far outnumber Palestinian documents, he stressed the importance of righting this imbalance: “It is incumbent upon us to pay attention, as archivists, to all our communities,” said Freundlich. “We must make efforts to collect Palestinian documents and preserve them.”

Salameh used slides to showcase some important Islamic manuscripts and artifacts housed in Al-Aqsa. He expressed his concern for the preservation of the library’s collection of Palestinian newspapers from 1900 to the present and showed some of the many ancient government records damaged by age, mistreatment, and insects, for which a preservation and restoration initiative is being organized that “hopefully will start this year,” said Salameh.

The two archivists were introduced by Merav Mack, a research fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute who had worked with them on the Endangered Archives Programme. The evening ended with a postpresentation discussion of “Archives and History” with comments by David Myers, professor of history at UCLA and former director of the UCLA Center for Jewish Studies; Rashid Khalidi, Edward Said professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University; Dov Waxman, associate pro-
Gotham Center Programs
Look at NYC Women as Observers of City Life and Powerful Agents of Change

The women of New York City, their impact on historical events, and their role in illuminating early twentieth-century life within the metropolis were topics of two spring programs sponsored by the Gotham Center for New York City History.

In a May 11 program entitled “The ‘Weaker Sex’ Takes Gotham: Fighting for Women’s Right to Vote,” writer and activist Louise Bernikow delivered a spirited, illustrated talk on the women’s suffrage movement in New York City. She focused on the final years of the movement, after voting rights for women had gained quick approval in the West, while the Eastern states stubbornly held out. When, in 1917, after extensive political action, New York State passed a suffrage bill by referendum, “This was so big, and had such a huge impact, that they felt the federal amendment was within their grasp,” Bernikow said. “And indeed, by 1920, it was.” That year, Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

Political action in New York City meant staging big events that captured the entire nation’s attention, Bernikow explained. During President Woodrow Wilson’s 1916 visit to witness the first illumination of the Statue of Liberty’s crown, two women in a biplane flew over the President’s yacht, showering it with suffrage leaflets; and the women’s parades, sometimes 40,000 strong with half a million spectators, were carefully produced. “The precision of this organizing is astonishing,” said Bernikow. “They were countering the myths that women were undisciplined, unorganized, and emotional.” Moreover, they marched in total silence, the better to draw attention to their organized force. This “force” comprised many social strata; despite ongoing conflicts, often instigated by racial issues, the poor of New York, of all colors and creeds, joined hands with rich and powerful society women like Alva Vanderbilt Belmont to reach the goal of equal suffrage.

In another Gotham Center event, on May 5, Suzanne Wasserman, director of the Center, premiered her documentary Sweatshop Cinderella, the story of Anzia Yezierska, a Jewish immigrant from Poland whose stark tales of immigrant life in New York made her a well-known writer in the 1920s and whose short story “Hungry Hearts” became a feature film. Yezierska’s work remains popular today, particularly her novel Bread Givers. Wasserman, herself a New Yorker, explained why she was drawn to Yezierska as the subject of her film: “The past really inspired Anzia. Maybe to a fault, since she felt as if she couldn’t escape it. But that was what I was interested in.”

—Kerri Linden

Probing Brazil’s Surprising Economic Success in “The Sleeping Giant Awakens”

Described not so long ago as “one of the region’s basket cases” and “ungovernable,” Brazil has emerged of late as a global player, with the fastest growing gross domestic product (GDP) in the Western Hemisphere, rising life expectancy and adult literacy, and a rapidly expanding middle class. Unraveling this dramatic turnaround for a January seminar sponsored by the Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies were the center’s director, Professor Mauricio Font of Queens College, and Peter Kingstone, associate professor of political science at the University of Connecticut. Both scholars have written widely on Latin America. Coffee and Transformation in São Paulo, Brazil (Lexington Books, 2010) is Font’s most recent book, while Kingstone, the author of four books on Brazil, has forthcoming The Political Economy of Latin America: Reflections on Neoliberalism and Development (Routledge).

A change in Brazil’s constitution, according to Font, heralded the new era. What has been called the Citizen Constitution of 1988 was Brazil’s seventh constitution since 1824 and the first to include, among its reforms, severe punishment for breaches of civil rights. With new confidence in the political system, Brazil has seen its first two-term democratically elected presidents and a peaceful transition between the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2003) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2002–10).

Stable government and Cardoso’s Plano Real (Royal Plan)—which tamed a 3,000 percent inflation rate—have earned Brazil membership in “BRICs” (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), a newly powerful grouping of large and rapidly growing economies. Font gives credit for this to the post-1990s reforms, the recent commodities boom, and Brazil’s strategic role in the Western Hemisphere. Open to private investment and committed to a trading economy, Brazil has just about tripled exports in the past decade, and a recent discovery could make it one of the largest oil producers. The nation is forming regional and global partnerships, participating in the International Monetary Fund, and pursuing an active foreign agenda, which includes hosting the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Its foreign reserves helped Brazil weather the global financial crisis better than the United States, and its banking system is now stronger than ours.

Wages have risen, and per capita income has more than doubled since 1985. The growing middle class—now the largest segment of the population—is filling the enormous chasm that still exists between Brazil’s “haves” and “have nots.”

Despite this extraordinary progress, however, problems persist. Public sector debt doubled in the past year, delaying pension and tax reforms. There is inadequate support for research and development, primary education is underfunded, and substantial investment in infrastructure will be needed for Brazil to sustain its level of growth. Also troubling is what Kingstone called “mission creep,” the increasing role played by the military in the country’s political and social spheres.

Font noted residual tensions from past authoritarian episodes and friction between the federal and state governments. Although regional cooperation on energy, infrastructure, and transportation needs
Were Artworks That Decorate a Famous Christian Chapel the Work of Muslim Artists?

Are there works by Muslim artists among the elegant mosaics and painted panels, rich in Christian iconography, decorating the ceiling of Palermo’s Cappella Palatina, the royal chapel of the Norman kings of Sicily? That’s the belief of Jeremy Johns, professor of the art and archaeology of the Islamic Mediterranean and director of the Khalili Research Centre, Oxford University. In a recent lecture at the Graduate Center, he used photographs taken after the reopening of the renovated chapel to illustrate his contention that the unique visual language of the cappella provides evidence of both Muslim and Christian artistic traditions.

Commissioned in the 1130s by the Norman king Roger II, Cappella Palatina functioned as royal audience hall as well as a house of Christian worship. This might well explain why the transitional border joining the intricately carved ceiling and the luminous gold mosaic walls, which Johns displayed, features painted panels depicting, along with religious stories, court life and entertainments, military figures, and auspicious beasts, such as elephants and camels, which signified the king’s command over the natural world and the geographical reach of his power.

Many of these depictions, such as those showing board games, fountains, veiled women, and men treading grapes, appear on the walls of other Mediterranean courts. Significantly, Johns noted, these courts were not Christian, but Muslim, and scenes in the Cappella Palatina correspond to the ceiling of the ruling Fatimid dynasty’s Western Palace in Cairo, thus corroborating his belief that the painters of the Cappella Palatina ceiling were led by an Arabic workshop from Cairo.

The Cappella Palatina ceiling exhibits Christian influence as well. Johns showed that images of men strangling or riding lions can be linked to icons of Samson or David, dragon slayers to St. George and St. Theodore, and a male figure holding two crosses to Easter ceremonies. While the Christian iconography in these paintings has led some scholars to conclude that the artists must have been Christians themselves, Professor Johns disagrees. Comparing differences in the grammar and syntax of paintings from the Cappella Palatina and pre-existing Christian iconography, Johns suggested that Muslim painters absorbed details and themes from Christian prototypes into their own tradition of “paintings of wonders.” After all, by the 1130s Christian images had been circulating in the eastern Mediterranean for hundreds of years. “Could Muslim artists not have assimilated these images into their repertoires?” asked Johns.

Moreover, he said, behind the assumption that the chapel painters must have been Christian is the implication that Islamic art is aniconic. But, he explained, although it is traditional for Muslim artists not to represent God or Mohammed figuratively, from the earliest days of Islam, palaces had been decorated with human and animal figures.

In conclusion, Johns asserted that paintings on the cappella’s ceiling show Muslim artists carefully manipulating the Christian iconography at their disposal and drawing on an Arabic tradition of representations of royal power to create a uniquely hybrid decorative program. If he is right in his hypothesis, the Cappella Palatina paintings lose their Christian charge and offer instead an intriguing example of studied medieval multiculturalism.

The April 7 lecture was sponsored by the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center. Professor Jeremy Johns’s research was published in the anthology The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina, by Ernst J. Grube, Jeremy Johns, and Eleanor Sims (Saffron Books, 2005).

—Anna Conlan
This White House portrait of President Lincoln by George P. A. Healy was commissioned by Congress in 1869 and hangs in the State Dining Room.
Lincoln is always with us—perhaps more so of late, after last year’s bicentennial of his birth and the election of Barack Obama the year before. But he is never far from our national consciousness, for he holds a special place in our hearts.

In his bicentennial year commencement address, Distinguished Professor of History James Oakes, who holds the Graduate Center’s Humanities Chair, came to grips with a question, he admits, “everybody assumes I should be able to answer: What made Abraham Lincoln a great President?”

Professor Oakes is a leading historian of nineteenth-century America, whose book The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics was awarded the 2008 Lincoln Prize. As most modern historians do, he rejects “the Great Man Theory of history” and the assumption that certain outstanding individuals rise above the chaos of events and shape the history of their times. Nevertheless, he admits, “I do think that Abraham Lincoln was a Great Man.”

In his commencement address, Professor Oakes gave the reasons for Lincoln’s greatness as a President. Here, he addresses more fully the greatness of the man himself and why Tolstoy would say, on the centennial of Lincoln’s birth, “Of all the great national heroes of history, Lincoln is the only real giant.”
closely associated with the Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle. He believed that the history of human civilization could be told as a series of biographies of Great Men—those rare individuals who rise above the chaos of events, take history by the horns, and shape it to their wills. I don’t think history works that way. On the other hand, I would not go as far as Leo Tolstoy, who believed that history has neither rhyme nor reason, that it is little more than the chaotic flow of unpredictable events. If there are patterns in history, Tolstoy argued, they are the work not of Great Men but of an inscrutable divine providence—which puts history beyond human control and even beyond human understanding. But that can’t be right either. I think there are patterns in history, but they are the work less of great men than of ordinary men and women who together create great forces and great movements—human forces and social movements that press against and shape the actions of those who exercise power.

But Tolstoy changed his mind about great men, and one of the reasons we know this is because toward the end of his life he was interviewed by the New York World on the occasion of the centennial of Lincoln’s birth, in 1909. On that occasion Tolstoy said that “of all the great national heroes of history Lincoln is the only real giant.” Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, and even Washington—all of them, Tolstoy believed, stood “far behind” Lincoln “in greatness of character, in depth of feeling, and in a certain moral power.” Speaking less than fifty years after the assassination, Tolstoy believed that the world was still “too near” to Lincoln to fully appreciate his greatness. After “a few centuries more our posterity will find him considerably bigger than we do.”

I’m not prepared to say that Abraham Lincoln was the greatest man in all human history, but I am inclined to believe—more modestly—that Lincoln was our greatest President. And so, in a sense, the problem posed by Tolstoy is the problem I’ve been struggling with: I don’t believe in Great Man history, yet I do think that Abraham Lincoln was a Great Man.

How so?

Having failed on Bloomberg television, I went home and thought about the nagging question. What made Lincoln great? Now, if CNN ever decides to ask me the question, this is what I would say.

There are three things, different but closely related, that made Lincoln great.

The first was his capacity for growth. This was a man who, as a young politician, was little more than a party hack—who in the 1830s used racial demagoguery to attack his political opponents and who, as a lawyer in the 1840s, took cases defending a master’s right to reclaim fugitive slaves. Compared to other politicians—Salmon P. Chase and William H. Seward, for example—who took courageous stands against slavery and racial discrimination during the 1830s and 1840s, Lincoln came relatively late to those causes.

But once he got there, Lincoln was unflinching. In 1854 he began denouncing slavery, publicly and eloquently, and by 1858 he was publicly denouncing racism as well. He continued to grow during his presidency. Only weeks after the war began Lincoln took the first of several steps that would end in the abolition of slavery, and once he made emancipation the policy of his administration Lincoln took the next step—toward supporting citizenship and voting rights for blacks. The demagogic hack of the 1830s and ’40s had become a determined emancipationist by the 1860s.

So Lincoln had not been the first politician to raise his voice against slavery. Nor was he the first to support civil rights for the former slaves. He preferred to move with public opinion at his back, and he certainly wanted to make it appear as though he was responding to pressure rather than taking the lead. “I claim not to have controlled events,” he once said, “but confess plainly that events have controlled me.” There was a vein of fatalism running so deep in Lincoln that some historians see him as essentially passive, “forced into glory,” as one critic put it. But then most of history’s “Great Men” are, in some sense, forced into glory. What distinguishes the Giants from the Littlepipians is their very different responses to the crises they confront. Not everybody can be forced into glory.

A different person might have been forced into disrepute by the very real pressures urging Lincoln to compromise with the slaveholders, to reject emancipation, and to repudiate civil rights for blacks. There were pressures from every direction. As Frederick Douglass recalled, Lincoln was “assailed by abolitionists; he was assailed by slaveholders; he was assailed by men who were for peace at any price; he was assailed by those who were for a more vigorous prosecution of the war; he was assailed for not making the war an abolition war; and he was most bitterly attacked for making the war an abolition war.”

The political skill with which Lincoln negotiated these contradictory pressures is, I believe, the second element of his greatness. He refused to compromise with secession, yet he kept the four border slave states from leaving the Union. He kept the War Democrats loyal, yet he moved steadily toward an increasingly aggressive emancipation policy that most Democrats despised. He maintained relationships—even cultivated friendships—with radicals and abolitionists who often distrusted him.

So Lincoln’s capacity for growth—his embrace of emancipation and his moves toward racial equality—cannot alone account for his greatness. He had to bring a good many skeptical Americans along with him. And that required unsurpassed political skill.

It also required his legendary way with words, his ability to persuade those skeptics—and so I would rank Lincoln’s literary gifts third in my list of elements that made him great. His speeches are so impressive and well known that we give them names: the Peoria speech, Cooper Union, the Gettysburg Address, the Second Inaugural. But how many of you know about the public letters he began

“He had to bring a good many skeptical Americans along with him. And that required unsurpassed political skill.”
What historian Richard Hofstadter found to be “the best measure of Lincoln’s personal eminence” was “that he was chastened and not intoxicated by power.”

Issuing halfway through his presidency as part of a concerted campaign to persuade Northerners to support the war, emancipation, and black troops? They, too, have names familiar to most historians: The Greeley letter. The Corning letter. And the most impressive of them, the Conkling letter—Lincoln’s brilliant public reply to critics back in his home state of Illinois who objected to a war for emancipation, especially one in which blacks were allowed to fight along with whites in the Union Army.

“You say you will not fight to free negroes,” Lincoln wrote. “Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but, no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively to save the Union.” But bear in mind, Lincoln warned, that when this war is over and slavery has been abolished, “there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it.”

I don’t want to say that Lincoln was a great President because he wrote beautiful sentences. My point is rather that Lincoln’s literary skill was an element of his greatness, precisely because he put it to use. Language was one of his weapons—his “sword,” Douglas Wilson calls it. It matters that at critical moments Lincoln wielded that weapon to persuade Northerners that a war for Union had to be a war for universal freedom and equality as well.

Lincoln was not great the way Thomas Carlyle thought men could be great: He did not bestride American history and bend it to his indomitable will. He did not free the slaves with the stroke of his pen. He did not give our otherwise amoral democracy a moral soul. To accomplish what he did, Lincoln needed—among other things—the pressure of the abolitionists, the commitment of the Republican Party, the determination of runaway slaves, and the victory of the Union Army. They were the winds at Lincoln’s back, the forces that controlled him, the human forces and social movements he confronted, and to which he chose to respond.

But none of this yet accounts for the thing that makes Lincoln so attractive. Long before I had given much thought to the elements that made Lincoln great I had already come to admire him—for reasons that have more to do with his personality than with his policy. Lincoln was shaken by the presidency,” the historian Richard Hofstadter once wrote. He was “moved by the wounded and dying men, moved as no one in a place of power can afford to be. . . . For him it was impossible to drift into the habitual callousness of that sort of officialdom that sees men only as pawns to be shifted here and there and ‘expended’ at the will of others. . . . Is it possible to recall anyone else in modern history,” Hofstadter asked, “who could exercise so much power and yet feel so slightly the private corruption that goes with it?”

This was Tolstoy’s point about Lincoln’s greatness. To illustrate it, the Russian novelist told a story about a trip he had once taken to the Caucasus during which he met a Circassian chief “living far away from civilized life in the mountains,” where “the fingers of civilization had never reached him nor his tribe.” The hospitable tribesmen invited Tolstoy to tell them all about the world he had come from—its industries and inventions. He told his listeners about the great czars, of their military victories, and of Napoleon. But when Tolstoy finished, his host lifted his hand and said very gravely:

“But you have not told us a syllable about the greatest general and the greatest ruler of the world. We want to know something about him. He was a hero. He spoke with a voice of thunder; he laughed like the sunrise and his deeds were strong as the rock and as sweet as the fragrance of roses. The angels appeared to his mother and predicted that the son whom she would conceive would become the greatest the stars had ever seen. He was so great that he even forgave the crimes of his greatest enemies and shook brotherly hands with those who had plotted against his life. His name was Lincoln and the country in which he lived is called America, which is so far away that if a youth should journey to reach it he would be an old man when he arrived. Tell us of that man.”

Tolstoy told all he could of Lincoln and the following morning he and one of the Circassians rode off to a nearby town where Tolstoy secured a large picture of Lincoln and gave it to the man. “It was interesting to witness the gravity of his face and the trembling of his hands when he received my present,” Tolstoy recalled years later. “He gazed for several minutes silently, like one in a reverent prayer; his eyes filled with tears. He was deeply touched and I asked him why he was so sad. After pondering my question for a few moments he replied:

“I am sad because I feel sorry that he had to die by the hand of a villain. Don’t you find, judging from his picture, that his eyes are full of tears and that his lips are sad with a secret sorrow?”

At the end of the war, where another leader might have reveled in bombast and boasted of his great military victory, Lincoln instead went before the nation and wondered whether God had been punishing the United States for the sin of slavery, inflicting four years of horrific bloodshed as the price Americans had been made to pay for the slaves’ two hundred and fifty years of unretracted toil. At the moment of his greatest triumph Lincoln rejected militaristic fervor in favor of soul-searching humility.

“Here,” Hofstadter wrote, “is the best measure of Lincoln’s personal eminence in the human calendar—that he was chastened and not intoxicated by power.”
For two and a half months this spring, the James Gallery at the Graduate Center recaptured the heady exhilaration and creative enthusiasm of the Sixties, with a multimedia exhibition—FASHION + FILM, the 1960s Revisited—bringing together the classic motion pictures and high-style designer clothing of that extraordinary era.

This year marked the fiftieth anniversary of such signature films of the period as Federico Fellini’s La Dolce Vita, Michelangelo Antonioni’s L’Avventura, and Luchino Visconti’s Rocco and His Brothers. The exhibit also evoked another symbol of those years with the return of Sixties high fashion to Fifth Avenue casements, as designer clothing of the era went on display in what were once the storefront windows of the B. Altman department store, now home to the Graduate Center.

The films and fashions of the Sixties, says the exhibition curator, Eugenia Paulicelli, professor of Italian and comparative literature at the Graduate Center, “were crucial to Italian identity and modernization.” This was true elsewhere in Europe as well, she explained. “Fashion and cinema were central in France and Sweden during this period of experimentation in the arts.”

In Italy, neorealism in film had predated liberation from fascism, but, with the fall of the regime, according to Paulicelli, “things somehow exploded. It was a very fruitful period, and directors took different paths in cinematic experimentation. There was a shift away from neorealism, with modernization and Americanization, to another kind of film and an emphasis on style.” These were films that reflected the urban revolution then under way. Paulicelli believes Fellini truly captures these changes in La Dolce Vita. “There,” she says, “the characters are in a state of crisis because of the transforma-

The fashions of Brioni, Pucci, Sarmi, Pierre Balmain, Oscar de La Renta, and the Fontana Sisters were on display at the gallery, along with rich archival materials—photographs, costume sketches, interviews with stars of the Sixties, and TV commercials. Each week through the duration of the exhibition, different classics of the period were shown in continuous screenings. These included The 10th Victim; La Dolce Vita; Rocco and His Brothers; L’Avventura; Red Desert; Blowup; Zabriskie Point; Contempt; and Giulietta degli Spiriti.

In mid-March, a symposium brought scholars in film, art, and fashion from both sides of the Atlantic to the Graduate Center. A symposium high point was a talk by costume designer Adriana Berselli, who had worked with Antonioni on L’Avventura.

The exhibition was cosponsored by Commune di Cesena, Assessorato alla Cultura; Centro Cinema, Città di Cesena; RAI; Archivio Giuseppe Palmas; and Brioni. Cosponsoring the symposium were the Center for Fashion Studies at the University of Stockholm and the Graduate Center’s Center for the Humanities, Concentration in Fashion Studies, Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies, Film Studies program, and Italian specialization.

With films of the Sixties, directors moved away from neorealism toward modernization and an emphasis on style in works that reflected the urban revolution then under way.

Above, Professor Eugenia Paulicelli, exhibition curator, checks the fashion array facing the James Gallery’s Fifth Avenue windows.

Left, a favorite exhibit was this smoking jacket by Brioni, whose elegant evening clothes were often on display at this very site, then the home of B. Altman’s department store.
The third program of the *Great Issues Forum* series on religion, “Immigration and Islam,” focused on concerns that surfaced toward the end of the twentieth century, as Western Europe became aware that the growth of a permanent Muslim population had daunting political and cultural significance.

European apprehension rose, explained panel moderator Chase Robinson, distinguished professor of history and provost of the Graduate Center, with the fierce Muslim response to the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 and the terrorist events that followed at the start of the new millennium. “These,” he said, “brought into clear focus a number of issues about Islam, integration, and citizenship, and raised questions about how one balances the rights of religious communities in general with the values of a liberal society.”

To address these issues, Robinson was joined on the stage of Proshansky Auditorium on March 8 by José Casanova, professor of sociology at Georgetown University and senior fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs; Tariq Modood, professor of sociology at Britain’s University of Bristol and founding director of the Research Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship; and Aristide Zolberg, Walter P. Eberstadt Professor of Political Science at the New School.

Although immigration contributes enormously to diversity, migrant populations—particularly those with strikingly different ways and beliefs—arouse fear and mistrust. “This is by no means a unique phenomenon,” Professor Zolberg pointed out, noting the hostile reception given Irish Catholics and Eastern European Jews in the United States once they began arriving in large numbers.

In time, however, the strange and different become familiar, and as Professor Modood explained, the immigrant communities themselves become less different—even in areas as seemingly fundamental as religion. “Virtually every migrant group that has come to the British Isles in the last 150 years,” he said, “has been more religious—and more visibly religious—than what one might call the native population of British people.” Over time, however, these groups tend to become less religious. “Both in their own generation but certainly their children’s and their grandchildren’s,” he declared, “they gradually come to approximate the rest of the population, give or take a few ultraorthodox sects.”

After noting that, in general, people tend to become more religious as they grow older, Modood pointed to a sharp break from this trend in Britain’s Muslim communities. Recent research, he reported, “has found that, among Muslims, the younger they were, the more Islamic they were—and the more eager to display being a Muslim.” This the British professor credits to pressures British Muslims have come to feel after the terrorist bombings and the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. “So, people complain about Muslims, people are frightened about Muslims. And any minority that has that kind of pressure put upon it becomes much more aware of its own identity and tries to project its identity through a kind of defiant confidence, a reactive defiance.” This Muslim solidarity, he maintains, “has little to do with religiosity. It has to do with people, with the sense that they are all in the same corner.” Among young people, he says, “talk of the *ummah,* the Muslim global community, is much more common now than it used to be.”

The eagerness with which many young Muslims in Britain embrace their Muslim identity would seem to mirror the way Europeans have come to identify these immigrants, not by their national origin—as Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Algerian, Turkish, or Iraqi—but by their religion. The countries of Western Europe, Professor Casanova explained, have had little experience with religious pluralism and have become increasingly secular in recent years. “They had seen practically no immigration before the foreign ‘guest workers’ arrived in the ‘60s,” he said. “The guest workers were not meant to stay. They were meant to work and then go back home. Obviously, many stayed, and they brought their families.” In general, those workers from southern Europe either accommodated and integrated or returned to their home countries. “It was the Turks and North Africans who stayed and created this new situation,” said Casanova. But they were no longer perceived as Turks or North Africans. “I worked in Germany, in the 1960s and 1970s,” he recalled, “and there were only Turks in Germany then—no Muslims. Today, there are only Muslims—no Turks. Some-
thing has happened in the way in which we denominate each other.”

While there have been times, as Zolberg noted, when immigrants in the United States were defined by their religion, this has not generally been true in Britain or the rest of Europe. “In Britain,” Modood declared, “overt religion is seen as something rather vulgar and unwanted and uncouth. People who want to be civilized and assimilate and be good Brits should keep their religion to themselves, private.” Failing to do so, he maintains, does not enhance integration, “because other people say, ‘Well, if you say you’re Pakistani, we can do things for you. We can give you grants to build a community center. We can have affirmative action to get you into jobs or become a candidate for a political party, but if you say you’re a Muslim, well, what can we do? This isn’t something you should be saying in public.’”

Despite the scale of immigration and the perception, by some, of Europe’s eleven million Muslims as a beachhead for Islam, the entire panel rejected the notion of a crisis in the making and what Robinson described as “the apocalyptic vision of Europe darkening because of an almost willful ignorance of the demographic threat.”

Modood, who admits to having “very little sympathy” for the “clash of civilizations” issue, allows that the non-European population is bound to grow, giving as his reasons Europe’s need for labor, North Africa’s need for jobs, the youth of the immigrant populations, and their reproductive capacity. But he sees in this no threat to the West. He believes the resulting diversity—in which “not all non-Europeans will be Muslims”—will make twenty-first-century European cities look much like twentieth-century American cities.

This sanguine view was shared by his fellow panelists, and when Robinson raised the question of Islam’s perceived incompatibility with “the values that we commonly associate with Western liberal democracies,” the responses were uniformly optimistic.

Casanova pointed out how Islam today is perceived much as Catholicism once was. “Catholicism in the ’30s was very undemocratic,” he reminded the panel, “but something happened, and you have a transition to Christian democracy. We forget that it was Catholic Christian democrats that basically established the European Union, which led to democratization in many of those countries after World War II. If you look around the Muslim world, it’s true that there are a majority of Muslim countries that may have authoritarian regimes, but not necessarily because of Islam. There are other, very promising developments—in Indonesia, in Senegal, in Turkey—that show developments could go in a different direction.

“The fundamental difference, I would argue, between Catholicism and Islam is that in Catholicism, when things change, they change radically, very fast, and homogeneously. After Vatican II, you suddenly have a process of democratization throughout the Catholic world. In the case of Islam, it goes in an opposite direction. It’s a very pluralistic and diverse structure, has no hierarchic authority.” Noting contending trends in Islam that can be both pacifist and aggressive, feminist and misogynist, liberal and conservative, Casanova maintained, “There will be not one single direction, and probably we’ll have to live for a long, long time with very, very contradictory manifestations of this transformation of Islam.”

“I certainly don’t think there’s a fundamental incompatibility between Islam and democracy,” said Modood, citing a global Gallup poll that found no real difference in support for democracy among Muslims and non-Muslims. Throughout the world, the closest parallel to Muslim opinions was found among conservative Christians in the United States. “Most Muslims,” he added, “have no problems with democracy. They’re dying for it, literally and in other ways, and Islamism itself really came to be a powerful movement because Muslims were fed up with corrupt, authoritarian, dictatorial, nepotistic governments who were supported by the West.” Finally, he added, “I don’t think there’s any problem between Muslims and democracy, but Muslims are likely to sit in the more socially conservative part of the political spectrum.”

Zolberg stressed the congregational structure of Islam, which, like Judaism, has no central authority, and he raised the issue of differing circumstances among Muslim families in Europe. “I think it’s going to become more diverse over time. So there will be very different adjustments of individuals and families. I would bet that the majority will probably integrate fairly well and act like other groups have and get some representation to protect their interests.”
After learning he had been awarded the 2010 Wolf Foundation Prize in Mathematics, Distinguished Professor of Mathematics Dennis Sullivan, who holds the Albert Einstein Chair in Science at the Graduate Center, observed, “Any time they give prizes, it’s usually because there’s some field that’s experienced some interesting activity, and they give it to somebody who is visible. It’s not really so much related to that person.” When asked about Professor Shing-Tung Yau of Harvard University, joint recipient of the prize, Sullivan suggested, “He’s much more famous than I am.”

The Wolf Prize, instituted in 1978, is awarded more or less annually by the Wolf Foundation in Israel. It is considered one of the highest international honors in the field of mathematics; the Fields Medal, mathematics’ equivalent to the Nobel Prize, is given only to mathematicians forty years old or younger. This year’s prize acknowledges Sullivan’s contributions to algebraic topology, the branch of topology where his interests lie.

Topology is that area of mathematics concerned with the invariant, or constant, properties of objects when they are stretched or twisted into different shapes (what topologists call deformed). Take, for example, a circular rubber band. It can be deformed into an oval without cutting or gluing, which makes a circle and an ellipse topologically equivalent, for each has the same topological properties. It is this focus on qualitative rather than quantitative analysis—that characterizes topology.

Phenomena that benefit from this kind of analysis occur throughout nature. In the human body, some proteins, Sullivan points out, “can fold up in space and form knots. Different proteins perform different functions in the body, and there’s an interest now in understanding the structure of these proteins. One aspect of the structure, if it’s connected at the ends, is how it’s knotted, because the structure of a protein will certainly affect its function. Among the things we study in topology are these knotted curves.” He explains, “Being knotted means that you cannot, by deforming and stretching this thing, change it to a circle.”

Describing his specialty, Sullivan says, “Algebraic topology involves defining a topological object algebraically—through systems of algebraic equations.” To illustrate, he points to a plastic model of a complicated knot on his desk. “You have a geometric figure, you attach an algebraic structure to it, and you use that algebraic structure to study the figure.”

You can, for example, take a knotted-up rubber band made up of what appear to be arbitrary curves in three-dimensional space. This knot can be separated into less complicated parts, and each defined by an algebraic expression. The relationships between these parts, complicated though they are, can then be defined algebraically. The procedure results in a complex formal algebraic definition of the entire knotted rubber band, which can then be studied as an abstraction, independent of the object itself.

When Sullivan was awarded the National Medal of Science in 2004, he was cited for “having developed new fields of mathematics and finding ways to connect seemingly unrelated disciplines.” Today, he continues to examine connections between seemingly unrelated disciplines, and an application of particular interest is the use of topology with fluid dynamics—that area of applied mathematics that studies the flow of fluids—to address problems in meteorology.

During the Hurricane Rita threat in 2005, Sullivan flew to Houston, Texas, to board up his mother’s house. He recalls the chaos that occurred when the hurricane struck east of the city, rather than the west as had been predicted. “If they had a more accurate prediction of where this hurricane would hit—to within twenty-five miles—twenty-four hours ahead, they wouldn’t have moved two million people. But this is in the realm of do-ability. This is something topology can help with.” The process, as he describes it, would involve taking the continuous space in which weather patterns play out...
and separating it into discrete segments. “You actually break space up into finitely many pieces and see how they fit together, and you use the methodology of algebraic topology to build algebraic systems in which you can express these weather problems. We want to go from the continuous to the discrete, and algebraic topology is a perfect tool for that.”

Sullivan teaches a two-semester course at the Graduate Center on “Algebraic Topology for Geometry, Algebra, and Analysis.” It explores the application of algebraic topology to other areas of mathematics. The obvious relationship between the conceptual and the visual in topology connects it to geometry. “Topology is lurking in geometry,” says Sullivan, and “topology is a set of tools for studying geometry.”

His blackboard during lectures fills up as much with geometrical figures as it does with mathematical symbols and equations. Kate Poirier, a student in the class, says, “I became interested in algebraic topology when I saw Dennis drawing pictures of the surfaces and operations. In fact, my reason for choosing Dennis as an adviser is his incredible geometric intuition. Dennis’s approach to math is very visual.”

To pursue the relationship of topology to other fields, Sullivan organizes the Einstein Chair Mathematics Seminars, which are held once a month and bring speakers from throughout the world to the Graduate Center. However, despite his ideas about and contributions to the application of topology to other fields, Sullivan remains essentially a theoretician. “I really only care about the theoretical,” he says. “It’s nice if it would have some use, but it’s clear that there’s something important to understand anyway.”

The Wolf Prize Awarding Ceremony was held at the Knesset in Jerusalem on May 13. Considering what the prize, which has an honorarium of $100,000 (divided among joint recipients), is likely to enable, Sullivan says, “It may be that some of the ideas I’d like to foster or promote will be taken more seriously, such as this idea of applying algebraic topology to study the weather.”

—Bhisham Bherwani

Here is one of the most popular examples of topology.

The Möbius strip (above), named after its discoverer, the nineteenth-century astronomer and mathematician August Ferdinand Möbius, can be created by giving a strip of paper a half twist and then taping the ends together to form a ring. What you then have is a ring with only one side, what topologists call a nonorientable surface.
Bea Hanson (Alumna, Social Welfare, 2010), chief program officer of Safe Horizon, a victim assistance agency that provides support for victims of crime and abuse, has been appointed by President Obama as the next director of the Office of Victims of Crime at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Alberto Blasi (Prof., Brooklyn, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages) has been named Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French government for “services rendered for French culture.”

Joshua Brown (Exec. Dir., American Social History Project; Adj. Prof., GC, History) has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for his work with Civil War-era images and illustrations.

Jerry Carlson (Prof., GC, Film, French) won an Emmy this year for the series Nueva York on CUNY TV, a show he introduces.

Morris Dickstein (Dist. Prof., GC, English, Theatre) won the 2010 Ambassador Book Award in the category of American Studies for his book Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression. The award is given by the English-Speaking Union of the United States as the focal point of its Books-Across-the-Sea program that promotes understanding through the written word. The awards are given annually for books published in the preceding calendar year that have made significant contributions to the interpretation of American life.

Richard Aste (Student, Art History), currently associate curator at Museo de Arte de Ponce in Ponce, Puerto Rico, was appointed curator of European art at the Brooklyn Museum.

Jennifer Gieseking (Student, Psychology/Environmental) won an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation German Chancellor’s Fellowship. Gieseking will spend a year in Berlin, carrying out her project, “Living in an (In)Visible World: Lesbians’ and Queer Women’s Spaces in Berlin, 1983–2008.” Only ten of these awards are given per year in the United States. She is the second Graduate Center student to be given this fellowship; Yvonne Hung (Psychology, 2010) was the first to receive one, two years ago. The aim of the program is to give young scholars the opportunity to spend an extended period of time in Germany at an early stage in their careers.

Ronnie Ancona (Prof., Hunter, Classics) received a 2009 Award for Excellence in Teaching at the College Level from the American Philological Association. A certificate and a cash prize were presented in January at a Plenary Session of the APA Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA.

Thomas McGovern (Prof., Hunter, Anthropology), Ori Vesteinsson (Adj. Asst. Prof., Institute for Archaeology, Iceland, Anthropology), Mike Church (Adj. Asst. Prof., Durham University, Anthropology), Ian A. Simpson (Adj. Prof., University of Stirling, Anthropology), Andy Dugmore (Adj. Prof., University of Edinburgh, Anthropology), and Sophia Perdikaris (Prof., Brooklyn, Anthropology) received the 2010 Gordon R. Willey prize from the Archaeology Division of the American Anthropological Association for helping to author the article “Landsapes of Settlement in Northern Iceland: Historical Ecology of Human Impact and Climate Fluctuation on the Milleninal Scale,” voted as an outstanding archaeology article appearing in American Anthropologist during the past three years.

Meena Alexander (Dist. Prof., Hunter, English) was the inaugural Poet in Residence at the University of Hyderabad, India, in January 2010. During her residency, she conducted a workshop and gave readings as well as a public lecture, “Migrant Memory: The Poetics of Place.” In February she gave readings at Calcutta University and at the Kolkata Book Fair. In June 2010 she will be a visiting professor at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies in Shimla, delivering a series of three lectures under the title “Poetry, History, Memory.”

Carol Gould (Prof., GC, Philosophy) presented a plenary lecture at the Ankara Bar Association Conference in Turkey, January 11–15, on the topic “Human Rights, Culture, and Gender Equality” in a session called “Human Rights and Ethics in Adjudication.” Her trip was sponsored by the U.S. State Department as part of its U.S. Speakers and Specialists Program.

Marvin Carlson (Sidney E. Cohn Chair in Theatre Studies, Dist. Prof., GC, Comparative Literature, Theatre) was invited to be a part of the international jury that will select the winners of the Prague Quadrennial Performance Design and Space Awards in 2011, including the prestigious Golden Triga for the Best Exposition.

Mitchell Cohen (Prof., GC, Baruch, Political Science) was an official guest of France in January, having been elected Visiting Director of Studies by the faculty of the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) in Paris. Cohen gave talks to graduate seminars, including “Irving Howe and the New York intellectuals” and “Politics in the Operas of Richard Wagner.”

Joel Spring (Prof., Queens, Urban Education) was presented with the Mary Anne Raywid Award for 2009 in April by the Society of Professors of Education. The award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the teaching of education.

Emelise Aleandri (Alumna, Theatre, 1984) was honored with the Educator of the Year award for Promotion of Italian-American Theatre by the Association of Italian-American Educators at the 11th Annual Awards and Scholarship Celebration in Carle Place, Long Island, on April 18.

Kelly Levano (Alumna, Biochemistry, 2009) received the Horst Schulz Biochemistry Prize, awarded for a first-authored, peer-reviewed research article in 2009. Levano published the article “A genetic strategy involving a glycosyltransferase promoter and a lipid translocating enzyme to eliminate cancer cells” in Glycoconjugate Journal.

Tarika Daftary-Kapur (Alumna, Forensic Psychology, 2009) and David Frost (Alumnus, Social-Personality Psychology, 2009) won prestigious James McKeen Cartell Awards for outstanding doctoral dissertations in psychology. Dr. Daftary wrote her dissertation on “The Effects of Pre- and Post-Venire Publicity on Juror Decision Making,” Mau- reen O’Connor (Prof., John Jay, Psychology) and Steven Pentrod (Dist. Prof., John Jay, Criminal Justice, Psychology) served as her mentors. Her dissertation also won first place in the American Psychology-Law Society’s 2009–10 competition. Dr. Frost wrote his dissertation on “Stigma, Inti- macy, and Well-Being: A Personality and Social Structures Approach,” and Suzanne Oullette (Prof., GC, Psychology, Urban Education), with Michelle Fine (Dist. Prof., GC, Psychology, Urban Education) and William Cross (Prof. Emer., GC, Psychology, Urban Education), served as mentors.

Donny Levit (Student, Theatre) has been awarded the 2010 Graduate Teaching Fellow Award in Appreciation of Exemplary Service by the Department of Theatre and Speech at the City College of New York.

Darla Linville (Student, Urban Education) received the 2009 Paul Monette–Roger Horowitz Dissertation Prize for her dissertation “Resisting Regulation: Discourses about Sexuality and Gender in Schools.”

Gianni Pirelli (Student, Psychology/Forensic) won second place in the American Psychology-Law Society’s 2009–10 dissertation competition for his work, “A meta-analytic review of competency to stand trial research.”
A Season of Musical Riches at Elebash Recital Hall

MUSIC IN MIDTOWN
With six performances this spring semester, Music in Midtown brought faculty and other talented area professionals as well as the Graduate Center’s accomplished student musicians to the stage of the Elebash Recital Hall.

February 25
“Chamber Music on Fifth,” a special two-hour program, featured first flutist Bonnie McAlvin and percussionist Barrett Hipes performing works by David Carey and Gareth Farr. Violinist We-Ti Lin and pianist Aleksandra Sarest followed with Béla Bartók’s Second Sonata for Violin and Piano. Next three sopranos offered a variety of chamber ensembles: Emily Eagan sang six folksong arrangements by Beethoven; Mary Hubbell, Three Chinese Love Songs by composer Bright Sheng; and Monica Harte, Franz Schubert’s Viola D. 786. A final group performed Anton Webern’s arrangement of Arnold Schoenberg’s Kammersymphonie No. 1.

March 11
On piano Norman Carey (Assoc. Prof., GC, Music), creator of the Music in Midtown series and deputy executive officer for the DMA program in Music Performance, teamed with celebrated violinist Rolf Schulte, who joined the GC faculty last year, in a program of “Sonatas for Violin and Piano” that included works by Schumann, Beethoven, and Debussy.

March 25
Students and faculty, with guest musicians, performed “Right out of Winter: Songs of Tom Cipullo.”

April 8
The Raphael Trio played music of Schubert and Marjorie Merryman.

April 22
Windscape, a woodwind quintet, presented a program entitled “Mitteleuropa.”

May 5
Faculty member Sylvia Kahan and several DMA students performed “American Beauty: A Program of Chamber Music for the Piano.”

CONCERTS AND CONVERSATIONS
“MUSIC AND THE IRAQ WAR,” on February 24, brought two very different musical experiences from the field of battle to Elebash Recital Hall.

First was the program’s panel leader Jonathan Pieslak (Asst. Prof., City, Music), whose recent book *Sound Targets* describes how U.S. soldiers rouse themselves for battle by playing heavy-metal, rock, and hip-hop anthems. His view was echoed by Iraq veteran Colby Buzzell, author of the memoir *My War: Killing Time in Iraq*, who told how iPods and computers created a new experience of music for soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, with heavy metal and rap used to prepare for missions and get them “pumped up.” Panelist Alex Ross, music critic for the *New Yorker*, wondered whether some music had aggression built into it and noted that Shostakovich’s 1941 *Leningrad symphony* was used to demoralize German troops during World War II, while Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries” served to inspire them. “We like to idealize music,” he said, “but it’s a form of human expression, as well as an art form. It’s going to take us to dark places as well as light places.”

Quite another kind of musical experience is possible during wartime, however, when the soldier himself is a musician. Guitarist and composer Jason Sagebiel, who joined the panel for the second segment of the program, told of American soldiers’ integration with Iraqis through music. Sagebiel, a Marine Corps scout sniper, struck up a friendship with Ali, a noted player of the *ud*, a Middle Eastern lutelike instrument. “Ali and I studied music back and forth. I taught him about Western music, he taught me about Arabic music, and we became very close.” When Sagebiel returned home, he maintained his friendship with Ali and composed several songs for the *ud* and guitar, two of which he performed that evening. One of them, called “Missing Kut,” he dedicated to Ali, who died in a bomb blast in Baghdad in 2006.

“SOLO: THE ART OF THE MONODRAMA: WIVES, DAUGHTERS, QUEENS AND WHORES—MEDIEVAL VOICES”
In this program on March 2, soprano Lauren Flanigan took the role of well-known women—factual and fictional—of medieval times, singing twentieth- and twenty-first-century compositions. As Henry VIII’s wives, she sang Libby Larsen’s *Try Me, Good King*; as Desdemona, it was “A Business of Some Heat” from Susan Botti’s *Téléïn: Desdemona*; as Ophelia, she offered Richard Strauss’s *Ophelia-Lieder*; and finally she sang “Lady Macbeth,” with Shakespeare’s words set to music for her by composer Thomas Pasierb. Pianist Miriam Charney and percussionist Ana Lorenzo provided accompaniment.

Throughout the program, Ellen Lauren performed excerpts of the solo show “Room,” an adaptation by Jocelyn Clarke of Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*. To close the show, Flanigan’s friend and colleague, jazz singer Annie Ross, took the stage with pianist Tardo Hammer to sing “I Wonder What Became of Me,” by Johnny Mercer.

Paquito D’Rivera holds center stage in a program of his music, memories, and convictions.
Reveling in the Musical Traditions of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish Communities

An enthusiastic audience crowded the Martin E. Segal Theatre on February 4 for a concert celebrating the rich musical heritage of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish communities. Both Sephardic Jews, who define themselves in terms of traditions that originated in the Iberian Peninsula before the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal in the late fifteenth century, and Mizrahi Jews, who are descended from the Jewish communities of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Caucasus, developed extraordinarily sophisticated musical traditions over the past five hundred years.

Bringing these energetic and infectious rhythms, haunting melodies, and beautiful lyrics to the Graduate Center were GC doctoral student in ethnomusicology and Gilleece Fellow Joseph Alpar and his ensemble, David’s Harp. The ensemble’s repertoire is drawn from Ottoman court music, Sufi devotional songs, urban Greek folk music, or rebetika, and Judeo-Spanish, or Ladino, music, among others, and the group is devoted to revealing cultural and religious interactions through music in their blend of diverse musical ideas from Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. The performance, which proved so popular that many were turned away at the door, was sponsored by the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC).

A Brook Center Scholar’s Liederabend Tells of Music, Madness, and Nietzsche

“Music was central to Nietzsche’s philosophy, and My Heart, My Serpent dramatizes that,” said James Melo, senior editor at the Brook Center’s Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM). He was speaking at a preproduction seminar prior to the performance in January of My Heart, My Serpent: Thus Spoke Zarathustra by the Ensemble for the Romantic Century (ERC) at Symphony Space. The seminar, titled “Dionysian Ecstasies: Madness and Music in Nietzsche’s Philosophy,” provided insight into Nietzsche’s struggle to free himself from the grip of madness, which is at the heart of My Heart, My Serpent.

ERC productions fuse music and theater into highly original theatrical concerts on nineteenth-century subjects—past presentations have focused on George Sand, Frédéric Chopin, Gabriele D’Annunzio, Vincent Van Gogh, Peggy Guggenheim, and the Dreyfus Affair—and the Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation and RILM have been important sources of musicalological research for ERC productions.

“My Heart, My Serpent is really a dramatic Liederabend,” Melo explained, describing the theatrical concert he had written—the Liederabend, or “evening of song,” being a form of public recital popular in the late nineteenth century. As musicologist and occasional playwright for ERC, Melo created the script using excerpts from Nietzsche’s letters and philosophical writings as well as German lieder and other works by some of the greatest Romantic composers, including Brahms’s Four Serious Songs, Liszt’s dramatic recitation The Sad Monk, and Wolf’s Prometheus.

“It took six to eight months to assemble the materials,” said Melo, “and my work at RILM helped enormously, because there I’m constantly aware of what is being published and the most recent music literature.”

The preproduction seminar made clear the philosopher’s surpassing love of music, his role as an amateur pianist and composer, and his frequent reference to music in his writings. “God gave us music so that we, first and foremost, will be guided upward by it,” he wrote at fourteen. The first paragraph of The Birth of Tragedy (1872) describes music as a Dionysian art that, when coupled with the Apollonian art of sculpture, “ultimately generate[s] an equally Dionysian and Apollonian form of art—Attic tragedy,” which Nietzsche held to be the highest form of art. Later, in The Twilight of the Idols (1888), he wrote, “Without music, life would be a mistake.”

The seminar also addressed Nietzsche’s growing disenchantment with Richard Wagner, who, as Nietzsche wrote in Nietzsche Contra Wagner (1895), “had condescended step by step to everything I despise—even to anti-Semitism.” Moreover, the speakers deplored the undue influence of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, Nietzsche’s sister, on the Nietzsche Archive in the 1930s, as she slanted his words towards her own anti-Semitic and fascist stance.

Celebrating Byzantine Music

“People come streaming in. There’s strong support from the Greek-American community in New York’s five boroughs and beyond,” says Stephen Blum (Prof., GC, Music), director of the concen-
Keeping Alive the Spirit of Intimate, Informal Jazz

The spirit of jazz is alive and well and hangs out on Sunday afternoons in Marjorie Eliot’s Harlem apartment at 555 Edgecombe Avenue. Eliot, a writer, actress, and pianist, has been hosting a free impromptu jam session every week for the past eighteen years. On February 14, she brought a jazz quartet to the stage at Elebash Recital Hall for the first in a series of concerts honoring black women in jazz.

Sponsored by the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean (IRADAC), the evening was conceived by Zee Dempster, the institute’s assistant director. “When we thought of having a jazz concert here,” she said, “I immediately thought of Marjorie. Women like her help to carry on the jazz tradition.”

The weekly gatherings began as Eliot’s tribute to her son Philip, an actor who died in 1992 and who had shared her love of music. She soon was holding the sessions every Sunday, turning her parlor into a blue-lit salon and providing occasional piano accompaniment herself. Still dedicated to what has since become a Harlem institution, she has never taken a week off. Sunday crowds now average about fifty and, while a donation bucket for the improvised jam session every week for the past eighteen years.

The highlight of the festival was the presentation to Professor Stephen Blum of an English translation of Great Theory of Music (Trieste, 1832) by Chrysanthos of Madytos, one of the major texts on Byzantine music, and a talk by the translator, the distinguished Greek musicologist Dr. Katy Romanou, senior visiting scholar of the Onassis Foundation USA, who had submitted the translation as her master’s thesis at Indiana University in 1972. It was Lampousis who arranged for the book’s publication after Charles Turner, GC doctoral candidate in music, brought the English translation to his attention. “This is by far the most referenced book in Byzantine music,” said Lampousis.

Copresenters of the festival included the Graduate Center’s Ph.D. Program in Music (Ethnomusicology), the Rev. Peter N. Kyriakos Endowment Fund, the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA).

The concert, which featured both secular, or folk, music and sacred forms, was the second festival of Byzantine music at the Graduate Center and featured notable Greek soloists Christos Chalkias and Eleftherios Eleftheriadis, U.S. violinist Elias Sarkar, and percussionist Ozan Aksoy, a GC doctoral candidate in music. For the finale, the school choir from St. Nicholas William Spyropoulos School in Flushing joined the ensemble in two folk songs.

The driving force behind these events is Angelo Lampousis, a GC alumnus and director of the Axion Estin Foundation, which promotes the knowledge and practice of Byzantine music in the United States through public events, CDs, and publications.

As a finale that evening, Eliot asked the audience to help her commemorate the recent death of a salon regular by singing along to “When the Saints Go Marching In.” The band struck up the tune, and few refrained from singing and clapping loudly in tribute to a departed companion.

—Kerri Linden

Presenting the Great Theory of Music to Professor Stephen Blum (right) were Theodore Brakatselos (left) and Nick Kyriakos.

Marjorie Eliot (left), Andrew McCloud III (top right), Gerald Hayes (bottom right)
Dr. Randolph Braham of the Rosenthal Institute: Keeping Memory of the Holocaust Alive

In 2003, for the fourth time since emigrating to the United States some sixty years earlier, Dr. Randolph Braham returned to Dej, the small rural community in Romania where he was raised. Although this was many decades later, Braham, distinguished professor emeritus of political science at the Graduate Center and director of the GC’s Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, had clearly never forgotten the devastating events that compelled him to depart. A leading expert on the Hungarian chapter of the Holocaust, he has dedicated a good part of his adult life seeking to better understand how and why the Holocaust was able to occur.

Braham’s motives in this endeavor are not purely intellectual. His own parents were killed soon after they were taken to Auschwitz, and he has vivid recollections of many other relatives, friends, and neighbors who were also casualties of the war and its atrocities. “I made a living teaching political science,” says Braham. “But writing about the Holocaust is a matter of the heart.”

If his list of accomplishments is any indicator, Professor Braham’s heart is very big indeed. Most recently, on November 30, 2009, at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Braham was awarded that school’s Ladislaus Laszt International Ecumenical and Social Concern Award for his groundbreaking work in the field of Holocaust studies. His two-volume The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary won the 1980 Jewish National Book Award and is cited twice in the Congressional Record. At the end of this year, Northwestern University Press, in conjunction with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, will publish an English translation of his extensive three-volume Geographic Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary—a unique compilation reporting on every Jewish community in Hungary, including hamlets where even a single Jew once lived. Braham was featured in Steven Spielberg’s 1998 Academy Award–winning documentary The Last Days, and his 2003 return to Dej was documented in a film titled Retracing a Nightmare, which received the Kamera Hungária award (the Hungarian equivalent of an Emmy) for best documentary in 2005.

A member of the faculty within the CUNY system for more than fifty years, he is committed to ensuring that future generations continue to study the Holocaust. Toward that end, he has seen that research grants are available from the J. & O. Winter Holocaust Research Fund, instituted through the generosity of Gábor Várzegi, a successful entrepreneur in Hungary. Moreover, in 1997, Professor Braham established the Randolph L. Braham Award Fund, which each year awards one dissertation fellowship in the field of Jewish, Eastern European, or Holocaust-related studies. In 2009–10 Garrett Eisinger (Theatre) became the most recent award winner for his dissertation proposal titled “Performing Wartime Zionism: We Will Never Die, a Flag is Born, and the Jewish-American Cultural Front.”

Marta Bládek (John Jay College), who received the 2007–08 award, was one of the speakers during the Rosenthal Institute’s Spring 2010 Lecture Series. Her talk on March 17 focused on “The Second and Third Generations’ Return to Eastern and Central Europe in Recent Jewish-American Memoirs.” In it, she described what she referred to as “deferred returns”—visits by survivor émigrés to their homeland many years after leaving. Examples she cited included the “deferred return” of Elie Wiesel to Sighet, Transylvania, in 1964, twenty years after his deportation to Auschwitz, and Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld, whose return to his childhood home in the Ukraine, fifty-seven years after his mother and grandmother were slaughtered there, he described in a 1998 New Yorker article.

Braham’s own return to Dej in 2003 also qualifies as a “deferred return.” The first time he had been back was in 1945, after being liberated from a forced labor camp. “I felt like a ghost driven by its own shadow, going from street to street,” Braham recalls. This is not so surprising, since the Dej the professor was taken from in 1943 was home to more than 3,700 Jews, and none of them were to be found on his last trip back. The ten elderly Jews he did find were Jews from other parts of Hungary or Romania who settled there after the war. As Bládek put it during her talk, “The places live on for the survivors only as a memory; they are no longer in the actual geographical location where they once were.”

For more information about the dissertation award, see http://web.gc.cuny.edu/Provost/Dis_Awards/Instructions.pdf, or contact Professor Braham directly at RBraham@gc.cuny.edu. To find out more about the Rosenthal Institute and its umbrella organization, the Center for Jewish Studies, go to their website, http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/cjstu/index.html.

—Jackie Glasthal

“Self-Regulated Learning,” Failure Prevention from the Center for Advanced Study in Education

Drawing on the work habits of standout writers and virtuoso athletes, Barry J. Zimmerman, distinguished professor of educational psychology at the Graduate Center, and clinical psychologist John Hudesman, senior investigator at GC’s Center for Advanced Study in Education (CASE), have developed an approach to education that is helping thousands of struggling students overcome obstacles to classroom success. It’s called “self-regulated learning” (SRL) and it teaches students that academic achievement, as Zimmerman puts it, “is something they do for themselves rather than something that is done to or for them.”

Together, Zimmerman and Hudesman have won $1.8 million in competitive grants to disseminate and test applications of SRL. A controlled study at New York City College of Technology produced compelling evidence of the program’s effectiveness. When 496 remedial math students at the school were randomly assigned to different sections—some that used SRL and others that did not—students in the SRL sections scored 15 points higher on their math finals and proved twice as likely to pass the general proficiency test needed to remain at City Tech. The two are now awaiting a grant from the National Science Foundation that will allow them to introduce SRL into New York City public school classrooms.

The SRL model teaches students to address academic failure by focusing on their study habits rather than making excuses for themselves. “We’re trying to change their traditional view of math as something where you make a lot of errors, and errors are bad things, to an alternative view that errors are part of the process,” says Zimmerman, “and if you know how to interpret them, that can be a powerful incentive to continue learning.”

There are three phases to the SRL teaching model—forethought, performance, and self-reflection. On an SRL quiz, students must rate their confidence in answering a question correctly before and after they attempt to solve it. When the quiz is returned, and students learn—as they often do—that their confidence was unwarranted, they are then shown how they arrived at their incorrect answers and given the opportunity to earn back lost credit by doing the problem again. Next, they reflect on how they had prepared for the quiz and how they will prepare for the next one.

Through this process students gain a sense of ownership of their academic careers. For Zimmerman, SRL is rooted in his conviction that—from
From December 2009 to May 2010, the Graduate Center received fifty-three grants totaling $5,200,625. The name(s) of the principal investigator(s), awarding agency, the title of the project, and the amount of each grant of more than $5,000 are listed below. This information was submitted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.


This list does not include all the titles published since the previous listing in Folio with 365 Fifth (Winter 2010). Several more recent submissions will be included in our next issue. All members of the doctoral faculty are invited to contact pubaff@gc.cuny.edu with information about their books once final proofs have been submitted. Due to space limitations, full descriptions cannot be printed here. However, a listing that includes more complete descriptions, book covers, and links for purchase may be viewed at www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/bookshelf.htm.

ANDRÉ ACIMAN (Dist. Prof., GC, Comparative Literature, French), Eight White Nights (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010). Aciman’s romantic novel examines, with uncompromising and sensuous prose, the relationship of two twenty-six something New Yorkers who meet at a swank Christmas Eve party and whose relationship plays out over the course of the seven following nights.

LINDA ALCOFF (Prof., GC, Hunter, Philosophy) and Mariana Ortega, eds., Constructing the Nation (SUNY Press, 2009). This collection addresses the U.S. racial issues in a post-9/11 environment and offers a philosophical response to xenophobia and the rhetoric of freedom, homeland, and unity.

JEAN MAUDE ANVON (Prof., GC, Urban Education), Theory and Educational Research: Toward Critical Social Explanation (Routledge, 2008). This valuable collection of essays bridges the age-old theory/research divide and suggests how engaging with critical social theory can lead to work that is theoretically inspired and politically relevant.

TALAL ASAD (Dist. Prof., GC, Anthropology), Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, and Saba Mahmood, Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech (The Townsend Papers in the Humanities, University of California Press, 2009). The four authors discuss the supposed standoff between Islam and liberal democratic values, blasphemy and free speech, religious taboos and freedoms of thought and expression, and secular and religious worldviews.

JUAN BATTLE (Prof., GC, Sociology, Public Health, Urban Education) and Sandra L. Barnes, eds., Black Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies (Rutgers University Press, 2009). Contributors seek to clarify blacks’ understanding of their sexuality through stories of empowerment, healing, self-awareness, victories, and other historic and contemporary life-course panoramas as well as provide practical information for fostering tolerance and acceptance.

HERMAN L. BENNETT (Prof., GC, History), Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico (Indiana University Press, 2009). In exploring neglected Mexican archival records, Bennett uncovers an Afro-Mexican community with a majority of freedmen living in an urban setting rather than a shattered individualistic society dealing with the “social death” caused by slavery.

JAMES DE JONGH (Prof., City, English), Vicious Modernism: Black Harlem and the Literary Imagination (Cambridge University Press, 2009). In tracing the evolution of the imaginative usage of Harlem by literary artists over the past seventy years, de Jongh emphasizes the continuing aesthetic and cultural force of the idea of Harlem in the Black Diaspora today.

IRWIN EPSTEIN (Prof., Hunter, Social Welfare), Clinical Data-Mining: Integrating Practice and Research (Oxford Press, 2009). This pocket guide covers all the basics of conducting clinical data-mining studies or doctoral dissertations, drawing extensively on published studies and completed dissertations from multiple social work settings.

MAURICIO FONT (Prof., Queens, Sociology), Coffee and Transformation in São Paulo, Brazil (Lexington Books, 2010). This volume pays close attention to the political and economic implications of São Paulo’s great transformation and the segmentation of the coffee industry, the Brazilian Revolution of 1930, and regionalism.

ROBERT GOLDFARB (Prof. Emeritus, Lehman, Speech-Language–Hearing Sciences) and Yula Serpanos, Professional Writing in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (Plural Publishing, 2009). This book aims to show that learning to be a better professional writer does not have to be drudgery, and uses humor and anecdotal material, plus self-test questions, to help illustrate the issues under discussion.

SAMUEL HEILMAN (Harold Proshansky Chair in Jewish Studies, GC; Dist. Prof., Queens, Sociology), and Menachem Friedman, The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson (Princeton University Press, 2010). The Rebbe tracks Menachem Mendel Schneerson’s remarkable life, describes his building of the Lubavitcher movement, and demonstrates that his embrace of traditionalism and American-style modernity made him uniquely suited to his messianic mission.
ROSE-CAROL WASHTON LONG (Prof., GC, Art History) and Marla Makela, eds., Of Truths Impossible to Put in Words: Max Beckmann Contextualized (Peter Lang Publishers, 2009). Essays by art historians relate Max Beckmann’s work to the circumstances of its production and reception, thus expanding research that only recently has begun to consider context in relation to Beckmann’s work.

GERARDO PiÑA-ROSALES (Prof., Lehman, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages), Hablando bien se entiende la gente (Santillana USA, 2010). This new, highly practical guide to correct Spanish, tailored specially for the Spanish language of the United States, contains more than three hundred pieces of advice for those who wish to make themselves understood correctly in Spanish.

STACEY B. PLICHTA (Prof., Hunter, Public Health) and Laurel S. Garzon, Statistics for Nursing and Allied Health (Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2009). This introductory textbook explores the role of research in health care and focuses on the importance of organizing and describing research data using basic statistics to teach students how to analyze data and present the results.

EDWARD G. ROGOFF (Prof., Baruch, Economics), The Second Chance Revolution: Becoming Your Own Boss After 50 (Rowhouse, 2009). With an enlightening combination of real-life stories and hands-on advice, this guide provides an inspiring yet practical how-to book for entrepreneurially minded men and women who dream of finally working for themselves.

RICHARD G. SCHWARTZ (Pres. Prof., GC, Speech–Language–Hearing Sciences), Handbook of Child Language Disorders (Psychology Press, 2009). Schwartz presents an in-depth, comprehensive, and state-of-the-art review of current research concerning the nature, assessment, and remediation of language disorders in children. There are individual chapters that focus directly on research methods.

MICHAEL J. SMITH (Prof., Hunter, Social Welfare), Handbook of Program Evaluation for Social Work and Health Professionals (Oxford University Press, 2010). Evaluation is crucial for determining the effectiveness of social programs and interventions. The author links current perspectives in social work and health practice to evaluation concepts and shows social work and health care professionals how to handle evaluations with ease.

JOEL SPRING (Prof., Queens, Urban Education), Political Agendas for Education: From Change We Can Believe In to Putting America First, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2010). Spring updates his description and analysis of the current educational agendas of major political players and organizations, focusing on the 2004 presidential campaign and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

JUDITH STEIN (Prof., City, History), Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies (Yale University Press, 2010). The book argues that in order to understand our current economic crisis we need to look back to the 1970s, the era of postwar liberalism, when political practices, high wages, and regulated capital produced both robust economic growth and greater income equality.

PETER STURMEY (Prof., Queens, Psychology), Clinical Case Formulation: Varieties of Approaches (Wiley, 2009). Case formulation is a key skill for mental health practitioners, and this book provides examples of ten case formulations that represent the most common mental health problems in a variety of populations and contexts, offering commentary on contrasting formulations of the same case.

ARACELI TINAJERO (Assoc. Prof., City, Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages), El Lector: A Hispánico and Lusobrasileiro Reader (University of Nebraska Press, 2009). This collection of essays informs educators and researchers about the teaching and learning of mathematical proof at different grade levels and helps define an agenda for future research.

DAVID G. TROVANSKY (Prof., Brooklyn, History), Hafid Gafñì, and Patricia M. E. Lorcin, eds., Transnational Spaces and Identities in the Francophone World (University of Nebraska Press, 2009). These scholarly essays examine the impact of postcolonial immigration on identity in France and in the Francophone world, and reveal the vitality of Francophone studies.
GC Alumna Adapts Ibsen and Strindberg as Chinese Operas

Alumna Faye Chunfang Fei (Theatre, 1991) has always been interested in merging cultures. A scholar, translator, and playwright, Fei has achieved considerable success adapting Western drama for the Chinese stage, specifically as Chinese opera. Born in Shanghai, she completed her undergraduate studies at Shanghai’s East China Normal University and earned her M.A. at Canada’s Queen’s University.

Coming to the Graduate Center in New York for her doctorate, Fei says, was the best way to round out her educational experience. “I had intensive study of theory and criticism in the theatre department,” she said, “and living at the student dorm at 44th Street, I was able to be right in the middle of all the theatre, and went to see shows on Broadway at least twice a week. The theatre community in New York was the reason I chose the Graduate Center.” Fei secured several grants for research with the help of Distinguished Professor Daniel Gerould, who encouraged her to incorporate her interests and cultural background into her dissertation on Huang Zuolin, a Chinese director who produced Western theatre in China in the 1930s. “I was given the Dissertation-Year Fellowship for this, among other grants,” she said. “The Graduate Center was extremely generous to me.” While in New York in 1987, she and her husband, William Huizhu Sun, wrote their first play, China Dream, a cross-cultural romance, which was first staged at New York’s Henry Street Settlement Theatre and has since been produced by several theatres in China.

Chinese opera, which has various styles, involves colorful costumes, heavy makeup, carefully choreographed staging, and stylized gestures. In general, the Yue style, the kind of opera that Fei has written, uses an entirely female cast and incorporates soft, romantic singing with plots that originate in folk and fairy tales. Fei conceived of adapting Hedda Gabler as a Chinese opera in 2006, the hundredth anniversary of Ibsen’s death, when many global events were planned. “Ibsen is the second best known Western playwright in China after Shakespeare, and one of the most influential, yet Hedda Gabler had never been staged,” Fei said. For her production, Liu Jiankuan composed music, which was sung in Chinese with English subtitles, and performed with an eight-member orchestra.

The show, called Hedda or Aspiration Sky High, was first presented by the Hangzhou Yue Opera Company and then in Oslo’s National Theatre for the International Ibsen Stage Festival. “It was very well received, and we immediately had requests for five more performances,” Fei recalls. “Our adaptation is a deconstruction of the original. Everyone knows the story, but this made it more universal, more about human choices.” The Chinese opera version more clearly displays the pure emotion of Hedda, Fei explained, with heartfelt arias and stylized movements that can express more than realistic acting. While Ibsen’s Hedda escapes dishonor by shooting herself, Fei’s Hedda, like Madame Buterly, commits hara-kiri, a ritual Japanese form of suicide by disembowelment. The opera has since been produced in France, Germany, and India, and in March moved to Romania.

After Hedda, Fei and her husband adapted two more Scandinavian plays as Chinese opera. Their production of Strindberg’s Miss Julie opened this past March at the Beijing Opera, and Ibsen’s Lady from the Sea has been commissioned by the Hangzhou Company and Norway’s National Theatre, also known as the Henrik Ibsen Theatre.

Fei and her husband, who now live in New York, shuttle back and forth to Europe and Asia. Fei is a professor at both New York University and East China Normal University. Their two sons attend Columbia University and Stuyvesant High School.

—Kerri Linden

The Jerrold J. Katz Memorial Lecture Was Given This Year by GC Alumnus David Pitt

David Pitt (Philosophy, 1994), associate professor of philosophy, California State University, Los Angeles, delivered the Jerrold J. Katz memorial lecture at the Graduate Center philosophy department’s spring symposium. Katz, a distinguished professor of philosophy and linguistics at the Graduate Center from 1975 to his death in 2002, was one of the world’s leading philosophers and a pioneer in semantic theory and associated philosophical issues. His seminal book, Semantic Theory (Harper & Row, 1972), had an enormous impact on philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and the fledgling field of cognitive science. He showed that the question “What is meaning?” could be formally analyzed in a way that was compatible with modern syntactic theory. Katz’s contributions were exceptionally broad, including linguistic semantics, philosophy of language, philosophy of linguistics, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of science, metaphilosophy, and metaphysics.

The annual lecture to honor his memory was instituted soon after his death and welcomes philosophers whose work touches on topics that interested Katz. David Pitt, who was his student, works in philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and metaphysics. Pitt’s lecture, “Demonstrative Thoughts,” drew on a current project in philosophy of mind—a phenomenally based theory of thought content. The lecture, which sparked spirited discussion at the symposium, dealt with the character and content of thought and whether these are wholly determined internally, by the character of the thinker’s experience, or are in part determined externally, by the thinker’s relationship to his environment.

Jay Sharp Theatre in Symphony Space, Manhattan, on April 17.

Barbara Heyman (Music, 1989), a music historian who most recently served as director of the Office of College Information and Publications at Brooklyn College, appeared on NPR’s “All Things Considered” on March 9 as a commentator discussing American composer Samuel Barber. Her award-winning biography Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music (Oxford University Press, 1994) has become a standard in music history scholarship.


Jeffrey A. Kroesler (History, 1991) has received tenure at the Loyal Sealy Library, John Jay College. He recently published The Greater New York Sports Chronology (Columbia University Press, 2010), covering the history of professional and amateur sports from the Dutch in New Amsterdam through 2009.

Angelo Lampousis (Earth and Environmental Sciences, 2009) currently splits his time between the City College department of earth and atmospheric sciences and as an environmental engineering consultant in a private consulting firm. Since June 2009, he has acted as the seminar series faculty coordinator for the City College department of earth and atmospheric sciences.

J. Patrice McSherry (Political Science, 1994) and three colleagues, John Ehrenberg, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Carolleen M. Sayej, have coedited The Iraq Papers (Oxford University Press, 2010), a documentary reader that includes both an analytical and historical narrative and a selection of key primary documents that illustrate the Bush administration’s war in Iraq.

D.H. Melhem (English, 1976) has produced an eighth collection of poems, Art and Politics: Politics and Art (Syracuse University Press, 2010), which describes accounts of individual triumphs and the ongoing catastrophic conflicts of our world.

Henry Miller (Theatre, 2003) wrote and directed the new play Perfectly Black: Seductions in an Alternative Cosmos of Negritude, performed by the Red Harlem Readers at Indian Café in New York City in February.

Maria Montoya (Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages, 2000), associate professor of Hispanic literature and Spanish, St. Joseph’s College, recently edited Hijas olvidadas: Two Contemporary Plays by Hispanic Women Writers (University Press of America, 2009), which includes Nora Adriana Rodríguez’s Una estrella.


Umesh Nagarkatte (Mathematics, 1976) was recently appointed to serve as chair of the mathematics department at CUNY’s Medgar Evers College.

Irwin Nesoff (Social Welfare, 1998), associate professor of social work at Wheelock College in Boston, has been appointed chair of the newly created department of leadership, social policy and advocacy, which offers a master’s of science degree and postgraduate certificates in organizational leadership, and will provide a variety of opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to become engaged in policy practice and advocacy.

Marcos S. Pinto (Computer Science, 2007) had his book Performance Modeling in Intelligent Educational Networks published (VDM Verlag, 2009).

Stanislao G. Pugliese (History, 1995) is a finalist in the biography category for the National Book Critics Circle Award for his book Bitter Spring: A Life of Ignazio Silone (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

Mark Sacharoff (English, 1967) is founder of the Jewish Remembrance Theater (JRT), which seeks to preserve and memorialize the great Jewish-European culture wiped out by the Holocaust by staging plays and other works by Jewish playwrights and authors. JRT will hold a playwriting contest each year, which will lead to a first prize of $20,000, a book of the top five plays, and an archive of the top twenty-five plays.


Anne Witte (French, 1992) has published Past and Future Culture (BookSurge Publishing, 2010), which investigates cultural and postcultural manifestations of human diversity and offers an introduction to values, authority, transnational communication, social capital, and global civic concerns.
Announcing GC’s Membership Program and Fall Public Programs

Please Join Us

Sign up now for our new GC Membership Program and enjoy a more rewarding relationship with the Graduate Center.

As part of the growing audience for our rich and varied programs of lectures, panel discussions, concerts, exhibitions, films, and plays, or as a contributor to our Annual Fund, you have a stake in our institution—in its scholarly achievements and the expanding role it plays in the intellectual and cultural life of our city. Membership is an opportunity for you to deepen this relationship and be a vital part of our community.

Membership has substantial benefits. All members receive the Graduate Center’s new magazine, GC, successor to Folio, and invitations to special members-only events. In addition, membership entitles you to discounted tickets to high-profile public programs. While the vast majority of Graduate Center events will continue to be free, rising costs and expanded programming make admission charges necessary for some of the more popular public programs listed here.

TO JOIN

ONLINE (www.gc.cuny.edu/events/public_programs.htm): You will receive your ticket discount code immediately and can create a member’s password-protected login.

BY PHONE (212-817-8215): Please have your credit card information ready and you’ll receive your ticket discount code immediately.

FALL 2010
PUBLIC PROGRAMS FOR THE PUBLIC MIND

Extraordinary Lives
William P. Kelly interviews exceptional men and women

Great Issues Forum: “An Exploration of Place”
Film Series curated by Ken Burns

Perspectives: Conversations on Policy and Place
Moderated by Peter Beinart and featuring: Christopher Hitchens, George Packer, Jeff Jarvis, Tina Brown, Andrew Sullivan

Elebash Presents: Music in Midtown
Elebash Presents: Concerts & Conversations

Gotham Center History Forums
Exhibitions at the James Gallery

(To learn about these programs, ticket prices, and discounts, go to www.gc.cuny.edu/events.)

365 Fifth Avenue (at 34th Street), New York City