

## At Long Last The Counterpoint Returns

Croft

Around this time last year, The Counter Point lost all of its operational capacity, from writers leaving Olympia, to researchers being too busy, to people just being plain ol' burnt out. But thanks to the immensely meticulous and inspiring work of past contributors, most folks on campus have at least heard of The Counter Point Journal, even if it is believed to be dead. To be invisibilized from Evergreen bureaucracies allows the powers that be to think they've won, that they won't have to worry about countering points emerging from "accepted" media outlets throughout campus, rallying up bits and sometimes movements of discourse.

I mean, shit, even we believed the thing was dead.

In fact I liked being dead. We have no HQ, no main phone line, no way to be targeted or laid siege to. Since we are not on the radar, no one knows what we are up to, what we will report on next, or when we'll release what we've procured. Shit, some people don't even know we've released anything even while I'm handing it to them. They'll look at the paper once I've shoved it into their hand and sometimes without looking up will say, "Yeah I really like some of the articles the Counter Point puts out." I always smile and say "Yeah thanks, we've got some neat pictures in this one!"

Most importantly, as an invisible organization we have no one to answer to but each other. A tough practice since, as a society we have an understandable deficiency towards holding each other accountable in genuinely loving ways. I say understandable because most senses of community are abstracted by idealisms that don't speak to the site specific-nature of existing networks of people, living and working together.

In any case, the material conditions were these: The Counter Point was down to one self-identified writer, and two self-identified visual artists, so it's taken some time to organize our latest issue. But we have organized (horizontally), and we have worked to solicit writing from those who are in direct contact with the issues at hand. By working where we are, with what we've got, we hope to sustain a tiny piece of the radical set of journalistic practices established by former Counter Point editors.

## Why Not (Occupy)?

Lish

Occupy Olympia began on October 17th 2011 in response to the call for a national day of occupations of public squares and in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street. Occupy Olympia's presence at Heritage Park undoubtedly provided an inescapable visual image to the community of the growing problem of houselessness and economic inequality in our community. The occupation provided an opportunity for people with concerns about our economic and politic systems, to find each other and begin to work collectively to experiment with solutions.

The encampment started off strong, with an immense amount of energy and quick formation of a variety of committees addressing everything from providing free food to organizing free education workshops. Experimenting with how to format direct democracy had its moments in Occupy Olympia, but the failure to continue with this experimental approach caused a decline in participation over time. A

failure to adapt to problems that arose also contributed to this decline. Discussions at General Assemblies began to become stymied by individual personalities, instead of cultivating a willingness to learn from potentially radical model. The discussion became too wrapped up in personal theory, instead of allowing individuals or groups to experiment and learn from it. As the weather deteriorated in Olympia and many members burned out, the focus shifted to addressing the steady rainfall, flooding, cold weather, and shortage of food. This is not to discount the efforts of many people who worked tirelessly at the camp on several different levels to provide essential services to the camp inhabitants.

On December 16th, with an eviction notice looming over the encampment at Heritage Park, participants in Occupy Olympia occupied an abandoned building on 5th Avenue, renaming it the Rachel Corrie Community Center. As the orientation of the encampment had become less about achieving political goals, an occupation of a building

Troopers surround the newly-occupied Rachel Corrie Community center on the morning of December 16, 2011. Image: P. Battson

was a strategic move to bring attention to social service gaps in our community. This effort was intended to highlight the lack of democracy in how downtown Olympia (and any city under the orbit of neoliberal capital) operates, to generate a space to conduct experiments in direct democracy, to address how resources are allocated and by whom, and to give inspiration for what is possible in this movement.

A recent study has shown that 18% (nearly one out of five) of the inhabitants of downtown are houseless. Meanwhile, there are numerous buildings downtown that have been unused for years. The Rachel Corrie community center had at one point been the Thurston County Department of Housing, closed due to budget cuts. It was later purchased by Trivo, a Seattle-based developer intending to build largely unpopular highrise condominiums. Trivo has since gone bankrupt, and the building has laid vacant for years. Given the huge discrepancy between land use and need within the downtown Olympia community, a new paradigm is needed.

While certain organizations in Olympia exist to provide services to those in need, they do it primarily through the framework of charity. In this regard, they help meet people's immediate needs without challenging or attempting to change the structures of power that generate the problems to begin with. The Rachel Corrie Community Center provided a space for self-empowerment through self-determination, where those in need and those in solidarity created a moment in which decisions directly relating to human needs and desires could be made by the community within a framework that recognized the failures of a representative democracy driven by capital. Short lived as it may have been, the Rachel Corrie Community Center can serve as an example of what can and must be achieved, not just in a fleeting moment but as a sustained paradigm for new forms of social organization.

There are many directions in which this movement can go. We hope to see it continue its

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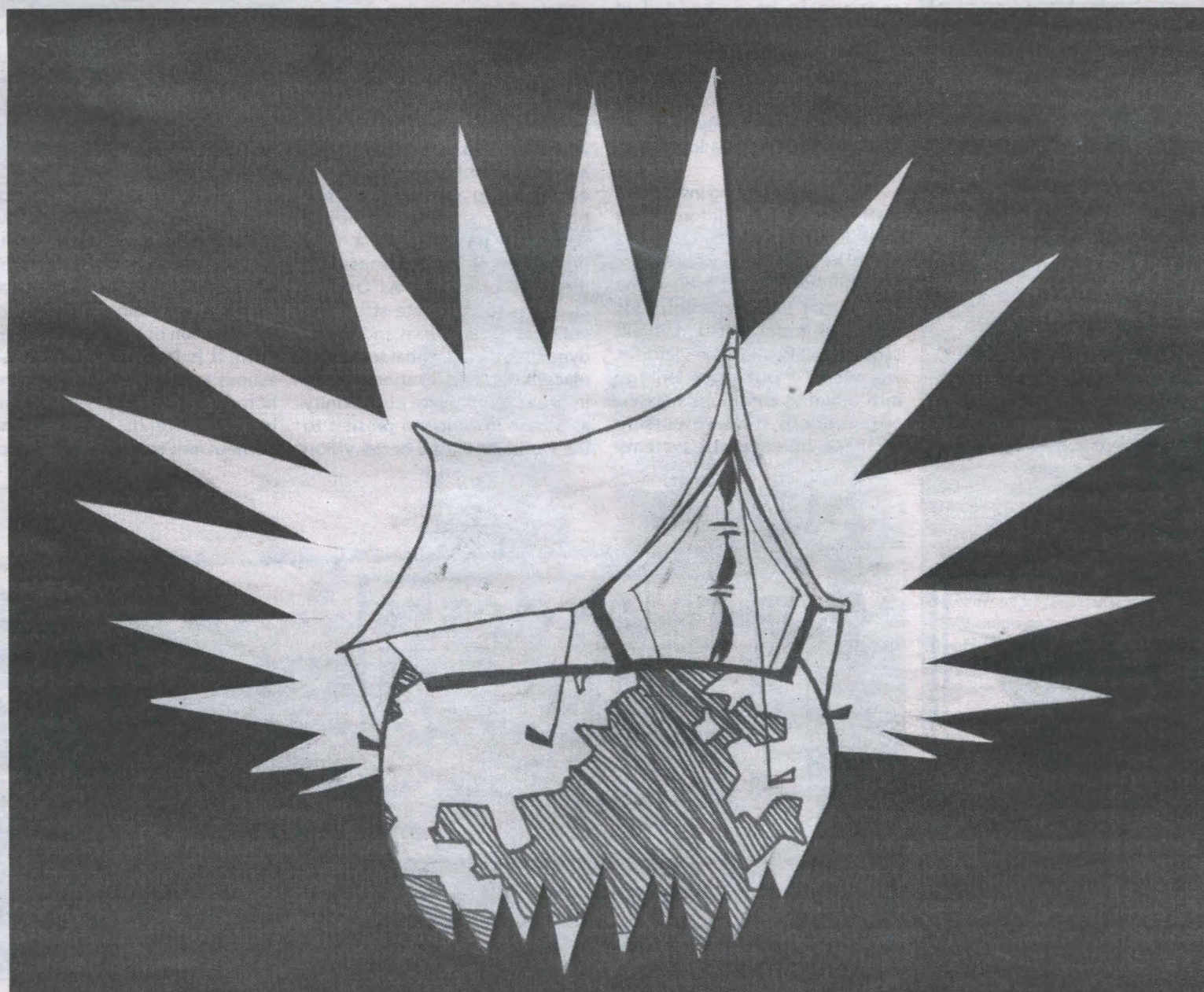
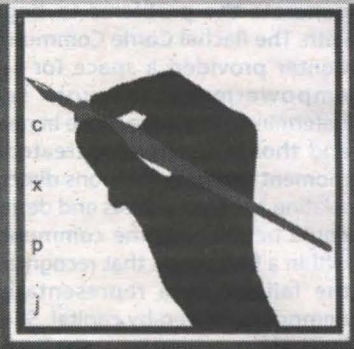


Image: Croft

# CxPJ

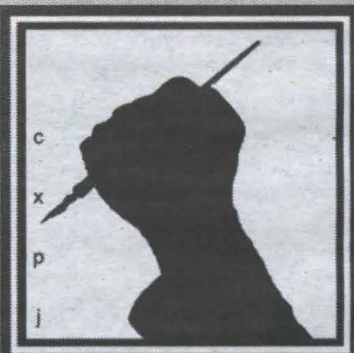
The Counterpoint Journal (CxPJ) is a collective of Evergreen students, staff, and alumni who publish an independent, alternative newspaper. The paper is designed as a space for voices, issues, and analysis silenced or marginalized by mainstream media in our community. Originally a direct response to the questionable and at times, oppressive policies of Evergreen's campus newspaper, the Cooper Point Journal (CPJ), the CxPJ has expanded its coverage and readership beyond the college through two years of quality journalism.

We accept submission of articles that deal with timely, relevant, and local issues. We specifically seek submissions based on research and include interviews with folks directly affected by the issue being discussed. We also accept

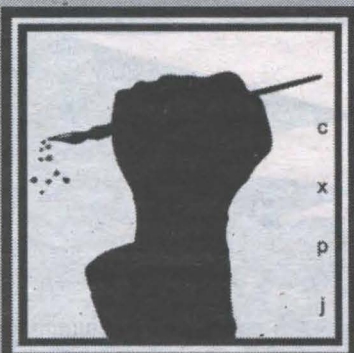


photography, poetry, art, and other creative works.

To submit original work, or to get in contact with us with questions or comments, e-mail [counterpointjournal@gmail.com](mailto:counterpointjournal@gmail.com)



The editorial collective reserves the right to question, edit or refuse any content it receives. The collective will make every attempt to consult the author(s) in regards to any potential revisions.



CxPJ logos by Lamise Al-Shawahin

## STATE OF THE UNIONS

E. Williamson

Evergreen has unusually strong union density for a small campus: dining services workers are represented by the Longshore union, one of the most historically militant in the state; faculty are represented by a joint AFT/WEA affiliate; and many of our staff members are represented by WFSE, the largest state workers' union in Washington. The newest staff members to be unionized—previously "exempt" staff in Registration and Records, Advising, Housing, Admissions, and other crucial student support offices—have formed their own WFSE local and are currently in the process of bargaining their first contract. (The term "exempt" is used to refer to staff members who have historically not been eligible for union representation, but last year WFSE representatives successfully argued at the Labor Relations Board that these positions, about 50 in total, do not include managerial duties and should thus not be prevented from joining a union.) Many of these staff members make less than \$40,000 per year.

In Washington, as elsewhere in the country, unions are one of the few mechanisms working people have to resist the defunding of higher education and other public services. Governor Christine Gregoire has been less aggressive than Ohio's John Kasich and Wisconsin's Scott Walker, refusing to openly blame unions for a budgetary crisis caused by corporate greed. But the lack of leadership in Washington State—particularly on the vital issue of tax reform—has caused most of the burden of the recession to fall on working people, including Evergreen staff, faculty, and students. As tuition continues to rise, so do the College's financial reserves, and yet salaries of

Evergreen staff continue to stagnate while employees are simultaneously being asked to shoulder a larger and larger percentage of rising health care costs.

For the most part, the College has attempted to avoid layoffs by choosing not to fill vacant positions—a move that has the unfortunately side effect of displacing workloads unevenly onto already underpaid staff. But in the Facilities, there has been a series of layoffs of temporary workers (covered in the Cooper Point Journal's May 25 article, "Permanent problem; temporary solution"). The Library has also lost a number of permanent staff positions. Likewise, the Academics division has been relying on a greater and greater number of contingent faculty to staff the curriculum. Contingent faculty are still represented by the union, but they sign a contract letter each time they are rehired which gives the College permission to cancel their appointment "based on enrollment, program need, and budget considerations without any further obligation" to the employee.

Why is the College hiring so many temporary workers? In part, this practice is the result of the state-wide public sector hiring freeze, which makes it harder for agencies like Evergreen to get approval for permanent hires. Hiring temporary workers also saves the College money on "added costs" like health care benefits.

What we have, then, is an institution that is responding to increasing economic pressures in all-too familiar ways, ways that threaten to erode the rights—a living wage, reasonable hours, dependable health care—that workers fought so hard

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## Occupy, continued from page 1

commitment to direct democracy, horizontal organization and experimentation. We also see a need for Occupy and people to continue to be embedded in local communities and struggles, addressing the failures and inadequacies of institutions and our government while highlighting our community's ability to create its own solutions in a long-term, sustainable way.

Focusing on existing institutions' inefficiencies will reinforce their value. By attempting to make these hierarchical institutions "better" or "stronger," we will not achieve the change that our community needs. While it is important to maintain accountability and gain victories, we need to put more energy into building community-based organizations that are outside of these bureaucratic systems.

Two strategies that we see as instrumental for a continued politicization of the movement (that are as of now in their beginning stages) are anti-foreclosure resistance and the ongoing labor struggles within our state.

Within Olympia, a fairly wealthy and (supposedly) liberal town, there exists a large houseless population and many families whose homes are being taken away. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Olympia, as the housing crisis and economic recession has created a new population of houselessness and illegal foreclosures. As Occupy attempts to articulate structural critiques of capitalism and power dynamics, it is essential to remain place-based and location specific in order to cultivate community as a base in which to present to the world (and us) a better vision

## IMMIGRATION AND RACISM

M. Stephens

Though those with US-citizenship can travel to essentially any given corner of the world, our own mechanisms for granting even temporary visas reflect the systemic oppressions which permeate our society. As the drum of xenophobia persists, immigrants and visitors from the south become complicit within the assembly-line style bureaucracy that dictates entry and exit from the United States.

My own journey to Santo Tomás, Nicaragua, with the Thurston-Santo-Tomás-Sister-County-Association (TSTSCA) exposes the contrast between my ability as a United States citizen to travel to Nicaragua to engage in a long-going community-exchange project. As the TSTSCA prepares for a north-bound delegation of two Nicaraguan school teachers, reflection regarding previous successes and failures within the visa process demonstrates the ways in which discriminatory practice has been a barrier to furthering these community exchanges and opportunities for mutual personal growth.

### Crossing Borders

Last spring, I painted the walls of my house. I ordered the things in my room, efficiently stuffing them into boxes labeled: Books, T-Shirts, Sweaters. I received a suitcase full of crayons made by Roseart and Elmer's glue sticks. I got my passport photo taken. I got shots for tropical diseases that flourish within the borders of the Caribbean isthmus to our south. Much later, I left from the city of Minneapolis with a five dollar bill jammed into my pocket. My body had been scanned.

electronically and my back-pack had been searched.

Sample I unloaded my bags from the conveyor belt and walked towards customs. A Nicaraguan official asked me not where I was from, not what my purpose was, and not if I had family in the country. Instead, I was asked for five dollars. I presented the now-creased green paper to the customs officer, who told me in exchange, "Enjoy your stay." My own interaction with visa systems contrasts deeply with those of north-bound delegates, and exposes my privilege as a white woman with a US passport in hand. The process of entering my own country is quite different for those who come from Santo Tomás, a community which so warmly accepted my presence and welcomingly invited me into its homes.

First of all, these women each have to pay a fee of \$150 in order to even apply for a Visa, a fine 30 times the sum of what I had to pay after disembarking from my flight. The already high price of this fine is exacerbated by the fact that minimum wage (in areas where enforced) is \$35/week. This budget, especially in the case of Nicaraguan women, likely goes to supporting family members, and it is unlikely that saving is feasible. TSTSCA will cover these fees, but otherwise visitors would be bankrupted by the expense.

A year after my own voyage south and after paying the fees, I find myself dashing around down-town Olympia collecting letters of support with the aim of obtaining two non-immigrant visas. These letters from Olympia community members and state representatives will support the Delegates' claim of being invitees participating in a long-term exchange relationship. We, as US citizens, **continued on page 5**

giving them the help they need.

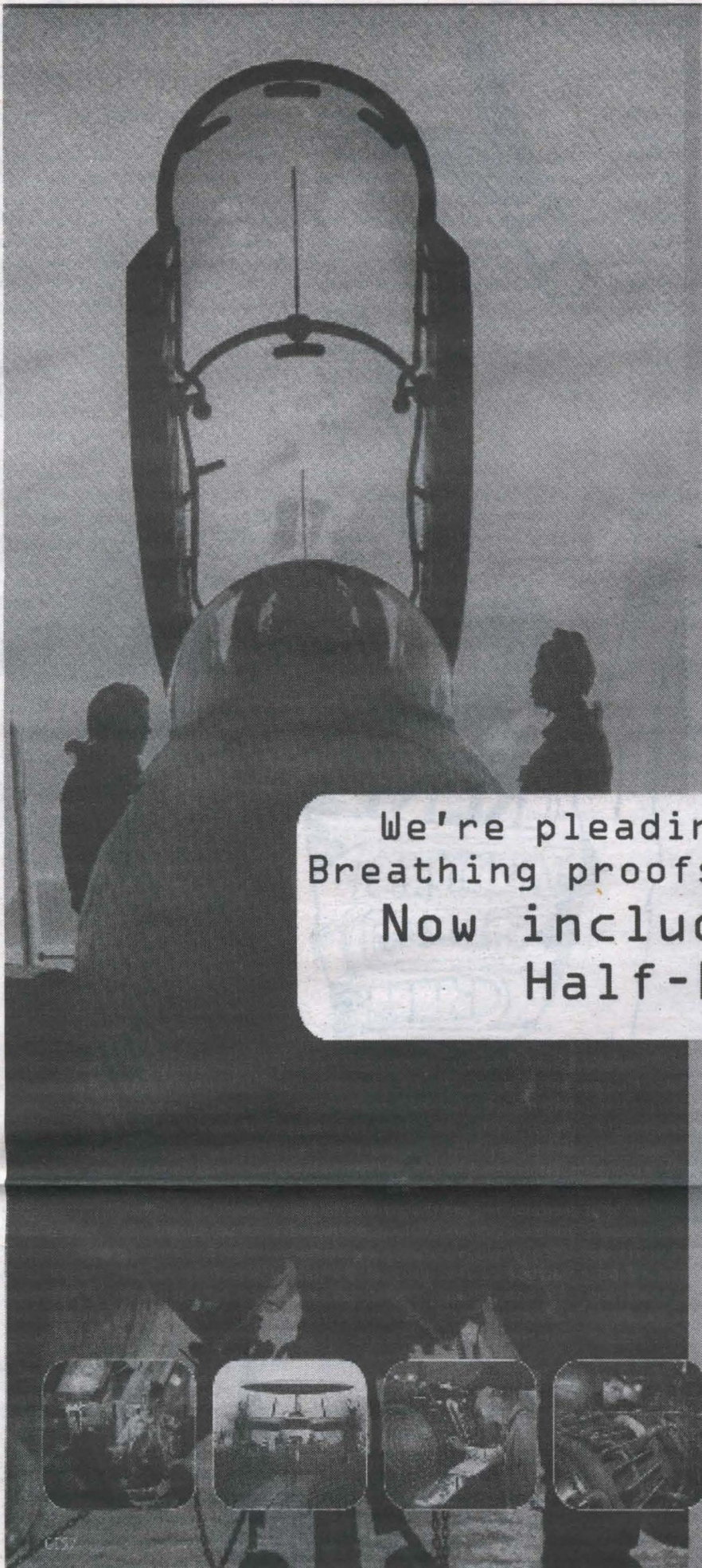
We also see the recent labor victory in Longview as an opportunity to channel this momentum into other labor disputes occurring within our state. Farm workers in Eastern Washington have reached out to the Occupy movement to once again gather its strength in numbers in solidarity with their struggle against milk producer Darigold. Efforts by these farm workers to unionize have been met with threats and intimidation from Darigold managers and working conditions at the dairy are inhumane. Employees work 16 hour days and when asked for water, the managers tell the workers to drink from the same tanks as the cattle. Attempts to ask for better conditions are met by a Ruby Ridge Farm's owner who carries a rifle and explains, "This rifle is for those people with the union."

The farm workers' call compels us to take action out of moral responsibility as well as a strategic opportunity for us to continue to articulate and demonstrate how our increasingly globalized economy plays out on the bodies working people. Solidarity with Darigold workers presents us with a great opportunity and also a great responsibility not to co-opt their struggle but to follow their lead and do what is asked of us in support of localized resistance against globalized forms of repression and exploitation.



Fencing was erected to support the dismantling of the Occupy Olympia encampment, with signage provided by the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.

Image: P. Bättson



# Death Before College:

Life not the refreshing sting of razor wire you'd expected? Thought it was 500 percent more electrifying stress? A touch of uncashed check...prickling snubs... Or \$3,000 above poverty line, even?

**We don't make out that 140 decibel one-liner that mutes our voice, mutters: "Stop looking for yourself in others." Should you? "Everything is always getting quieter" is best.**

**Apathetic about cooling down your social life slowly? Annihilate it. Out on the plank.**

Shrivel your self in the least ignored ocean bottoms! Recollecting fissured atoms, exploding matters. A Different Kind of Company. A different kind of without your organism in atrophied armor tissues! Discover the loud noise that comes from pumping fluid. Perform undesired dominatrix demands. Hungry? Why wait? How many licks does it take to get to the center of a command society with Cold War era technology? **Don't get mad, get overtly selfless.** If you like a lot of passive robots on your McMuffin—Join Our Club! **Come see the softer side of a streamlined economy. A disciplined unlearning game just like mama used to make. Couldn't your hands use prior knowledge of an exploded sphere?**

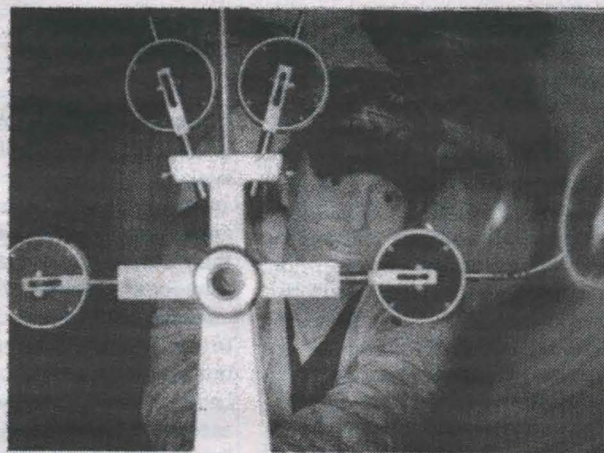
**We're pleading.  
Breathing proofs and convictions.  
Now including the  
Half-Life Spin.**

How close to the edge will death before college take you? Force the answer from a weightless student. Ending with just under **\$0 worth of classroom smarts** after dismissal of promised payday.

It helps to drink our noise- it looks good on you, baby. **The best part of waking up is demanding answers in your cup.** Tall characters stretch out on a surface of the tale. Your spine is a chest of drawers and nothing is on TV at this hour.

There's no wrong way to eat the prediction that your death will be shy in all the wrong ways. PTSD food bank farming. **The Navy... your own dream-yacht tour. The longest point not included on the plane of you not here, or you still not here.**

Are you out? **The Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities @ [www.objector.org/before-you-enlist/alternatives](http://www.objector.org/before-you-enlist/alternatives) & Project Yano @ [www.projectyano.org](http://www.projectyano.org) for less misinformation.** This message is over. Navy. **You're in Good Hands With Death In Your Mouth.™**



## Unions, continued from opposite page

for in the early twentieth century. Ohio voters overwhelmingly rejected the bill that would have significantly curtailed workers' bargaining rights, but workers lost the fight in Indiana, and similar struggles will not be easily won—the political battles occurring in former union strongholds like Michigan and Wisconsin remind workers that we can take nothing for granted in the era of "austerity."

The importance of union leverage in combating the erosion of these rights can be seen quite clearly in comparing two all campus e-mails sent by President Purce last spring. On April 15, 2011, before the legislative budget for the new biennium had even been finalized, Purce wrote that both of the proposals on the table at the capitol "would also have significant impacts on college employees, including 3% wage reductions across all employee categories, additional furlough days for some employee groups, reductions in retirement contributions for some employee groups, and increases in employee contributions to health insurance premiums."

By May 26, however, he had backtracked, stating that despite the 3% cut to the overall payroll costs called for by the legislature, "we will, of course, honor our current collective bargaining agreements and meet our responsibility to negotiate any changes in compensation." He added that "the specific nature of the impacts will vary." Indeed. Though Purce did take a token pay cut at the beginning of the budget crisis, there has been no recent announcement about cuts to the salaries of upper level administrators, a dozen of whom earn more than \$70,000.

Classified staff members did agree, as part of their 2011 contract negotiations, to take a 3% pay cut in the second year of the current biennium. But thanks in part to workers at Evergreen and across the state resisting the logic of inevitability, the College returned to the bargaining table this year and agreed to make up the 3% reduction in the base budget through "voluntary furlough program, employee turnover savings and other compensation base reduction strategies" ("Three percent reduction for classified staff canceled," e-mail from President Purce to all staff and faculty, May 10, 2012).

The faculty union has been equally successful in resisting blanket cuts; last June the UFE negotiating team reached an agreement with the administration stating that salaries would not be cut for the next two years. This result is due, in large part, to the power of coordinated bargaining with faculty at Eastern, Central, and Western. It's worth noting, however, that despite a long-overdue pay raise included in the UFE's 2008 contract, Evergreen faculty are still the lowest paid in the entire state, and lag 20% behind faculty at peer institutions across the country.

It's too early to tell what challenges the new, formerly exempt staff union will face in its contract negotiations. But recent outcomes provide powerful evidence that the College has the ability to choose not to punish its already underpaid workers. Although each union bargains separately, each successful contract reinforces the importance—and the viability—of resisting the "race to the bottom."

Jenny Paris  
2700 Evergreen Parkway NW  
Olympia, WA 98505

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Please print clearly.

Email Address: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth:\* \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:\* ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time to Call:\*  a.m. or  p.m.

Current Year in High School:\*  
 Freshman (08)  Sophomore (09)  Junior (10)  Senior (11)  Graduate (12)

Year of High School Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Year in College:  
 Freshman (12)  Sophomore (13)  Junior (14)  Senior (15)  Post-Graduate (16)

Year of College Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

GPA:\*  2.0 - 2.9  3.0 - 4.0

U.S. Citizen:\*  Yes  No

\*Required Fields

**NAVY**  
OUT ON THE PLANK.

**YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS  
WITH DEATH IN YOUR MOUTH.™**

# Poet-Activist Community Extension

## Portland Debrief

N. Tiso

Our PACE action-experiment was conducted on the afternoon of Sunday, December 11th 2011 during gray weather. The political event we were framing our action around was the next day's West Coast Port Blockade, a picket action done in solidarity with ILWU as EGT attempted to use scab labor during the union strike. This was also just a month after the notorious "midnight eviction" of Occupy Portland on the morning of November 13th, when police raided the encampment (one of many sweeps across the nation). So our antennae were attuned to this uproar; I identified myself with the leftist radical communities that textured Occupy's ecology, like the anarcho-clowns making riot police laugh or the volunteer staff feeding the tired and the hungry.

As cheesy as it sounds, one of the most beautiful maxims I heard about Occupy (as a social phenomena) was: Occupy is in your heart. Whenever I think about Occupy post-eviction, I remember this phrase. I also remember it when wondering if my involvement with Occupy is authentic, or enough, compared to more dedicated or able-bodied activists, but then I remember the best thing about Occupy is how it can be infinitely appropriated. Occupy is a site, a feeling, and ultimately a social practice: it's about live resistance and community-building. This essay examines one such practice, its theory and execution, in the interests of continued experimentation/liberation.

PACE as an acronym means Poet-Activist Community Extension, and is best conceived of as poets engaged in "guerrilla street action, sharing with strangers in public space" via "unconventional methods of poetic exchange" that can range from the antagonistic to the invitational. The term originated from Philly poet-sorcerers CA Conrad and Frank Sherlock. Together with other poets like Lin Dinh, they performed PACE actions in downtown Philadelphia in 2004, to positive reception.

PACE is an semi-improvisatory invitational social engagement in an otherwise mediated false-immediate world, where even former Supreme Court Justice Stevens rightly acknowledges in his landmark Citizens United dissenting opinion, "business corporations have been 'effectively delegated responsibility for ensuring society's economic welfare'; they inescapably structure the life of every citizen."

The fact is that public space is a misnomer. If it wasn't, Occupy's park takeover wouldn't be so politicized. An anticommens, American public space is everywhere managed by an anti-intellectual corporate-political elite hostile to nondomesticated community-organizing (i.e. activism). Public space is more or less integrated into the capitalist architecture of mass consumption. How to practice mass participatory democracy under these alienating social conditions is a quintessentially American dilemma.

Occupy introduced into the history of protest rhetoric a new discursive tactic: the human microphone, which, as I'll go into later, uniquely occasions the context of its utterance and in doing so creates the space for new modes of interaction to be tested, from within the outside of the dominant reality. Our PACE action experimented with how poetry can appropriate the human mic form to similarly build solidarity between listener-speaker (as each are both), only in this case in improvised situations and so with a more permeable coterie. We were also modeling more consensual linguistic frameworks viz. the listening-based speech-act that is the human microphone. Our appropriation of this discursive tactic was justified in showing that poems are more than just

words; they are bodies.

In his notes on PACE, Sherlock identifies poetry as "the least commodifiable of art forms" and therefore a particularly attractive form for "generative community extension" in/against a culture industry that actively recruits art into "the prototyping of fascinating consumables." It's true poetry is not very good at prototyping anything other than poetry, but when speech acts are central to the political development of a movement, such as with the human mic and Occupy, then poetry is uniquely situated—empowered even—by its marginal circumstance.

It's perhaps useful to contrast this idea of 'fascinating consumables' with what poet/art critic Thom Donovan in his blog post calls 'lyrical valuables'—the qualities of a poem that can be shared or made common, as distinct from consumed. How can we share what can't be consumed? Good question. Construed subjectively, the human mic poem links bodies in space thru recitation and reception, and is absorbed by the chaos of its occasioning, or kairos, if you will, becoming changed (and charged) in a way a commodity cannot. The hope is to "reclaim public spaces as sites of social production," (Sand and Boykoff) in this case thru what linguist J.L. Austin calls performative utterances, wherein "it is by the utterance of the words that the act is performed" (Hall 184). Interestingly, Austin classifies poetry as separate from his conception of the performative in language:

A performative utterance will, for example, be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in a soliloquy... Language in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but in ways parasitic upon its normal use—ways which fall under the doctrine of the etiolations of language. All this we are excluding from consideration. Our performative utterances, felicitous or not, are to be understood as issued in ordinary circumstances (169).

Rest assured the next time I'm asked my line of work, it'll be in the Department of Etiolated Language. Within the abstract formulation of Austin's theory, this separation of "poetic" and "ordinary" modes of discourse helps make his argument intelligible; however it's just this intelligibility PACE calls into question. Certainly our utterances as poets in the street were said as if on a stage (the stage of reality) and their delivery felt "hollow or void," confirming our standing as parasites, but they also issued from an "ordinary circumstance." If a performative utterance produces the circumstance of its reception, its precisely how "ordinary" the circumstance of our "parasitic" utterances were that accounted for their remarkability. This suggests a possible synthesis of poetry, performativity, and the practice of everyday life.

We met at Powell's Books on SW 9th & Burnside in the mid-afternoon. Gabe, Croft, and three other enthusiastic Evergreen students were there, with materials in tow—books to read from, flyers/broadsides to handout, and poster boards with radical graffiti slogans to hang. It was badass. David and Elizabeth were late, but that's ok; we got warmed up while waiting for them. It was cold out (not raining) and Gabe was wearing sandals without socks. I felt bad for Gabe's feet. We banded together and lit cigarettes, fumbling for a way to get started. Eventually we just did.

We had two planning meetings about this PACE action dating back to a

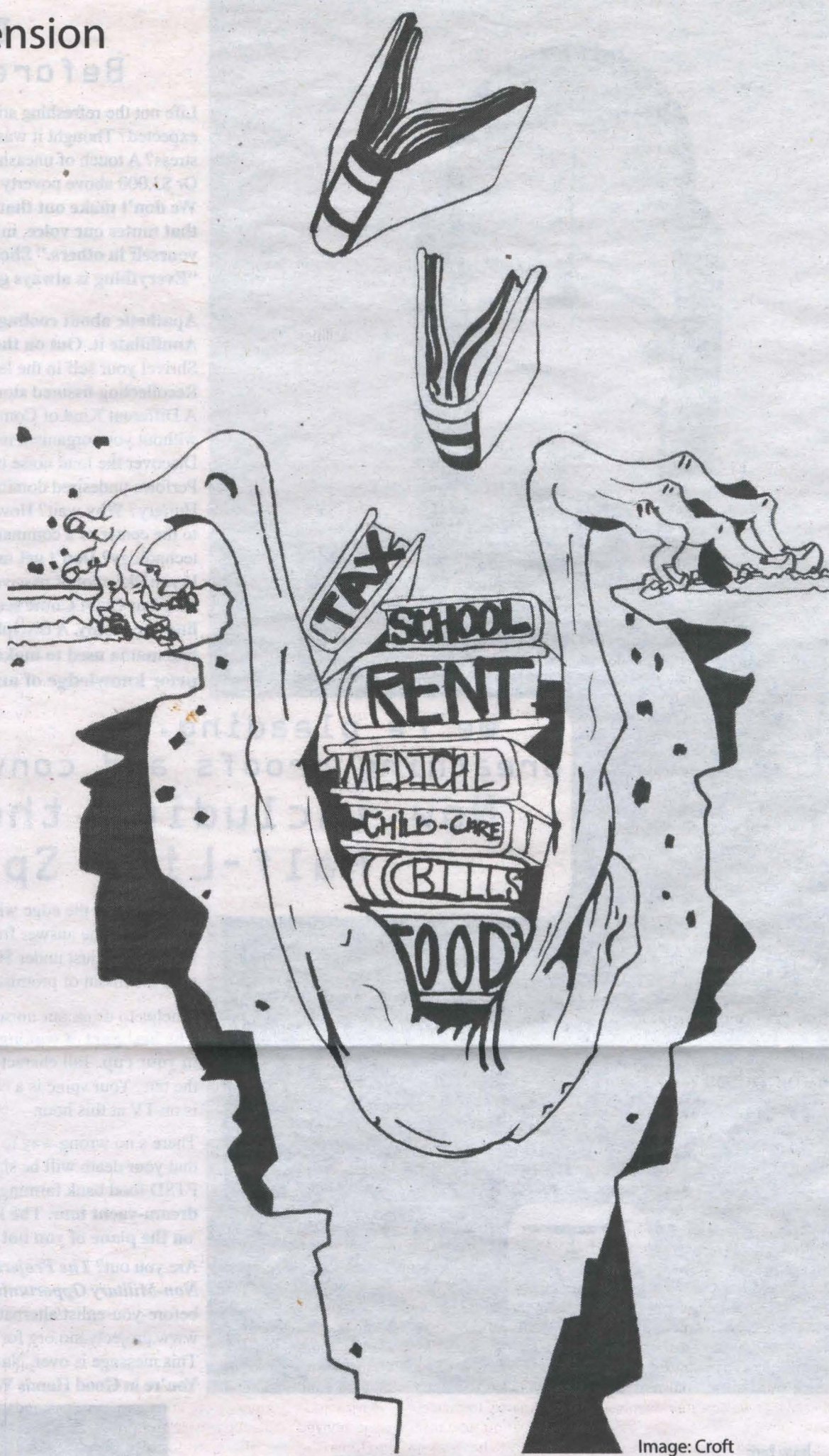


Image: Croft

little over a week prior, one I attended in long Johns via Skype. We discussed evolving conditions on the ground—at the port, with the longshoremen and the union, with Occupy PDX and their action committees, etc., and were for a time interested in framing our PACE action on the day of a march to the blockade site, until we found out no march would be happening because the port was too far out to be accessible by foot, and was not near any neighborhoods. We then decided to do our action the day before as a sort of promotional event for the shutdown, and put the call out for other similarly interested community members to join us via the Google group OccupyPortlandPoets.

It was a typical busy downtown day; people filed in and out of the bookstore around us. I showed Gabe and Croft my broadsides. I must say I was proud of them because I printed them left-justified on pretty cardstock at the IPRC, then chopped them to better size with a big paper cutter. We decided it'd be best to warm up by reading these aloud human mic style, with every few words spoken by one repeated and then amplified by the many. None of us were really experienced reading poetry this way.

The need to repeat demands simplicity, whereas my poems were usually complex beasts, so fitting their unusual syntax and polysyllabic vocabulary into this condensed and then echoed format required, above all, a sustained attention to misunderstanding.

By coincidence, an unhoused person named Steve was selling Street Roots magazine on the same storefront sidewalk entrance. Steve had something of the marketplace hawker about him, only goofier, whereas here we felt, well, serious, or maybe just scared. Steve's levity reassured us.

I forget if I had Steve read my poem solo first or if the troupe I was with performed and then we asked Steve to join in. I remember Steve at first reading it with a comic persona then becoming more absorbed in how it specifically addressed what appeared to be Steve's condition (unhoused), and this caused Steve's pitch to slow and deepen as the poem worked upon Steve:

I don't listen to the news but can't help hearing the homeless question, the carnival feeling, the politics of outburst emotion on both sides: one paramilitary the other a new Left sleeping outside, not keeping clear its function...

Imagine that being read aloud (real loud) for all within earshot to hear, like an ancient bard. It was doing things to me too. That it "brought the poems to life" is probably the most cliché way I can describe the affect.

Feling less & less nervous, I lead the way in a cascading chorus, three phases long. What is so great about the 'human mic' repetitive speaker-listener format is it puts the emphasis on listening and receiving the poem, literally, into the body, before reciting it, so that every speaker puts their spin on it. As Adam Weg writes in On The People's Microphone, "Parceling oratory into memorable bundles, arousing enjambed speech—the new technology suspends authorial timelessness and elicits the historical precession of hallucinatory closure experienced by any reader absorbed in any text...which inaugurates a community not of authorship but of readership". This idea of cultivating "readership" encounters what Bay Area poet Rob Halpern calls "a poetics of receptivity," that privileges "passivity over activity, receiving and accepting over unraveling, decoding and, in the end, appropriating."

continued on page 7

# A Sixty-Five Percent Privatized Evergreen

E. Hauser

Budget cuts. Those two words have haunted members of the Evergreen community for years, from students and alumni to faculty and interested residents of Olympia. Most everyone has something to say about the issue, but no one seems to know the whole story. That's because, as with most issues involving politics and money, there's more than meets the eye at first glance. I attempted to clear matters up a bit in a recent interview with the Executive Director for Operational Planning and Budget at Evergreen, Steve Trotter.

I began by asking what the funds that constitute what are often referred to as the school's "reserves" are, exactly. Trotter was quick to point out that "reserves" is a misleading term: undesignated fund balances are not equal to reserve money that the college can allocate any way it likes. "At the end of the last fiscal year, there was about 30 million dollars in this pool," he explained, but this fund balance was largely tied up in future plans. For example, a large portion would go to support the housing and dining services on campus in the coming year. Evergreen has to keep an operating budget to pay for improvements to buildings and other expenses, both expected and unforeseen. Therefore, some money is designated for expenses like planned remodels to buildings, while some is kept as a true reserve for things like unexpected repairs to on-campus facilities, or deficits that must be made up in the school's budget.

"Evergreen's operating budget comes from state subsidies and students' tuition," said Trotter. When state budget cuts slashed funding for higher education, the school was forced to look for alternate means of generating revenue. These cuts took money out of the school's budget faster than tuition increases could

make up for the difference, so reserves were used as a quick fix to balance this discrepancy.

The logical next question is where is this money coming from? If state budgets and student tuition are not enough to cover the school's needs, how does it generate extra revenue? Trotter explained that Evergreen does, in fact, have tools to gather funds for the reserves. Overenrollment of students is one way the school gets money: it accepts fees from more students than the school expected in a given year, then uses that money to provide the extra faculty and facilities necessary to accommodate these students. Trotter said that "Evergreen recently enrolled 4,500 students instead of the expected 4,200, and used their tuition money to ensure that the school would be staffed and prepared to accommodate them." Twentythree percent of these were out-of-state students, whose higher tuition fees helped even further.

Of course, there is a limit to how much the school can overenroll before it runs into trouble. Savings are also accumulated throughout the year through unfilled office positions. The more the school can avoid hiring secretaries, receptionists, and like staff, the more money it saves. Also, not spending the entirety of funds that have been allocated to certain purposes, such as travel budgets, translates into savings at the end of the fiscal year.

How much of the budget deficit can these efforts make up for? Not all of it, since state funding has been so drastically reduced in recent years. "Thirty years ago students paid twenty percent of the school's costs," said Trotter. "Now they pay sixtyfive percent." The economic recession helped to speed up an already existing pattern of decreasing state mandated money for colleges. There is a large continuum between an organization that is funded entirely by the public

and one that is privately funded, and Evergreen has been slowly moving in the direction of the latter. Its thirty-fivepercent state funding is actually high compared to what other schools are getting, but Evergreen's unique approach to education requires the school to have more financial flexibility in order to maintain things like small class size and hands-on opportunities for students.

Using the school's reserves has helped to cushion the pain of budget cuts, but at some point these reserves must be rebuilt. The state has, unfortunately, implemented a three percent yearly decrease in funding for the school, so the school must continue to find other ways of making money to compensate. Over-enrollment can only help so much, and Trotter reiterated that frugality must be maintained, now that the school is more dependent on savings from things like staff vacancies. Trotter said that "Evergreen is trying to minimize the impact of this frugality on employees by avoiding pay cuts and layoffs," but this reporter knows that these things will happen when there is no other easy way for the school to save money. The reserves have been useful, but they won't last. The state has asked the college to prepare five and ten percent budget reduction plans, but there just aren't many other obvious places to cut spending before students, faculty, and staff start bearing the brunt of the burden.

Evergreen is working on a five-year plan of ramping up efforts to secure resources, which are needed mainly for financial aid for students and for faculty development. "State and federal financial aid subsidies are holding up the current model for financial aid at the moment, but this cannot be expected to last," said Trotter. Instead of public subsidies, tuition is becoming the only income for the school, and if students cannot pay out of pocket the school is not financially

benefiting from their attendance. "The trinity of public subsidies, financial aid, and tuition is no longer balanced," Trotter explained. "The cost of tuition has gone up, not because the cost of operating the school is higher, but because less money is coming from the state."

As Evergreen struggles to come up with financial aid money, one of the issues faced is that of college becoming an opportunity for the wealthy only. Higher tuition expense has already become a barrier to some new students. With the school relying more and more on tuition fees to cover its expenses, less students can afford to apply, and those that would have once received financial aid may not now. Trotter informed me that "Over one third of Evergreen's students are below the poverty level, and many constitute the first generation in their family to attend college at all." More recruitment of out-of-state students who will pay higher tuition fees is expected from the college, but while this will generate more money for the school it won't help the plight of those students who have difficulty paying for college, whether in-state or out-of-state. Trotter also expects decreasing applications from minority students, who may have relied on financial aid that is not now available.

One challenge Evergreen faces that many state schools don't is its youth as a school. Evergreen receives markedly less income in the form of private donations from alumni than other schools do, as it is only forty years old and therefore has a much smaller pool of alumni to receive gifts from. This alumni group is "our largest private funder," said Trotter. As the current school year marks Evergreen's fortieth anniversary, Trotter expects the school to be asking for more donations from its alumni and supporters, but there is no way to tell how much these individuals will be willing and able to contribute.

Although there is now less funding coming to Evergreen from the state, this does mean that there is more accountability from the state. "Washington wants to support the college and increase its efficiency," said Trotter, "because the state will benefit from having more people with degrees." However, with the school growing and state funding decreasing, it is difficult to see how this can be done. Trotter stressed that public officials cannot be blamed for these problems. "No one wants to raise tuition, but it becomes the only option when the public doesn't want to allow tax increases that would translate into more money for schools. There is a demand for more money

for financial aid and improvements to the school, but little desire to pay. The legislators do not provide money; they merely manage what they are given to work with, so it is up to the public to provide them with more funds if they want the school to get more money." Unfortunately, people seem unlikely to become more receptive to tax increases any time soon.

Evergreen's faculty is already paid less than the faculties of the rest of the state schools, yet they often do more and harder work. The school lacks opportunity for revenue because it refuses to cut corners in academic areas, such as the way it handles its lower division classes. While large state schools like UW and WSU cram hundreds of freshmen and sophomores into lecture halls for classes that offer little to no one-on-one help from or interaction with their professor, Evergreen is known for small class size and close student professor interaction. This uniqueness leaves less room for cost-cutting, but faculty and administrators are loathe to change the qualities that make the school so remarkable. Trotter stressed that "in the future, preserving this uniqueness will remain a high priority." Evergreen students and graduates who have benefited from the school's alternative approach to education can only hope that Trotter speaks the truth, so that future generations can enjoy an option that contrasts drastically with traditional approaches to education.

Evergreen needs to have some financial flexibility in order to remain the unique opportunity that it has been for thousands of students, but what little money the school has is already tied up in prior obligations. Fund reserves do not mean free money, and even those reserves that are needed for the school's operation are running out. When it comes to solving the school's budget problems "we have to think long-term," Trotter said. Clearly there are no easy answers, but it seems that it will ultimately fall to the public to do what the state no longer does for Evergreen. If we continue to resist higher taxes, the school will be left with no choice but to make changes that will destroy its valuable uniqueness and take away educational opportunities for future students. The ultimate question, then, is how much does higher education mean to the people of Washington State?

If you would like to find out more, there is information on the school's website. The Office of the President page has a link to the Budget Office page, and to the Office of Governmental Relations, which provides blog entries that may be helpful in understanding the role the state is playing in all of this.

## Immigration, continued from page 2

lend assumed legitimacy to these representatives through our letters. In the eyes of the state, this justifies the personal statements of these women.

Meanwhile, Martha Irene Lazo and Heylin Amarely López both work towards getting letters from the Ministry of Education and county State workers local to Santo Tomás. The letters from both here and there justify the women as workers with valid ties to their community and state that the women are excited to use this opportunity as a means to better and enrich our educational practices in Olympia, as well as their own back in Santo Tomás.

Martha and Heylin are presumed outlaws even before crossing the border.

The exorbitant fees for visa application and the reinforcement letters from the state and Olympia community members show that the US visa process restricts access according to class. Being able to get your hands on \$150 is no easy feat for the average Nicaraguan, and neither is it easy for many United States citizens.

The quantity and content of support letters reveal the power of the State to deem who is cut-out or permitted to touch sacred US soil. Immediately criminalized and forced to jump through a series of hoops, Lazo and Lopez must justify their desire to cross into sacred U.S. soils.

### Previous Visa Experiences

When Normantina Aguilar and Ana María Sánchez made their four hour pilgrimage to the US embassy in 2004, their visas requests were denied. While the TSTSCA has had success in bringing numerous northern-bound delegates to Olympia over the years, things do not always unfold in a way that allows us to further our goals of solidarity and sisterhood.

Normantina recounted her experience to me via an international

phone call. She said that the people weren't so nice and that they asked her questions unrelated not to the deep and powerful history of the sister-city relationship. They overlooked details about her important work as a librarian in the community's only library, and failed to question her about her work in the comedor infantil, a children's soup kitchen whose roots trace back to the Sandinista struggle, today feeding about 50 kids their only meal in a given day. They didn't ask her about the purpose of her visit: dialogue with Olympians about community work and ultimately to travel back to Nicaragua, delivering new insights and revived energy to her work in Santo Tomás.

As it turned out, Normantina paid a monumental fee in order to be questioned about her lack of a husband. Her age and her status as a single woman, officials said, made her a likely 'illegal,' a stowaway in disguise, seeking work in the glamorous ornamental greens industry in order to send wages southward.

I asked Normantina if her plan was to stay in the United States, and she responded with laughter. A life lived in silence, under the fear of ICE raids and police brutality? No thank you. What arrogance these gringos have, Normantina told me with chuckles.

Nevertheless, Normantina's story shows the way in which social and political profiling based on racism, classism, and sexism color the systems which govern us. Normantina was profiled according to her social class, gender, and because she came from Nicaragua. In the eyes of US officials, these factors cumulatively add to her status as an economic and social 'risk-factor.' Being a working-class woman from Nicaragua, the other aspects of Normantina's identity were invisibilized. She became a threat to the U.S. economy as a potential 'job-stealer' (and therefore a threat to the function of our capitalist society), because of the social markers assigned

to her. "Lo sientooooo," said the customs official as he passed her a rejection notice from across the table in the US Embassy.

At this point, we aren't sure whether Martha and Heylin will be granted their Visas. We can't be sure of much in a society that labels people 'alien,' and 'illegal,' or just plain old 'different.' In order to ensure safety and equality both for ourselves and for those labeled 'different,' we need to collectively re-imagine our immigration system and democratically re-distribute power.

These stories of well-intentioned and good hearted people who are my friends groping their way through the systemic oppressions of the visa system drive me to ask who or what that system is trying to protect.

Who is gaining from the dehumanization and criminalization that happens on a daily basis? Why is it that my friends have to cross what feels like an iron-wall of bureaucracies just to visit us at the northern end of the same continent?

As the US government continues on its systematic campaign of terrorism, solidarity across borders and constructed identities become absolutely necessary for collective liberation.

\*Update: As of March 2nd, Heylin Amarely López and Martha Irene Lazo received their US Visitor Visas. Although this recent success is something to be celebrated, the process for US Visa acquisition continues to reflect systematic inequalities and alienations embedded in the bureaucracies of the United States and global capitalism at large.

## Counter-Hegemonic Global Aggregates: A Paper

Three Evergreen students; G. Buell, J. Bracken, and K. Ashcraft; produced a 115-page paper entitled *The Contours of Social Movements in the Neoliberal Epoch for an academic contract* in [spring 2011?].

By popular demand, the full text of the paper is now being hosted at [url]. This column is meant to serve only as a very short introduction to the full text.

In its first section, the paper argues a thesis: "the claim that globally-networked counter-hegemonic movements provide the most favorable opportunity for this systemic change" against a global, neoliberal, capitalist order. Its second section constructs a framework to analyze "counter-hegemonic global aggregates" or "antisystemic movements and networks." Finally, it presents case studies of such "CHGAs" illuminated by both the thesis and framework in question.

The case studies analyzed are "La Via Campesina, The Free Culture Movement, and the Islamist Movement." They are characterized by, in the authors' own words, "historic failure." This should be no surprise, since significant success of a CHGA

would mean a very different world as compared to today's.

Ashcraft et al. itemizes the "myriad inadequacies—both respective and collective—that fail to instigate a fundamental structural transition from the capitalist world-system" and in doing so clarifies some boundary conditions of success. This is what, primarily, makes it an important work to anyone interested in collective activism politically or academically.

Ashcraft et al. cites 77 unique references, and, at the beginning of section II, annotates a list of "the most relevant and dynamic" of these texts. As such, the paper has some secondary importance as a comprehensive guide to further readings.

Finally, this paper derives tertiary importance specifically to Evergreen students due to its existence. That is, it is worth remembering that it is possible to produce important, critical, academic work such as this through the contract system at Evergreen. Simply as an example of work, this paper is an important read for anyone interested in studying history, activism, or social change at Evergreen.

# ARTISTS: Strike to the Street

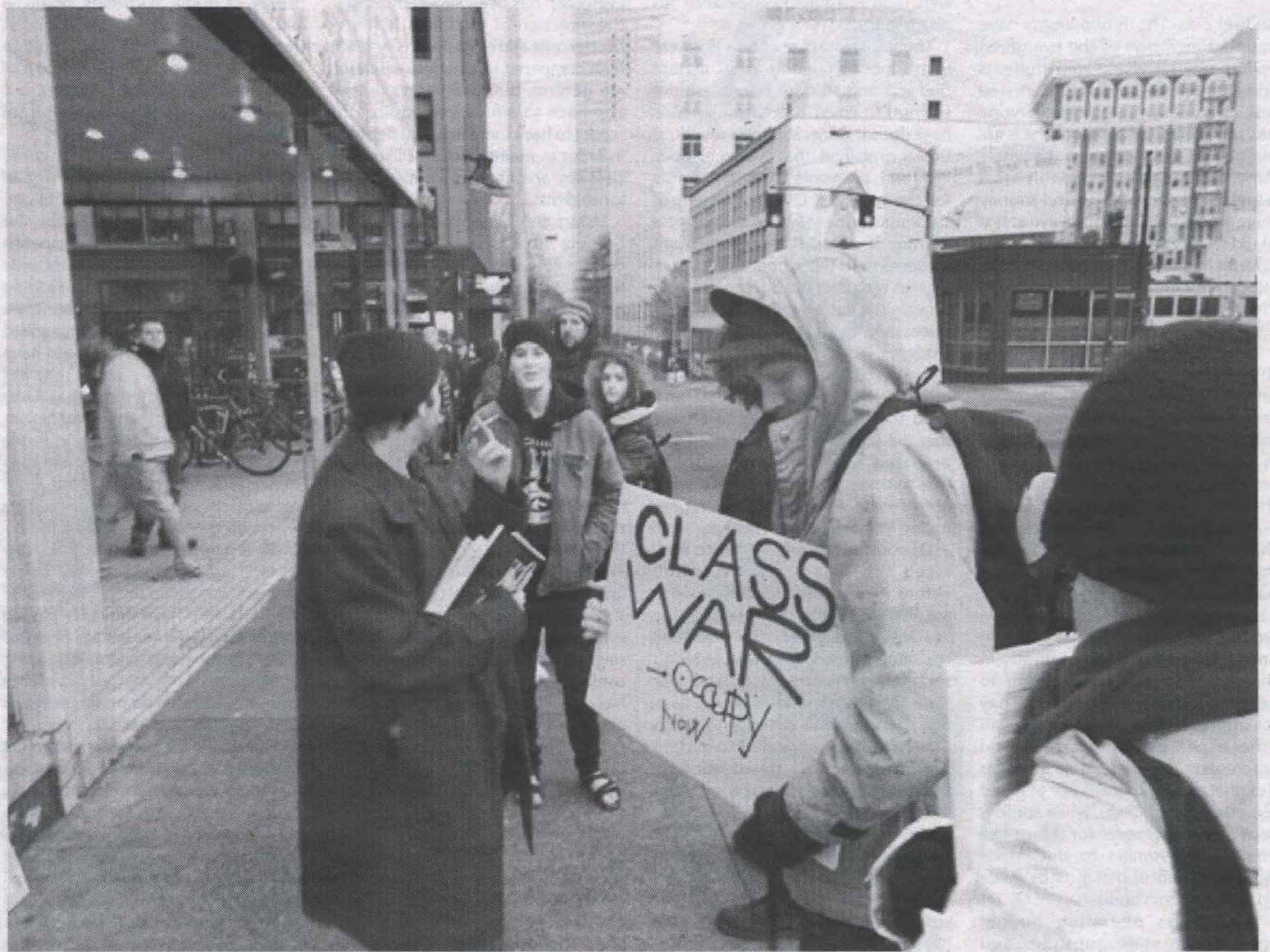
N Croft

## THE SITUATION

As the idea of "Public-Place" is "negotiated" by "our" federal and state laws, a perverse interpretation from what I believe such ideas desire to be is in effect. Visual stimulus for example is bought and sold to the highest bidder. (I.e. advertisement billboards). While the ideological goal behind making a public message available is to inform the community (that interacts with the board) about a particular thing or idea, yet informing one's public potential is dictated by how much money one can spend. I'm relating a competitive means to live, to who gets to put out their message, and to what communities are targeted by the messaging. What this creates is a representation of knowledges that are dictated by fewer interests than that of the amount of those who occupy the spaces that are affected by the "advertisement".

It is obvious to me that under our current terms of cross community negotiations (Capitalism), we will never be in each other's interests. Entire panels would have to be recruited, close to the likes of a "city council" process of representation. In case you don't know capitalism is not interested in developing communities' social and health practices. Please, look around your "public" terrain. Might it be conducive for you to be able to make available an idea, a hint or path towards proposed further investigation, i.e. a website domain of your choosing written or installed on a wall? Unless you're not in front of a chalkboard the answer is then no. (How long does chalk last anyway) What I mean by conducive, is how immediately can your messaging be accommodated by your community's "hot spots"? Do the bureaucratic procedures you must go through rely on you spending money for your "space"? A messaging that you believe needs to be made available for the general knowledge of your community. Does an American company like Coca-Cola have any right to advertise in India? What is it that makes Coca-Cola having representation in India so important. How is it that Americans who spent little to no time in India, know what an Indian might like to drink. What deals and information are they using to influence their decisions. Unfortunately Coca-Cola's intent is not to genuinely supply people with a tasty beverage to fulfill their belief that people have a right to experience the wonderful inventions and concoctions of the world. Basically people (American Coca-Cola) who don't spend time in a particular community (India) don't know or care for what the community may not only need, but just flat out want. I'm not knocking the genuine idea of informing another community from one's own about a new drink that one thinks other people would like. If we even can, how could we regulate what messages get promoted across cultures and communities. And at what point is a cultural practice hindering a possible social (Maybe health in context with dietary education) development.

For you to agree with me as to your environment not being conducive for you to be able to impact it physically via a visual sign is that you are taking into account a couple things. What you've been told since you've existed in this society is that you need to go through the legal bureaucracies and money arrangements to claim a billboard or advertisement. Another thing you take into account is how you would be treated if you chose to ignore the legal bureaucracies, an example would be the possibility of being spotted by the police while putting up your sign. So the last thing I can think of that does not make your situation conducive would not only be fear of your "neighbor" seeing you commit the action, but also the fear you possess yourself, you become a witness to your own "crime." (Othering yourself, "Othering" as verb, a self surveillance) You become the first obstacle implemented by a societal conditioning that has told you what's



Poets gather in front of Powell's Books. Image: N. Tiso

"right" about "public" manipulation. This text aims to articulate some ideas as to how to make you, those around you, and your environment easier to manipulate to you and your community's desires.

Guy Debord spoke of how a "commoditized" (Divided) cultural existence only allows particular kinds of experience, thus a limited potential of experience through out day-to-day possibilities. The example of the 9-5 labourer has a home, a work place, and a social venue of some sort, whether that social venue be for grocery shopping or the local pub. In a commoditized culture, the venues for dissensus must be sparse, unnoticed or not allowed in order for "capitalism" to have developed as it has. What Guy Debord was attempting (simplified) was bringing the experience or knowledge to the venues that wouldn't have otherwise been able to house. (Let alone want to) Steeped and raised inside our material fetishizations, our capitalist framework, we have splintered off from socially conducive activities, we have separate living with individualized borders, we receive separate checks and separate tables when we go out to eat. We are culturally not interested in helping each other out. Guy Debord suggests an immediate intervention with a mindfulness of aesthetic properties as a means to inflict on people in very abrupt yet specific ways. Let's take the "Sidewalk" for example, one of the most populated and "public" terrains one could find. This is also a terrain that when used, people have a lot of behaviors that they aren't even aware of, even if they are aware they may do nothing to change the behavior. (Auto-Pilot) An example of being conscious of your actions and not doing anything to change them is how people generally deal with "homeless" people in the street. There is a behavior that seeks to ignore them; people without a "Home" are hard to look at, to see us in a similar situation, as a possibility of our own is undesirable. This practice begins to negate a possible dissensus, what it might start to be like to not ignore people, to hear that they would prefer to be warm rather than sleeping under a bridge.

This is where Situationism seeks to be of use, that a "Live" public media announcement be made in person. In today's context, with so

much media saturation in our "Public" spheres, our public displays must be contrasted in relation to the specific terrain you seek to manipulate. If you seek to manipulate a space where people are moving fast then one's aesthetic production must be still or slow. If some one is bustling on their 15 minute lunch break in midtown Manhattan, hurrying on a multi lane crowded sidewalk, and is suddenly forced to navigate around some one not moving, on their knees, positioned in the middle of the sidewalk. The moment that the person has to navigate around the person kneeling on the sidewalk is very important. Let's say this person kneeling has their mouth open, (as if screaming) their eyes closed, and hands tied behind they're back. Even if it's for a brief moment in passing that the pedestrian on their 15 minute lunch break has to change they're perceived path, and in that changing of trajectory, they are left with a social interaction that they can't "tame" in their minds. What I mean is that at some point after the situation, the person provides themselves with an anecdote as to what that social "interaction" meant. I.e. why that person was kneeling on the sidewalk.

The positioning you and your fellow Comrades decide on must bear in mind the sight specificity to the space. Researching the space becomes incredibly important, both "at home" research as well as "in the field" research. Do a lot of police patrol the area, is the infrastructure that of big business or do people live in the space. These are variables that must impact the decision making process for designing the situation. If your performance idea seeks to give a representation in America for foreign factory workers of Nike, then why not conduct the operation in front of a Nike store. Or in front of a legislative building that continually enables and endorses Corporations to "Export" labour for cheaper production costs. By situating yourself in front of a Nike store, (for example) and attempting to provide a "voice" for those that become the cost for Nike to exist, you are providing a possible dissensus from the general media that surrounds the Nike store. The situation that is created in front of the store is directed to impact the workers of the store directly, while causing more of a stir so that higher management will have to get involved and "deal" with you. If

you cause enough of a stir, then maybe you'll get some media attention, so that the amount of people who have to deal with your action may be big. That doesn't mean that most of them will have interacted with your work how you needed them to, except for the people who came into direct contact with you or your troupe. The people who are going to potentially be "fucked" by your performance are the ones who will have if any the most profound interpretations of your action, because their physical body brushed past yours.

When deciding on a position, map out how the space is used, where the streams of pedestrian traffic are, and where the entrances and exits are (when thinking of public streets and alleys). Is there an entrance, a funnel, a hot spot? Target it. Think of the physical logistics of the space: where can you be seen from, whether people can be hindered physically in navigating around your space. Is it wheel chair accommodating, in that observation reveals an almost hidden political belief that is supported by the space? Think about it.

Let me divulge into a little bit of my experience with New York City street hustlers, or what quaint Olympia beautifully calls "busking." Smart hustlers will do a few of the following when setting up a certain positioning on a sidewalk. The items for sale will be laid out on a blanket which rests on the sidewalk and the hustler's back will be propped up against a parked car with the blanket laid out in front of them (with the hustler facing away from car traffic). This gives the illusion to drivers that the person leaning on the parked car is A. in front of their work place, or B. or just hanging out in front of where they live. "Homeless" buskers blend in less, which is why a lot of "Homeless" buskers in New York will sit on the floor, not only because they may position themselves there for an 8 hour work day (thus they must sit down), but also because sitting down hides them better from cops while remaining in the public eye. Another thing I want to relate between what kind of aesthetic logistics should be recognized and how people hustle items in the street is how collapsible the set up is. Thus going back to the blanket that is under the items for sale can be grabbed up by all four corners and moved not only quickly, but keeping the materials for sale

hidden inside of a pillow case looking sack. The aesthetic properties of your situation should be mobile, otherwise you raise the chances of being shut down all together. I'm not saying that you should avoid actions that require one (and hopefully many) to make a stand. All I'm saying is that if your theatre can be mobile, or have little set up, then that opens up where you can do it, and how many times you will be confronted by police, yet continue to operate. (I.e. "of course we can move, Officer. We'll just cross the street.")

A protest that must be deciphered in order for it to be recognized as a protest is, to me, a situationist production. This is not how most protests have ever been conducted. Protest rhetoric has always been to mobilize as many as possible while blaring a clear set of demands. For centuries, the dramatic protest meant it was loud and that the causes for why the protesters were there were summarized onto signs and banners (to make a clear visual statement for non-protesters passing by). By being clear in your sign as to why you're there while strapping it to a stick so you can raise the sign above your head for it to be seen, with the font size of the signage being big for an obvious interpretation. In this day and age, this is detrimental to the protestor's ideal of mobilizing in the street. To code the messaging of the sign would be an attempt to invite for individual criticism from onlookers. What I mean by detrimental to the ideological prompts that initiate a gesture such as public mobilization of a like minded force, is that the like minded want to cultivate more people into they're mass via educating them on the issues that have brought forth the mobilization to begin with. So if a protestor has a sign that says "NO BLOOD FOR OIL"; some one who sees that sign will write you off in they're own mind as some one protesting the war. Therefore you are interpreted as having nothing to teach the onlooker about the war, I mean shit, everyone "Knows" about the war, right? Yet our argument (as protestors) would clarify what it is about the war that is known, and what it is about the war that should be represented when a capitalist engine revs the old yet ever consistent war pipes. I propose that

continued on  
opposite page

## Poet-Activism, continued from page 4

Reading the poem was far different, in this case, than writing it. It felt, ironically, like a more direct form of address to read to these people in an environment constructed to facilitate the rituals of the private person-commodity (thru marble hallways into low-end malls etc.), than reading in an art gallery was. The public's reaction to our PACE action was, in many ways, identical to how the public at a museum or gallery reading would react: inaccessibly. It is only that in the streets such a cold reaction to poetry or art is more viscerally exposed and becomes spectacular.

It was precisely the severity of this juxtaposition between art/life, and the pain of existing as the conductor of that contrast in real-time, that paradoxically accounted for the emotional power of this event. That is why if the public responds with a lack of interaction and a surplus of spectatorship to a PACE action-experiment, by no means is it a failure. Failure is a part of the success of art.

Each one has a thick shell they're reluctant to crack. Each one driven by wants. Each one worried about tomorrow. Each one with or without bread on the table. Each one walking past me lost in the illusion of their isolate circumstance, with a kind of fear in their eyes. Each one I love very much. And we symbolized a brief "we" within them, some fodder for gossip about Portland weirdo's later at the dinner table, perhaps, or something more sinister or impregnating, even.

I mean it when I say reading in public like this felt intimate. I felt the poem as really living up to the emotional impasse it faced, about how to be pedagogic without being patronizing or paternalistic or pedantic,

## Streets, continued from opposite page

the sign should imply that something is going on amongst the bodies of protestors that some one passing by should investigate. Basically, the signs should be prompting investigation towards the operating bodies if anything is to be understood. I'm really strict on this point: I mean no icons, no Anarchy symbols, and no monkey wrenches. These bear associations that today detract from the meaning we would want people to understand. Everyone knows about the war right? Everyone knows what Anarchy is. We've all heard of it, so therefore you provide me nothing new. An example would be if a protestor is reading out from a text, then the sign another protestor carries should be holding something that reads "LOOK" or maybe "LISTEN." This is a way to not give yourself away too early to communicate with someone who disagrees with you; this is a way to lure them into your educational exercise or experience. In public, to demonstrate or recite text is very hard due to the auditory competition that occurs. If the situation you procure has "vocalizing language" aspects then there is little help I can provide besides thinking about how to prompt investigation by the pedestrians via signage.

Yet there are a couple of things we can learn from (UH-OH! Brace yourself!) the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations and situational creations. One thing I found to be particularly interesting was the use of "The People's Mic." Occupy Wall St. spawned from different Anarchistic models and has unique Anarchistic tendencies due (in large part) to who was instrumental in the early organizational processes that brought the first occupations into fruition. The movement being "leaderless" promotes that any one can provide skepticisms to the entire group to impact group decisions and process. This can be hard to do physically due to the sheer turnout

by addressing that skepticism in the mind of the reader and trying to—in a kind of appeal to shared moral values, to a desire for peace—defuse those fears guarding us from accessing one another's sentimental and erogenous interiors:

It's ok, I'm confused too, and know you might not be convinced to join this upswell of the repressed returned to haunt them the 1%. Maybe you wonder what the pay-off is or can't afford to be hunted down when you've got jobs to keep & mouths to feed.

As a poem it performs a kind of sentimental outreach. It juggles the need to both appeal to skeptics & cynics nevertheless of the 99%, while also converting that disenchanting outlook characteristic of the modern subject into a more optimistic, involved position, such that they might come to sympathize with or even join the Occupation. Again, that the poem failed at actually doing this by no means negates the awesomeness of the attempt.

After this whole experience I had with my poem, Gabe lead in reading excerpts from Theresa Hak Kyung

It's ok, I'm confused too, and know you might not be convinced to join this upswell of the repressed returned to haunt them the 1%. Maybe you wonder what the pay-off is or can't afford to be hunted down when you've got jobs to keep & mouths to feed.

Cha's *Dictee* (Tanam Press 1982), an image-text novel documenting the body's resilient unwillingness to being colonized. Then David and Elizabeth arrived. David brought a really great poem David wrote in response to a Rodney Kocik quote; it was about capitalism and the body, and was all at once haunting, ironic, tender, analytic.

of participants. The People's Mic is a tool designed to keep everyone in the mass, in on and current with the conversation of whoever is talking. With the "People's Mic," there must first be a speaker who says three to four words in their sentence but then allows for a gap in the sentence so that the crowd who heard what the speaker said, can now relay to the outlying crowd what was said. This obviously takes a while to get through, but the result is that everyone will hear what that one person just said. So if we have a text that is a personal account of a worker from a Nike-owned factory, I'd say let's get it out there, let's get it heard. That if someone wrote about their own experience, or were down to be interviewed, represents a notion that the worker wants others to interact with what that worker has gone through. The "People's Mic" is a great way to cause an auditory disturbance, yet remember that it is what it is. People will get very annoyed very quickly if a "People's Mic" erupted in a library, or anywhere else inside to that effect. The tool has its best effect out in the streets, where unlike in an institution or establishment, they would be less likely to listen to what you have to say, due to the contrasting nature of your actions.

The most important challenge for me to think about when designing "public" acts, is that it's an ever-evolving field of constraints. A tactic that works in one specific place will not have anywhere near the same effects elsewhere, although multiple places may have irrefutable similarities (e.g. a business chain.) Yet because the "act" that one might design must contrast in some way with the place in which it takes place, there is as much potential as to what this form can initiate as there are places in the world. Art's role in our American society (at the very least) must be a gesture of the social, an acknowledgement of privilege within and inside of the "Art" itself. Since these public productions are designed to propel a social idea, the idealism behind the action is that of an intervention towards the specific public place. A writer, theorist, and

It made fun of earth day and contained pornographic innuendo. Croft read it aloud with great delivery in terms of timing 'oratorical bundles' to match up with David's punch lines.

Sometime during all this hullabaloo the Powell's bookstore manager came out and told us we had to step about five feet backward off their property, back onto the public sidewalk. We asked if he'd like a broadside. He said no. I'll refrain from commenting on the ludicrous irony of a lefty bookshop being against hosting an admittedly impromptu reading. Later a non-managerial store clerk came and asked what we were doing and took a broadside, and was generally supportive, so it's really just the bookshop bosses who don't like reading, for the record.

The reactions of the shoppers/passersby around us consisted mostly of indifference or disavowal of listening; a stiffening like of a trying to resist having a reaction, but maybe inwardly trembling, etc. People don't really care if you read poetry to them; they are too busy shopping and are afraid of having their routine interrupted, so they fight against attending to your irruptiveness (the punk in me gets off on this making

a spectacle of their "consumer happiness").

I changed my mind about people not caring when you read to them in public. I think they care they're just not allowed to show it or act like they do, and it's those conditions of a laboring/consumptive society preventing the reception of poetry (or of the non-

activist David Graeber speaks of such poetic actions as having never had the effect that the architects of the action wanted. "The sky never opened" as it were: people didn't stop being fascist and continued to elect fascist representatives even in the midst of certain emerging theories, as well as independent medias. (Guerilla Theatre, Journals etc.). Yet something that even Graeber (Who had an important hand in organizing the first Occupy encampment) misses in that analysis is that during this wave of "Public" Occupations are the multiple facets that were made visible by the demonstration of living publicly. There are people out there that quit their jobs as numbers of demonstrators increased. As the perceived support for such an individual seemed to grow, it became a more possible action to walk away from one's job. I'm not saying that people left their Wall St. jobs like wildfire, but just that there are people who traded their mega corp. jobs for an undetermined future. A decision like that being made comes from a new assertion of an impacted consciousness, prompted by the "Situation" of having to pass "Homeless" homes every day before and after work. For me to be implicating Situationism in the Occupy demonstrations is to articulate to people that the "messaging" was and is very clear (though the amount of bodies operating on a national scale already evinces cohesion). The general media's language relies on a privileged "academic" lens, that in of itself becomes a criteria maker. By not seeing the Situation of people living publicly as being its own language of communication, people found themselves confused when trying to translate the situational experience to an academic language of "rationality". Therefore, the public's actions are being understood as irrational as far as general medias were concerned. They tried and asserted understandings based on whether what was conveyed from the situational experience could be plugged into our "academic" lens.

If you thought there is some art that doesn't speak to a certain Political practice, then you are surely wrong.

necessary, non-saleable) that we addressed, uncomfortably.

Were our poems able to receive them, the people?

After hanging around Powell's we decided to move into the heart of the downtown area, but before we left Gabe smuggled some of my broadsides into the magazine rack at Powell's and Croft inconspicuously wedged that CLASS WAR—OCCUPY NOW sign pictured above in the street-facing display window. Then, we walked to Pioneer Place Square. A large Christmas tree was being erected in the square and festooned with lights. A crass manger for Santa was also under construction.

We regrouped at the intersection of SW 6th and Morrison, planning our next move. David wanted to be mock-arrested, hands cuffed behind back with zip-ties and all, like a detained subject. I believe David read poetry from this position; I was across the street at the time. We decided to do a reading across the intersection, from one side to the other, and split ourselves accordingly. We were also offering various broadsides/flyers to passersby (one with actual Blockade information/directions to Port site).

Our eventual positioning at Pioneer Place Square (a consumer/municipal nexus) was a three-phase (in groups of two each approx.) human mic poetry chain, from one major street corner to the other (at times interrupted by the light-rail system), amidst a dense urban crowd. This discursive tactic allowed us to relay our poems across larger swaths of city space than would be ordinarily possible. Thus the poem sprung from differently oriented bodies in space, or was in other words a somatic/spatial, not just semantic, phenomenon, and both demonstrated and constructed a solidarity among speakers.

On a core level this action was about my friends and I coming together and strengthening our relationships with each other and thru that, forming an artistic community. What the Occupy movement showed us is that revolution happens through interaction. Sharing poems

Yet in the maw of our buried America somewhere in that sick terrain of deranged rhetorics mixing terror into amber waves of grain I know, even amidst the hopelessness of being able to be myself (or all the more because of this?) an inclusive 'we' is holding out, waiting to exist

## Further Reading

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# URGENT Divest URGENT

## TESC DIVEST!

is part of an international movement campaigning to end the occupation of Palestine and systematic oppression of its people. Currently, DIVEST! is working to gain support for the divestiture of American companies who assist in the ongoing civil liberty violations against Palestinians at the hands of the American and Israeli military. Alongside Jewish Voice for Peace, American Friends Service Committee and the campaign WE DIVEST, DIVEST! hopes to spread awareness on the importance of ending financial support to these companies, and how one can make a difference on a local and national level.

### TIAA-CREF

is one of America's largest financial servicers, has the ability to choose where to invest the funds of those employees and citizens using its services.

### TESC

currently uses TIAA to manage the retirement funds of faculty. Money from our own community is at the disposal of TIAA. These funds are financing an assortment of corporations who not only assist the American and Israeli militaries in their occupational exploits, but also see direct economic benefits from Israel's ongoing subjugation of Palestine.

A collection of corporations supported by TIAA-CREF and some grievances against them:

#### Northrop Grumman

produces mechanical parts used in the making of Apache helicopters and F-16 aircrafts. These aircrafts were used against Gaza civilians by the Israeli military during the 2008-09 assaults.

#### Caterpillar

produces the armor plated and weaponized bulldozers used in demolition work against Palestinian homes, orchards and land.

#### Veolia

Involved in the construction and expansion of illegal Jewish only settlements, exploits Palestinian natural resources to serve illegal Jewish only settlements, is currently contracting for the future operation of an illegal light rail system connecting said Jewish settlements with Jerusalem

#### Elbit

provides surveillance equipment used on the "Separation Wall" – an act declared unlawful by the International Court of Justice

#### Motorola Solutions

Assists in restricting Palestinian population by supplying surveillance equipment used around Israeli settlements, checkpoints and military camps in the West Bank; Supplies communication systems to the Israeli army and West Bank settlers

#### Hewlett-Packard

Provide maintenance and support to biometric ID systems used in Israeli checkpoints to systematically deprive Palestinians of freedom of movement. These systems also control information granting or denying special privileges to those in its database.

## DIVEST!, The Evergreen State College and a democratic let down

In 2010, TESC student body became the first in the nation to democratically decide on a boycott of all products produced by companies benefiting from the occupation of Palestine. An election on the matter was held in the spring of that year and the voter turnout set a record at Evergreen – it was also more than double the average turnout in student elections nationwide.

Two resolutions were passed:

- A call for the financial divestment from companies profiting off of the Israeli occupation of Palestine
- A call for the creation of a "CAT Free Zone" prohibiting the use of Caterpillar Inc. equipment on campus

Although DIVEST! has been widely well received on a local, national and international level, the collective has encountered strong resistance from those one might expect to respect such a popular movement – TESC Board of Trustees. Despite an overwhelming effort on behalf of TESC student body, the Board of Trustees has refused to recognize the popular call to end support of companies used in the Israeli occupation. Contrarily, the

### Evergreen Board of Trustees has:

Stood in solidarity with the Israeli General Consulate and various pro-Israel lobbying groups.

Dismissed and ignored student representative input during the drafting of the passifying and inadequate Social Responsible Investment Policy

Produced written statements vowing NOT to uphold the student vote to boycott pro-Israel products

The actions by the Evergreen Board of Trustees have shown the TESC student body, and the Olympia community, that they want of the people will not be met without a strong demand.

### How Can YOU Help?

The great thing about BDS is that everyone can participate. From lobbying to direct action to simply making informed choices as to where you spend your money, making an effort is the most important step one can take. We need students interested in organizing film screenings, attending lectures by guest speakers, making zines, taking photos, writing articles, and pressuring the administration to respect campus democracy. Working together, we will continue to build momentum and demand that those in power listen to the student body. New members are always needed, and maintaining a strong and sustainable student voice on campus is essential. Please join TESC Divest in helping to bring hope to those who need it and justice to those who deserve it.

For more information, visit us at  
tescdinvest.org