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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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It is my great pleasure to deliver to you the first issue of *Superscript*, the online newsletter of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia.

The launching of *Superscript* marks a commitment on the part of GSAS to renew its connection and communication with the almost thirty-five thousand members of the school’s alumni community as well as with its current students. Many of you have expressed your desire to know what is going on in the graduate school—our projects, initiatives, and aspirations; others are curious about the work, profiles, and needs of our current graduate students; and current students would like to know what is happening in GSAS outside their departments and programs. *Superscript* will fulfill your desires to stay in touch and to be informed of what is taking place in graduate education at your university.

Each issue will consist of a miscellany of features and information that we hope will give you a sense of the many facets of the graduate enterprise at Columbia and of the diverse interests, achievements, and concerns of our alumni and graduate communities.

These are exciting times for GSAS at Columbia. During the academic year that just ended, we announced an enhancement plan for financial aid that will place our doctoral students on a par with those at our peer institutions and provide resources for the creation of a graduate center at Columbia; we implemented a revision of our parental leave policy that makes it the most generous and comprehensive of all such policies in the Ivy-plus institutions; we limited the number of years that a student may spend in pursuit of the doctoral degree. Finally, the GSAS Alumni Association rewrote its by-laws and refashioned its governing board to become more representative of the rich diversity of our alumni population and to underscore its dedication to the well-being of our students.

There are still, of course, many challenges ahead. But I assure you that we at GSAS will tackle them with renewed imagination and vigor. We hope that you will want to be a part of this stimulating present and of this emerging future, both of which will be chronicled for you in the pages of *Superscript*.
A student learns about his great-grandfather through his studies at the Graduate School.
ROSS Ufberg’s interests in literature and language have taken him from Hamilton College to Yale to St. Petersburg and even the deserts of Israel, where he spent six months practicing Hebrew in conversation with his fellow goatherds. He did not expect those interests to take him home.

Ufberg first learned about his great-grandfather after his grandmother’s death in 2009, when he returned home to Pennsylvania to find a box of his great-grandfather’s belongings. No one in the family quite knew what to do with it, but when Ufberg began to sort through its contents he discovered what he describes as “a whole world.” It held his great-grandfather’s literary life—diaries, manuscripts, published collections of short stories, poems—nearly all of it in Yiddish.

Ufberg’s scholarly work and research until that time primarily concentrated on Russian and Polish immigrant literature. Yiddish was on the periphery of his studies. Ufberg felt this was unfortunate and had planned to one day explore the language. He believes language unveils the nuances of a culture, and “it was a shame that I knew so much about some cultures and not this, which is so funny and interesting.” The discovery of his great-grandfather’s work gave Ufberg an incentive to delve into the language as part of his Ph.D. in Slavic Languages. He is now studying Yiddish at the Jewish Theological Seminary and has begun the slow process of translating his great-grandfather’s work into English.

Ufberg’s great-grandfather wrote under the pen name Talmed Metumtam (Learned Fool). He was born in the Molgilev Province of the Russian Empire, now Belarus, in the 1890s. He kept a journal throughout his youth, chronicling his childhood in the shtetl, including observations about his first unrequited love, Rosa Cohen, when he was about ten years old. That year, Rosa dressed as a Russian Cossack for Purim, and Metumtam lovingly described her in his diary: “She was wearing a long thin
moustache, drawn above her lip, like a thin graceful crown upon her mouth.” Little nuggets like these, peppered in the text, are what Ufberg particularly loves coming across. They are “like gold,” he says with a smile.

Metumtam immigrated to New York City’s Lower East Side around 1911. The neighborhood was the heart of American Yiddish culture and a good place for a young Yiddish writer like Metumtam to find work. He worked at various newspapers, published in journals, and formed a small literary group called Die Absurd-elekh (The Absurd Ones). His first collection of short stories was published in 1915. The short story “The Magic Backwards” (1926) catapulted him into the public eye, winning him recognition in Europe. During the course of his literary career, Metumtam would write nearly 300 short stories and one novel. He won the Chambermaid Prize in Potsdam twice, in 1929 and 1946.

Metumtam’s work is now largely unknown because the culture in which he wrote no longer exists. The Second World War destroyed the Yiddish-speaking population in Europe, and by the 1950s Yiddish culture in America was beginning to fade. As Ufberg describes it, “Yiddish simply went out of fashion. One daily newspaper, once quite a large publication, was reduced to once a week. Eventually its articles were replaced by obituaries, mostly.” Not only were the children of immigrants moving from the Lower East Side to New York’s outer boroughs and beyond, but the Yiddish-speaking audience was literally dying off as well. With no audience, Metumtam’s literary career came to an end. By the late 1940s, he could no longer make a living as a writer. He joined the scrap metal business and died of a heart attack in 1954.

When asked why his great-grandfather did not continue to write in English, Ufberg thinks a moment before responding. “I think Yiddish was such a big part of him, I’m not sure he would have been able to find what he was looking for in English.” Because of this, Ufberg feels a great responsibility when translating his great-grandfather’s work. Metumtam’s stories are “a snapshot of culture in New York in the early 1900s. His story “Going to See the Elephant” describes a hotel in Coney Island that was literally a huge elephant. Because of its shape, there were many nooks and crannies where couples could meet. It quickly became a house of ill repute, and the phrase ‘going to see
the elephant’ entered the language on the street as a way to say you were visiting a prostitute.”

For Ufberg, what makes translation so challenging is keeping true to the work, trying to create a document that will stand as a witness to the time and culture of the writer. But it is also what he finds most rewarding. “I love translating. I get to hang out with these people who led really interesting lives and have amazing stories to tell.” Ufberg is also working on the autobiography of Polish writer Marek Hlasko. “He was the James Dean of Polish literature. His autobiography is a catalogue of everyone he wrote with, met with, got drunk with, and went to jail with in the 1950s.” This is good reading, but Ufberg finds he identifies more with Metumtam. It is difficult to study the work of one’s relative without being curious about one’s own connection to the writer’s characteristics and style. Ufberg has found his great-grandfather to be funny and frenetic, a bit of a performer—something he sees in himself. “At times, I can get overly excited, so I think he may have passed that on to me. And we both have a love of the written word.”

Students often come to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences with the goal of earning a degree that takes them into their future. It is an unexpected discovery to find it can sometimes lead one of them to his past. 

When Moish was nine, he remembers, the sun tickling the back of his neck with its cottony August afternoon-evening fingers, some men began building a mammoth hotel near the beach. When he was ten, it burned down. But for one glorious year Moish would hop on his bicycle and race down the broad streets of Brooklyn—What streets didn’t seem broad then to a skinny little boy on his sister’s bicycle?—and go see the Elephant. Higher than the tower of Babel, wider than the river Nile, too large to fit into Noah’s ancient cruise ship, the Elephant Hotel rose nearly to God’s shoulders, and on the Elephant’s back there was—a what? Was it a pagoda? A café up there? A private viewing space for the city’s rich and famous? Did men go up there and pinch their girlfriends’ fannies, showing them the arc of the ocean in the geometry of their short lives?

It lasted a year and then, by the time he was ten and three months, the Elephant Hotel was like a bad word, an arsoned fairyland that made his mother’s face go sour as a pickle whenever he mentioned it. Today, Moish can fathom what must have gone on there, but then, in his youth, before anybody had ever lifted up his tzitzis—this is how he divided his life—back then he only felt awe at the structure, and fear of the spirits which must have inhabited it.
“She was wearing a long thin moustache, drawn above her lip, like a thin graceful crown upon her mouth.”
Last fall, Professor Márka’s team was awarded a two-year Grand Challenges Explorations grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation worth one million dollars. The grant will allow the team to continue their work on the light-shield phenomenon and the basics of the mosquito’s instinct and sense perception as they observe how variables such as shape and color affect mosquitoes.

by Kristin Balicki

“When you hear a dog barking behind a door, you can’t see the dog but you can tell where the door is, how close the dog is to the door, and sometimes whether it is a large or small dog.” This is how Ph.D. student Imre Bartos describes his work with gravitational waves and black holes. Bartos specializes in astrophysics, the field he discovered in his work as an intern at the California Institute of Technology prior to coming to Columbia to earn his doctorate in physics. As a teaching assistant for several introductory physics courses—including Physics for Poets, a course many undergraduates take to satisfy their Core science requirement—he has become well versed at making his field and research accessible and applicable to others. Because his research focuses on the birth and death of black holes, he finds audience interest in the subject makes the explaining easy. “People love to talk about black holes. They find them familiar and mysterious at the same time.” When asked if he finds it challenging to share his field with students who may have little to no background in the subject, he is quick to defend them. “It is important in our work to be able to communicate and share our ideas with the public, not just scientists.” The students, he says, often give him insight into his own work he would not receive from other channels. More unusual collaborations like these are what fuel and inspire Bartos’s work.
Bartos’s research focuses on finding ways to view black holes by observing cosmic gravitational waves, disruptions in the fabric of space and time. His work is split between lab work—building devices and sophisticated electronics—and data analysis to understand what may be expected and what can actually be seen. The immediate goal is to discover a side of the universe that was traditionally believed to be unobservable. The ultimate goal, as Bartos phrases it, is “to understand the basic ways of creation in the universe as well as things we don’t anticipate.” In other words, the work leads to more questions. This does not bother Bartos. “Science involves answering questions,” he says. “Sometimes the questions come to you. Sometimes you pose them yourself. Sometimes you get them as a gift. I think it is good to wander around and see what questions come up and try to think of how you can answer them.” The best questions often come to the observing scientist unexpectedly.

Such was the case with Bartos’s work with his adviser, Professor Szabolcs Márka. An experimental physicist, Márka uses data analysis and diagnostics to enhance the reach of laser interferometer gravitational wave observatories worldwide. As a member of Márka’s core research team, Bartos meets with his adviser regularly over coffee or beer to discuss ideas, research, and life in general. During one of these conversations Márka proposed using lasers on mosquitoes to prevent the spread of malaria. Saving humanity from mosquito-borne diseases with lasers could seem more science fictional than scientific, but Bartos took the idea seriously. “Professor Márka asked me if I thought it was reasonable to stop mosquitoes with lasers. I went home, did some calculations, and went to see him the next day to tell him that it was reasonable and that I thought it was a great idea.”

The research team set out to develop a system using lasers as a light shield to repel mosquitoes by throwing off their sensory perception. Lasers themselves cannot harm mosquitoes, but the insects perceive them as unsafe. “At a campsite,” Bartos explains, “mosquitoes do not fly into the campfire because they can sense danger. The laser wall might be considered an analogous kind of barrier. Mosquitoes can perceive some kind of danger and they turn away from it as fast as they can.”

The aspect of the work that motivates Bartos most is the broad collaboration. In order to understand how to develop a laser that affects a mosquito’s behavior, one must first understand the mosquito. For this, the team has turned to other fields of science. “As a physicist, it is an interesting experience to see what a biologist is working on and what interests him or her.” By exchanging ideas and sharing information, the scientists continue to enrich and enhance each other’s work, facilitating discoveries not possible in isolation. The phrase “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” stands true; and working with biologists and others on this project has, Bartos observes, brought physicists closer to fundamental science. “It satisfies our curiosity on how genetics and behavior are connected.” Last fall, Professor Márka’s team was awarded a two-year Grand Challenges Explorations grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation worth one million dollars. The grant will allow the team to continue their work on the light-shield phenomenon and...
the basics of the mosquito’s instinct and sense perception as they observe how variables such as shape and color affect mosquitoes. They may also explore in the future the use of lasers with other insects such as flies, wasps, and bedbugs.

Today they are in the process of expanding the mosquito facility. “We are the only animal keepers in the physics building,” Bartos enjoys pointing out. While learning about mosquito behavior and the application of lasers on terrestrial rather than cosmic questions, he has picked up some more unexpected knowledge. The mosquitoes under study in Pupin Hall are an African species and surprisingly fragile in comparison to their American cousins. As a result, Bartos and the research team, while learning a good deal about climate control, have invented new layers of safety measures and ways to stabilize environmental conditions in the insectary. Another thing Bartos has discovered in his work with the insects? “It’s surprising how quickly one learns how to identify male and female mosquitoes [on sight].” Yet another piece of knowledge he can easily explain to nonscientists. 🕷️

Imre Bartos will be graduating from the Physics Ph.D. program later this year. After graduation, he plans to continue his research in both astrophysics and biophysics.
A Cosmopolitan Degree

Faculty in Columbia’s Department of History and the Department of International History at the London School of Economics had collaborated in the past, brought together by shared research and a mutual understanding of how history can play a role in contemporary issues. In 2005 the departments created the Global Public Policy Network, gathering several international universities in a dialogue on public policy in the twenty-first century. It was not long before they entertained the idea of a transatlantic dual master’s degree, a program that would give students a historian’s understanding of globalization, grant them the ability to transcend national and regional boundaries in historical study, and enable a partnership between history, other social sciences, and nonacademic careers. The program would also answer the call for more freestanding M.A. degrees in history—generally a Ph.D.-oriented field.
While graduates of this new program might enter doctoral programs, they would also be prepared for professions in journalism, government, business, and the like. The logistics of setting up such a program and getting it approved and accredited on both sides of the ocean were difficult to see to fruition, but the result was worth it: a two-year dual-degree program in International and World History, launched in 2008. Students spend the first year in New York and the second in London, earning an M.A. at Columbia and an M.Sc. at LSE. When it began, it was one of only two master’s programs in history operated jointly by an American and a foreign university.

Three years have passed and the program has steadily grown, drawing students from diverse backgrounds. Sally Davies and Krzysztof Kosmicki are in their first year of the program at Columbia. Davies, a native of Perth, Australia, was working as a litigation lawyer before moving to the United States for her studies. She had interests in academia and journalism but wanted to test graduate study before making a final decision about her career. Kosmicki enrolled for similar reasons. Originally from Denver, he earned his undergraduate degree in international and political economy from the University of Puget Sound before joining Teach for America. He knew he wanted to be involved in education, but was unsure about teaching at the postsecondary level.

Both students say they were attracted to the unique structure of the program and the opportunity to earn degrees at two renowned universities. “There is nothing comparable to the scope this program gives you,” Davies states; she appreciates studying history beyond limited geographic boundaries and in connection with other disciplines. As Kosmicki explains, “We need to start accounting for how this phenomenon of globalization took place and . . . a stateist perspective does not give a researcher analytical flexibility.” For Davies, one of the strengths of the program is the general flexibility of study at Columbia and the ability of the student to pursue her own interests by taking elective courses outside the field of history. Davies has taken courses at the School of the Arts and the School of Journalism, something she would not have been able to do in more traditional programs. In this way, she says the program uses history in an engaged and contemporary way.

Professor Volker Berghahn, acting academic director of the program at Columbia, agrees. “Historians always feel that history is not just an archaic subject, but—especially in the social sciences these days—it can be quite helpful to other disciplines to have a historical dimension.” The variety of student interest is illustrated by the topics of their theses: leprosy in Indochina, drug trafficking in Hong Kong, the UN Outer Space
Treaty of 1967, and Britain’s view of Watergate. Kosmicki is doing research on the Cuban revolution using “the process of transnational history, where you can look at the history of country A through the lens of country B. So I will be using the processes of the time period within the United States to rewrite the history of the Cuban revolution, and the processes within Cuba to rewrite our understanding of events in America.” Davies’s thesis is more interdisciplinary, bringing journalism and art into her work on the intellectual history of the World Press Photo competition. She will address “the way in which people’s responses to images have changed over time and what that says about our changing conception of photography as either an aesthetic medium . . . or something that has political and moral consequences.” She hopes her research will add to the academic conversation between scholars of literature, communication, and the media about the effect of photography on human empathy.

Along with the flexibility of the program, Davies also cites the standards of the program as one of its best qualities. It demands that students live up to high academic expectations; in fact, the requirements of the program give them little choice. Students often take foreign language courses on top of a full load of core courses and electives, and they all spend the summer between the academic years in New York and London in either the completion of preliminary research or intensive language study abroad. It is, as Davies phrases it, “a 22-month sprint.” Line Lillevik, the executive director of the program, describes it as a “boot camp.” She and Berghahn agree that one of the major challenges of the program is a “double culture shock”: adjustment to New York and London and to intensive graduate study that does not give one a chance to pause until graduation. “The initial workload was nothing short of terrifying,” says Evan Pheiffer, a student in his second year at LSE. An indirect result of such intensity is the building of academic confidence and ability. Berghahn explains that the first year at Columbia was set up to ensure that students could read primary sources in languages other than English and embark fully on the thesis by the time they arrive in London.

The pedagogy of the two departments is well suited for a program that begins at Columbia and ends at LSE. Columbia’s emphasis is on a broader study of the subject, so that the student can explore the field through electives and hone in on particular interests. LSE, Lillevik and Berghahn explain, is more specialized in its approach and curriculum, so it is appropriate for students to be concentrating on the thesis by the time they
move to London. The students in the program have also noted the difference in pedagogy. LSE, they say, is focused more on research and on the answering of a specific question, whereas Columbia is more classroom based and teaches students how to find and formulate a question.

The move to LSE, Evan Pfeiffer states, “could not have been easier, though the gray of East London takes some getting used to.” Pfeiffer came to the program after teaching and traveling in Asia and the Southern Cone of South America. “I wanted to continue my studies at a more rigorous level . . . and eventually obtain a deeper understanding of why the world looks the way it does.” Pfeiffer is working on his thesis about the 1980 political assassination of former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza in Paraguay. He spent his summer between New York and London conducting research in Asunción and Buenos Aires. When asked about the transition to LSE, Pfeiffer explains that while it was smooth, it was not without some challenges. The library system was a bit baffling and the scholarly abilities of his fellow graduate students different from those at Columbia, but the “professors are great . . . the squash courts are free . . . and the cafeteria serves a good curry.” As current and former grad students know, there is more to the graduate student experience than research and study.

While the students all discussed their desire to plunge into challenging graduate work, they were also enthusiastic about another big draw: location. New York City and London are world-class, cosmopolitan cities, perfect for students who want to study inter- and intranational subjects and possibility enter global careers. Davies explains: “I’ve always enjoyed the experience of study and not just the act of studying, so it is really important to be in a vibrant city—the extracurricular informs my study in a way that is really productive.” Pfeiffer agrees: “You’re here to learn [more] about history, but also to develop meaningful relationships, explore new continents, and enjoy yourself... Learning and enjoying yourself needn’t be a zero-sum game.”

Now that three years have passed and the program is established, Berghahn says plans are to “generate synergies between LSE and Columbia by adding collaborative seminars, visiting professorships, and increased exchanges of students and faculty.” The hope is for such developments to spawn joint research projects, fortify the collaboration between the universities, and further push the study of history beyond boundaries defined by location and academic ideology.
A Teller of Tales
by Kristin Balicki

There was a time when, asked what she did for a living, Pegi Vail would reply according to her audience: teacher, curator, filmmaker. She has since consolidated her jobs into one. “Anthropology is the thread through all of them, so I just say I’m an anthropologist.” Vail teaches in the Department of Anthropology, serves on the curatorial board of The Moth—an organization in the city dedicated to the art of storytelling—and is simultaneously preparing a book on backpackers in Bolivia for publication and in postproduction of her first feature-length documentary. Five days after her interview for this article, she left the country as a guest lecturer on a three-week National Geographic–Smithsonian study/travel tour with Columbia alumni. Unlike some who leave behind former interests when they change careers, Vail collects new ones while keeping the old.
Vail was an installation painter at various museums in the city when she discovered the Culture and Media Ph.D. program at NYU, which focused on visual anthropology, an area that combined her interests in culture, art, and history. Where it would lead her, she didn’t consider. “I wasn’t thinking of a particular career. I was just a voracious learner and was excited to find all my interests in one program.” Her research examined indigenous media, particularly the politics and distribution of funding for Native American filmmakers. Vail’s interest in visual anthropology and film stemmed from her experiences making Super 8 films of her Williamsburg neighborhood and of her travels abroad. Her first short film, *The Dodgers Symphony* (1998), documented a small group of fans who shared a love of the Brooklyn baseball team and an utter lack of musical skill. Popular at home games and across Brooklyn, they continued to perform long after the team moved to Los Angeles in 1958. Vail knew nothing of the Symphony until she learned that two of her neighbors were former members of the band. “Every block has a story, and this was ours.” The film aired repeatedly on PBS/WNET and is now available online. Having found a subject within her own neighborhood, Vail began to consider focusing her anthropological lens on a social community of her own: backpackers.

Vail’s current research focuses on political economy and tourism in the developing world and on how travel stories in various media shape expectations of destinations and of the tourist experience. Her interest in travel began at the age of four when her parents took her on her first trip on the Staten Island Ferry. A trip to visit a friend in London after graduating from college solidified the thrill of being somewhere new and sparked years of work and travel around the world. The excitement still shows when she talks of her experiences. “I was hooked on movement and discovery.” Several passports and more than sixty countries later, Vail began to take notice of the impact that tourism had on native cultures and landscape. Ko Pha Ngan in Thailand was especially shocking: She had gone there when it was an island of pristine beaches, but now it is a major backpacker’s destination famous for its all-night, full-moon parties. When she returned years later, the island was nearly unrecognizable, having undergone what Vail calls “touristic globalization.” “When I saw the changes, I was thinking this is just like the unbelievable level of gentrification of my neighborhood in Williamsburg.” Both developments involve the same issues of class and economy, both vastly alter local culture and environment, and both begin with only a few people. “There were some places where I was among the first wave of travelers into an area. But it is because we did that that the industry ultimately followed.” Although tourism is one of the top industries in the world, including it in the general discussion of globalization and its effects is not common. Vail believes this is because it is viewed as “too leisurely” for serious examination. She aims to change that, bringing tourism into the conversation on globalization by focusing on the development of tourist destinations through story. “I want to follow, from start to finish, a few stories to show how word of mouth travels all around the world.”

Vail’s upcoming book, *Right of Passage*, follows her research on backpackers in Bolivia. Backpackers, she says, are often the first group to visit a particular location as tourists. They make a destination appear safe and often are the first to share tales with others of their experiences. Such low-budget travel is also
often viewed by long-term backpackers as a rite of passage, a way to explore the world and themselves prior to settling into careers and family. They are a younger crowd—the average age of long-term backpackers is 26—and they travel to mark a period of change in their lives, like Israelis after their military service or British students on a gap year, or because it is an instilled part of their home culture, like in Australia and New Zealand for example.

Vail’s first feature documentary, *Gringo Trails*, supplements her book by following the experiences of travelers and locals in Thailand, Bolivia, and West Africa through their travel stories from the 1970s to the present. The film is in its final stages of production and is due for release in 2012—a bit behind schedule, Vail admits. “That’s one of the problems with wearing many hats. When you are working on different projects simultaneously, it can become time consuming.”

Her work with backpackers is very different from her work as a guest lecturer for the Columbia Alumni Association’s study/travel trips. The trip with alumni involves travel to multiple locations by private jet, and the contrast to her backpacking experiences couldn’t be starker. “They are the polar opposite of each other,” Vail explains, “but they are equally impactful upon the travel experience and destination. It is just on a different scale. Luxury travelers have more choice on where and how to spend their money.” Among their other destinations, the alumni group will visit Bhutan, where the development of tourism is heavily regulated, preplanned, and policy based in an attempt to control and minimize touristic globalization. Vail hopes to complete some filming there to add to her research.

Once her book and film are launched, Vail will explore adoption, a topic inspired by her own experiences as an adopted child. She would like to complete a longitudinal view of the adoption experience, particularly the aftermath of reunions between adopted children with their biological parents and the effects on relationships between the adopted, the adopting family, and the biological family. She hopes the research will add to the debate on nature vs. nurture and looks forward to expanding the research to include other, more modern, reunion experiences such as those of children conceived through biological donors.

The project on adopted children will be the academic exploration of a very personal topic, and Vail has not hesitated to share her own experiences in her work. The search for her birth parents was the subject of her first public storytelling experience at The Moth, the not-for-profit for which she was a founding board member with friends nearly fifteen years ago and for which she now serves as a curator. Organizing live storytelling events in New York City, The Moth is, in Vail’s words, a “community of supportive listeners.” The idea is that the events should be like “moths to a flame, people coming together to hear and share tales.” The first event was organized in 1997 in an attempt to bring forward the art form of urban storytelling. In the city, “we forget to just stop and listen. To forget everything else and to hear a story is a beautiful thing.” The Moth has grown in scale over the years and has featured such storytellers as Malcolm Gladwell, Salman Rushdie, a pickpocket, and a hot dog eating champion. It has its own radio hour and is podcast on iTunes. When Vail told her story in the American Museum of Natural History’s Rose Planetarium, she found herself initially intimidated by both her setting and the company of fellow storytellers, which that night included Frank McCourt, an astronaut, and a nun. “It was scary, but it was also a fantastic experience because it was just me and my story up there.” And above all, Pegi Vail is a believer in the power of story.
Social Media

How tweeting, posting, and

About the Center for Career Education (CCE) Alumni Services

Columbia University GSAS alumni have access to the Center for Career Education’s counseling and programmatic offerings, including career counseling services; a monthly webinar series on various career topics; workshops and events specifically for alumni; and a range of online career resources. In addition, alumni can connect with other alumni by utilizing the larger general alumni directory and several LinkedIn Columbia alumni groups to seek advice and connections.
According to a 2009 CareerBuilder survey, 45 percent of employers use social media to screen potential job candidates. And this figure is undoubtedly growing. These employers are assessing the applicant’s communication skills and online professionalism before they set up an interview. Furthermore, candidates may be eliminated from an applicant pool simply because they cannot be found online or because the information available does not impress the potential employer. As a consequence, understanding how to strategically use social media, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and blogs, has become an essential job-search skill.

Social media is no longer only for friends and family. It can expand job seekers’ professional networks and allow them to see how their own connections are connected to others. It also allows job seekers to see where they fit in the network of their field and enables them to attract attention and to interact with professional peers in a way previously impossible.

Successful use of social media requires the job seeker to create a clear and coherent personal brand, an online presentation of his or her professional self. There are an infinite number of ways to do this in a technology-driven work environment. It is important to remember, however, that no matter what media and methods one uses, the brand showcases one’s skills, interests, personality, and expertise and how these qualities connect with employer needs.

A brand is individual to each person and should be defined by job seekers themselves. To find the right brand, they need to identify what makes them unique. Identification exercises, psychometric testing, and journaling are some of the ways one can define a brand. Once the brand is formed, job seekers can incorporate it into their social media profiles and contribute to blogs and online discussions to illustrate their knowledge of their field. It should be easy for an employer to see a candidate’s potential value from his or her personal brand and online presence.

Branding should also be included in the traditional job search offline. All job seekers should have an up-to-date résumé and make an effort to meet employers, colleagues, alumni, and others face to face. These components will not disappear but now need to be balanced and supported with an online presence. Many people are not only making sure that the content on their documents support their brand, they are listing blogs, websites, Twitter handles, and LinkedIn URLs as well. Connecting résumés, business cards, and correspondence to a personal brand is important, because it presents a single, focused picture of who the job seeker is and what he or she offers.

When using an online personal brand in such a way, it is important to remember to keep it active even after one is gainfully employed. Maintaining an online presence and expertise enables one to continue to build a network and market value. Some people might find it more effective to make a concerted effort in one or two professional social networks, whereas others might focus their efforts on an industry-specific blog that highlights their knowledge. No matter what one chooses, becoming familiar with more professional networks such as LinkedIn before moving on to another platform is helpful. And if one network doesn’t work, move on to another that does.

By managing an online personal brand and networking on the Internet and in person, jobholders can maintain connections that will serve them in future. It also allows people to assist others with a job search, a valuable way to continue the generosity that may have assisted them in landing their own positions. Online or off, being an active member of a professional community can reap great rewards.
WHAT’S IT WORTH?

by Kristin Balicki

The debate on the purpose, value, place, and future of graduate education is an old one. Over the last four decades, the academy has been evolving, raising questions about the state of education, the future of tenure, and the employment prospects of graduates. The recession has only fueled the debate further, and in recent years journalists, politicians, career counsellors, op-ed contributors, and bloggers have all lent their viewpoints. The overall view of the situation is not cheerful.
Penelope Trunk’s *Brazen Careerist*, a popular career advice blog, calls graduate school outdated. In an increasingly dynamic workforce in which people change careers several times, specializing in a particular field of study is not beneficial. The skills and experiences one acquires in graduate school are not perceived as useful on the job. In a recent article, *The Economist* wrote, “writing lab reports and conducting six-month literature reviews can be surprisingly unhelpful in a world where technical knowledge has to be assimilated quickly and presented simply to a wide audience.” Within the academy, the debate is equally pessimistic. Articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Academe* have discussed concerns ranging from the overproduction of graduates to the reduction of academic positions and lack of career training for nonacademic fields.

A December 2009 report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics listed post-secondary teaching as one of 30 occupations with the highest projected employment growth from 2008 to 2018. But the Modern Language Association noted a 25 percent drop in language and literature job postings from 2008–2009 to 2009–2010, and the American Historical Association declared the 2009 job listings the lowest in a decade. Once the economy recovers, will there be a sudden increase in academic positions? Perhaps, but expected booms in the last 40 years have been disappointing or—as was the case in the mid-1990s—nonexistent. A more likely situation will be a surplus of job candidates created by a flood of recent graduates, and available academic jobs that may be temporary or part time and characterized as “excellence without money,” a phrase coined by Marilee Lindemann, a higher education blogger and associate professor of English at the University of Maryland.

In response to these conditions, there has been a call for reform. *Crisis on Campus* (2010), along with various pieces in the *New York Times* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* by Columbia religion professor Mark Taylor, and Louis Menand’s *Marketplace of Ideas* (2010) have contributed to the debate. What do other members of the GSAS community have to say about the value of graduate education, and how is the Graduate School responding to current student needs?

In conversations about graduate education, not all degrees are of questionable worth. Degrees in the natural sciences and mathematics are often characterized as training for a particular field of research and therefore similar to an M.B.A. or L.L.M., professional degrees that are highly valued in the market. In the debate on graduate education, degrees in the humanities and social sciences are more often questioned, and their “value” is usually defined in two distinct ways: as the direct value of the degree holder’s potential increase in income, and the indirect value of polished transferable skills and knowledge.

Among the Columbia faculty, staff, students, and alumni interviewed, there is agreement across the board that monetary gain is not a guarantee. “In today’s economy, a grad degree is rarely worth it,” states Kory French, an American Studies M.A. student. There is “no promise of employment or higher pay.” Richard Kurz, director of Graduate Student Career Development, agrees. “There’s no certainty that going back to school is going to get you a job or get
you paid a higher salary, because many companies do not know how to price an education.” They are “sceptical of the value.”

In addition, the increasing cost of education works against students who hope to eventually pay off school debt with future earnings. If a student completes a Ph.D. and secures an academic teaching position, there is no certainty of financial stability. French, who hopes to go on to a doctoral program, agrees with this viewpoint. “Teaching at a university will not earn me enough money to own a home, live comfortably (not excessively), and pay up student debt.” A 2009 report by the College Board estimates that the lifetime “earnings premium” for graduate degrees—M.A. and Ph.D.—is $120,000 more than undergraduate degrees alone (based on median 2005 earnings from ages 25–64). Some universities cost upward of $50,000 per year. If the College Board is correct, students who attend expensive private schools may be lucky if they break even on their student debt upon retirement. This is particularly true for M.A. students who do not usually receive much, if any, funding from universities.

In terms of the skills and knowledge gained in graduate school, students not in professionally focused programs are not wrong to worry about the pertinence of their degrees in the market. As director of the M.A. program in Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences, Professor Christopher Weiss finds that employers do not automatically understand what the degree means in terms of a graduate’s ability to
do a particular job. Weiss notes that employers sometimes view an arts and sciences degree as downright self-indulgent, and students have to battle stereotypes. Employers with whom Kurz has worked at the Center for Career Education have voiced concerns about hiring graduate students. They fear that students lack social skills, can’t see beyond their own research topics, are too innocent about the world outside the university, and will not find motivation under the performance evaluation system of most industries.

Despite such views, a graduate degree is valuable as a necessary credential for certain fields and levels of employment. This may be a result of the devaluation of undergraduate education. Today’s M.A. is yesterday’s B.A. No matter the subject of the degree, an M.A. shows some “scholarly savvy,” says Darice Birge, associate dean for M.A. programs at GSAS. When a company receives more than a hundred applications for one position, narrowing down candidates to only those with advanced degrees is an easy way to automatically reduce the stack. While it does not guarantee a higher salary, the M.A. may give students a basic credential they need to find employment in the first place.

A master’s degree can also allow students to test graduate education before committing to a Ph.D. degree. Birge has observed an increasing number of M.A. students at Columbia who are interested in eventually undertaking doctoral degrees. Weiss agrees, adding that the M.A. has, in some programs, become an unofficial requirement for Ph.D. admission. As doctoral programs have grown more selective with increases in applications and reductions in available seats, previous experience as a graduate student gives some applicants a competitive edge.

Entering a doctoral program, however, does not alleviate a student’s concerns regarding future job opportunities. One of the most prevalent complaints in the debate on graduate education is the lack of academic job prospects for graduates. Overproduction of Ph.D. candidates is often interpreted as a result of institutions admitting students to serve as teaching assistants in order to supplement their faculty. “There is a disconnect between the needs of the university and the needs of the student,” states George Rutter [name changed upon request], a 2005 graduate of the English and Comparative Literature doctoral program. Ph.D.’s, he says, are good business for universities because they provide cheap labor in the classroom and lab. To rely on the nonacademic market to “absorb and absolve the overproduction of graduates is disingenuous ... There are forums on how the Ph.D. translates into nonacademic positions, and it can, but the greater reality is that unless you are planning to go into teaching or an academic field, the Ph.D. is not the best expenditure of your time and money.” The chair of English and Comparative Literature, Professor Jean Howard, emphasizes the need for programs to consider the job market when deciding on the number of applicants to admit. “No Ph.D. program should produce graduates without regard for their employment. Programs with poor placement rates should cut back.” The reduction in the number of admitted students, she says, will only continue, especially in the humanities, where, she believes, there will be an erosion of teaching positions in future years as institutions devalue humanities in the curriculum in favor of preprofessional training.

Some graduates find the reality of academic career expectations difficult and jarring because they are not warned about the market in advance of their job search. According to Rutter, “I don’t regret getting my Ph.D. degree, but I wish I were more educated [about the market] before I graduated.” He reveals that many of his fellow Columbia graduates working at universities regret their degrees because they cannot secure tenure-track positions or they are unhappy with the compromises they have been forced to make in order to remain in academia. “They are generally disenchanted with the academy.” One of the greatest frustrations Rutter says he experienced while a student was a...
If any endeavor believes in the power of questions it is higher education. Challenging the value of graduate education should be part of that questioning.
lack of guidance. “Columbia needs to step up and realize that times have changed and that the kind of education, mentoring, and professionalization—like learning how to participate in peer review and conferences—needs to take place.”

GSAS departments and offices have, in recent years, mobilized resources to help students prepare for a tighter academic job market. In 2007, Jan Allen, associate dean for Ph.D. programs, brought the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) Program to the Graduate School. PFF, founded in 1993, is a national program that helps students prepare for work in academic fields, specifically non-tenure-track jobs. At Columbia it is open to M.A. and Ph.D. students and includes panels, information sessions, and lectures to familiarize students with the job market and the professional skills they need to develop to be competitive. Departments also provide resources to students. English and Comparative Literature, for instance, offers a series of workshops each year, Howard explains, that address the job hunt and assist students with their curriculum vitae, writing sample, and interview skills. “There is a tremendous operation in this department to help Ph.D.s secure jobs, because they are the students to whom we feel the greatest obligation. They are with us six years, and that is a huge investment of their time.”

The potential key to success for graduates navigating the academic market is a combination of understanding the industry and being flexible with their options. Kurz finds that students too often box themselves in when they will only look for jobs at certain types of institutions or in a few select cities. Allen also suggests that students reconsider their parameters when seeking teaching positions. There are countless other schools in the United States besides Ph.D.-granting research universities. “There are good places with surprising amounts of support that students might not immediately consider,” Allen states. “Places like Chicago State University or the University of North Carolina in Asheville offer benefits not found at larger East Coast schools.”

Flexibility with options should also include the consideration of nonacademic careers. M.A. graduates who cannot secure admission to a doctoral program and Ph.D. graduates unable to find a teaching or research position should explore plan B: nonacademic fields. Understanding what they can offer nonacademic employers is the first lesson to be learned. The debate on graduate education often focuses on the inapplicability of a degree in the nonacademic working world, and students adopt this view. Graduate education, by its very nature, perpetuates this perception as well. “The purpose of a graduate education is to produce research,” not to teach students how their research can apply to nonacademic jobs, Kurz points out. To market their degrees to employers, graduates need to learn how to sell their education to the world outside higher education. “Students sometimes need to be coaxed into understanding that they are not just good at seventeenth-century Italian poetry but that they also have skills in writing, research, self-management, and organization.”

To assist students, the Center for Career Education focuses its resources on nonacademic fields, providing students and alumni with personal assessment tools, one-on-one counseling, workshops, panels, and career fairs to help them identify areas of interest, hone job-finding tools and skills, and discuss their graduate education in a way that a potential employer will understand. One such tool, Kurz says, that is particularly popular with students is the Versatile Ph.D., an online forum available to all graduate students that discusses alternative career paths. Some departments offer similar professionally focused resources. The Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences program, Weiss explains, has recently been building its alumni network and has also joined a consortium with similar programs at NYU, Duke, Boston University, and John Hopkins to host career fairs.

Such department-level resources are particularly helpful to students because they are designed
around the students’ specific degrees and fields. But resources should address all options within and outside academe to reflect the current economy. “The picture has changed in the last twenty years,” argues Rutter, “and the professors’ own [academic job] experiences don’t necessarily apply.” Birge notes that she was hired for her first academic teaching position when she had not yet finished her dissertation, something that was not unusual for non-tenure-track jobs at the time. She understands how stories about change for the worse in the academic job market are far from soothing for those who are about to face today’s prospects.

While today’s prospects may require some students to consider professions outside the university, the latter hesitate to pursue such routes because of the culture within the academy. Leaving academics for the professional world is stigmatizing in some academic circles. Graduate students express feelings of failure to Kurz if they cannot find a teaching position or if they decide not to pursue a job in higher education. “You feel as a Ph.D. candidate that there is a lot of social, intellectual, and personal prestige wrapped up in your choice of career.”

A change in discourse is perhaps needed to assist students further. The life of an academic is often described within higher education as the “life of the mind,” but this implies that such a life is not possible outside the university. Excluding nonacademic pursuits is unrealistic and unproductive. By working together to educate students about nonacademic as well as academic careers, administrators and faculty increase student employment options and satisfaction in career choices and weaken the argument that advanced degrees are irrelevant in today’s working world.

Despite the multitude of voices contributing to the debate on graduate education, all those interviewed agree that a degree’s value is ultimately defined by one person: the graduate. Whether a degree is worthwhile is determined by whether graduates get what they were hoping to gain from their educational experience. “I believe in what we do,” says Weiss, “but I also believe in the need for students to want [a degree] based on their own circumstances.” Students need to seriously consider their reasons for undertaking a degree and to learn as much as they can about potential programs and job prospects in their chosen field before they begin a degree program. A student’s decision on whether a degree is valuable is her own, but universities inform that decision by providing information. “When there is transparency,” Rutter explains, “everyone’s job is easier, because you are operating honestly. I think that when this dialogue isn’t happening, students are justifiably confused when they later enter the market.” Transparency and an open dialogue are important, because they help manage student expectations of their education and prospects. As a result, they may not be as dissatisfied upon graduation: M.A.s may feel less like “cash cows” and Ph.D.’s less like “slave labor.”

The debate on the value of graduate education often sounds negative and cynical. But if cynics are people who know the price of everything and the value of nothing, they are also frustrated optimists. If any endeavor believes in the power of questions it is higher education. Challenging the value of graduate education should be part of that questioning. It can yield a greater understanding of the place and purpose of a graduate degree in today’s economic and cultural climate and ultimately lead to welcome change. By opening themselves to the public by offering comprehensive, transparent information to prospective students and including nonacademic fields in career preparation, graduate schools may counter the opinion that they are disconnected from modern society and change the debate from an us-versus-them argument into a conversation on the great contributions that graduate education can make in the world.

Want to join the conversation? Share your thoughts by writing to gsaseditor@columbia.edu.
“Participating in the GSAS Alumni Association provides the stimulation, creativity, diversity, and optimism that first attracted me to Columbia University.”
—Lester Wigler ’80 M.A. in Music

Join the conversation

GSAS graduates are getting involved with Columbia. Here’s how:

ATTEND events to expand your mind and your circle of friends
DIG IN to library research services
LOG IN to online career networks, job boards, and career support from CCE
FIND discount tickets and special access to shows from CAAL
PAY LESS for insurance, prescriptions, and computers
MENTOR, volunteer, and give back

Visit alumni.columbia.edu/login-help to update your information.
Then watch your inbox—we’ll keep you posted!
What are you doing now?
I’m a producer in the video department at The Daily, News Corporation’s new digital publication with video for the iPad. Before this job, I’d been working as an associate producer for The Dr. Oz Show. Although this new position isn’t in television, it’s similar to TV because we view the product—our daily digital publication—as the future of broadcast news.

Why did you choose your degree at Columbia?
I’d been living in China for two years when I applied to the East Asian Studies M.A. The only knowledge I had of the country was the language and what I had learned living there. I wanted to round out my China expertise with formal study. I really liked that the East Asian Studies M.A. in the Liberal Studies M.A. Program was interdisciplinary. When choosing my courses I realized one area of study I’d neglected in my undergraduate education was political science. I focused on political science and history, because they go hand in hand.

In my research I examined Chinese nationalism surrounding two specific independence movements: Tibetan and Uighur. I was especially interested in this because I lived in China in the years right before the Beijing Olympics and went back as part of my master’s program during the summer of the Games. I saw a lot of protests at the time.
What did you like most and least about your time as a student at the Graduate School?
I liked that the Liberal Studies M.A. Program allowed me the freedom to choose my courses and required me to take classes across at least three disciplines. That made me feel like an adult who happened to be back in school rather than like an old student, and it eased the transition from being a working professional to studying full time.

At first it was tough for me to get into the mode of studying. It was hard to go from working full time with no homework to reading hundreds of pages every night and writing papers again.

How did you get into your current field?
Since graduating from Columbia I’ve been working in television and media. I started interning at NBC during grad school, and I worked with NBC Sports & Olympics, *Late Night with Conan O’Brien* and *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*. I completed my last internship just after I finished my course work at Columbia. I decided to stay at NBC and take a job as assistant producer at the *Today Show*, which was a wonderful experience. When my contract ended, I took a position as an associate producer at *The Dr. Oz Show*. I quickly realized that syndicated television wasn’t where I wanted to be—it’s more entertainment and less journalism—so after some time I made the jump to my current position.

How have you applied your degree work to your career development and current job?
When Hu Jintao visited the United States or on days when China makes the domestic news, my knowledge of China and East Asia comes in handy. I’m also better at my job because I’m able to look at events and figure out how they influence different groups. As a producer it’s my job to research a story and think of questions to ask the experts we interview so they are addressing the issue from the angle we want them to address it. That kind of analytical thinking and interviewing are skills I developed in graduate school.

What are the most satisfying and most challenging aspects of your work?
Seeing a story from start to finish and being proud of the work you do is worth it. When you end up working on a story you are passionate about it’s a great feeling. In my line of work I also enjoy meeting a lot of interesting people and learning new things all the time.

One of the most challenging things about my current job is that it’s at a start-up, so we all work longer hours than usual at the moment. It’s sometimes difficult to find a work-life balance.

If you could give current students any advice, what would it be?
Take advantage of the fact you are in school. Take classes that interest you and take the time to explore industries you are considering. Do as many internships as you can! Interning is the best way to sample career paths and puts you in a position to get hired right out of graduate school. I’d also recommend networking as soon as you start your studies. Go to the Center for Career Education and attend the workshops. I found the Center very helpful. My résumé was in fantastic shape when I graduated.

Enjoy your time there! When I was in school, I couldn’t wait to finish and get back to work. Now that I’m working, I can’t wait to go back to school.

What are your future career plans?
I’d love to move back to China and work for an international news source like CNN, Bloomberg, or AP. I would also like to get involved in documentary filmmaking, because when you look at the bare-bones skills needed in the media world, it comes down to telling a good story well.

In later years I would like to transition to a career in politics and public service such as the diplomatic corps.
What are you doing now?
I work as a humanitarian affairs officer at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in New York, which mobilizes and coordinates humanitarian responses to emergencies. My current position is with the Coordination and Response Division, which is charged with humanitarian analyses, operational planning, and the monitoring of emergency response coordination. My main responsibility lies in the preparation of early-warning analytical reports on emerging crises, as well as of contingency planning support for humanitarian emergencies.

How did you get into your current field?
After graduating from Columbia in 2003, I moved back to my native Denmark to complete a second master’s degree in political science at the University of Copenhagen. I also worked part time at the Danish Institute for International Studies and took Arabic language courses. In 2005 I was about to enter a Ph.D. program in Copenhagen when I was offered a position as an associate expert with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs. I decided to stray from my academic career plans to gain some practical experience and accepted the position.
My UN career began in the Security Council Secretariat, providing substantial support to the Security Council, monitoring and reporting on developments in international peace and security, and preparing analytical reports on the Security Council’s negotiations. After four years I was ready to learn more about the UN’s political work outside of the Security Council and was looking to refocus my career on the Middle East, which had been at the center of my graduate studies.

I started working as a political affairs officer in the Division for Palestinian Rights and was responsible for organizing international meetings on the Palestinian question and the Middle East peace process. After a year, I was offered my current job in OCHA, and I decided that it was time to switch lanes and get to know the humanitarian dimension of the work of the United Nations.

How did your experiences at Columbia prepare you for your career? Studying at Columbia’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences was an invaluable experience professionally and personally. The comprehensive curriculum and intensive coursework expanded my knowledge of international affairs and political dynamics, while the numerous papers and one-on-one advising sessions with some of the world’s best political science professors enhanced my analytical and drafting competencies.

While the very inspiring professors challenged and encouraged me to go the extra mile in my academic studies, the enthusiastic and creative environment among the students on campus was an invaluable addition to my Columbia experience. The international makeup of Columbia’s student corps provided a unique opportunity to learn how to interact in a multicultural setting, to draw benefit from other perspectives, and to learn about different parts of the world.

What advice would you give current students interested in your field? Gaining international experience and learning languages are crucial. Studying, volunteering, or working abroad are also invaluable for a future international career as well as for your own personal growth.

If you strive for a career as an international civil servant, whether it’s in a small humanitarian NGO or with the United Nations, the value of international experience cannot be overstated. Field positions are often more accessible entry points to an organization than headquarters, and internships can provide valuable exposure to the work of the organization.

My most important advice would be to be open to unexpected opportunities that might not be part of the plan that you have set for yourself.

Alumni profiles are available on the Center for Career Education website at http://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/alumniprofiles. Alumni interested in being profiled may contact Malla Haridat at vh19@columbia.edu.
Kant's discussion of the relations between cognition and self-consciousness lie at the heart of the Critique of Pure Reason in the celebrated transcendental deduction. Although this section of Kant's masterpiece is widely believed to contain important insights into cognition and self-consciousness, it has long been viewed as unusually obscure. Many philosophers have tried to avoid the transcendental psychology that Kant employed. By contrast, Kitcher follows Kant's careful delineation of the necessary conditions for knowledge and his intricate argument that knowledge requires self-consciousness. She argues that far from being an exercise in armchair psychology, the thesis that thinkers must be aware of the connections among their mental states offers an astute analysis of the requirements of rational thought.

Beyond Boundaries
Manning Marable, History and Political Science
Paradigm Publishers

This new book, a rich array of some of Marable’s best writing from the last two decades, will prove invaluable to anyone who seeks a better understanding of—and creative possible solutions to—our society's deep and enduring inequities of race, class, and gender.

Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention
Manning Marable | Viking Adult

Of the great figures in 20th century American history perhaps none is more complex and controversial than Malcolm X. Constantly rewriting his own story. He became a criminal, a minister, a leader, and an icon all before being felled by assassins’ bullets at age thirty-nine. Through his tireless work and countless speeches, he empowered hundreds of thousands of black Americans to create better lives and stronger communities while establishing the template for the self-actualized, independent African American man. In death he became a broad symbol of both resistance and reconciliation for millions around the world.

Professor Marable passed away on April 1, 2011. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences mourns the loss of our colleague, mentor, and friend.
Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile
Jesús D. Rodríguez-Velasco, Latin American and Iberian Cultures | University of Pennsylvania Press

In Order and Chivalry, Rodríguez-Velasco explores the role of chivalry in the emergence of the middle class in an increasingly urbanized fourteenth-century Castile. The book considers how secular, urban knighthood organizations came to life and created their own rules, which differed from martial and religiously oriented ideas of chivalry and knighthood. It delves into the cultural and legal processes that created orders of society as well as orders of knights.

Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century French Culture
Madeleine Dobie, French and Romance Philology | Cornell University Press

In Trading Places, Dobie explores the place of the colonial world in the culture of the French Enlightenment. She shows that, until a turning point in the late 1760s, questions of colonization and slavery occupied a very marginal position in literature, philosophy, and material and visual culture. In an exploration of the causes and modalities of this silence, Dobie traces the displacement of colonial questions onto two more familiar—and less ethically challenging—aspects of Enlightenment thought: exoticization of the Orient and fascination with indigenous Amerindian cultures.

Scribble, Scribble, Scribble: Writing on Politics, Ice Cream, Churchill, and My Mother
Simon Schama, University Professor of Art History and History | Ecco

Schama turns his omnivorous erudition and warm prose to a vast array of topics. There are incisive historical essays on everything from Europeans’ evolving image of the “Unloved American” to Churchill’s oratory and, in a deliciously cruel book review, the “pigmentation of historical scale” in micromonographs. There are meditations on the art of Rembrandt and Richard Avedon, reportage from British and American election campaigns, disdainful commentary on the Bush administration, and a stew-to-ice-cream smorgasbord of foodie articles.

The Unfinished Enlightenment: Description in the Age of the Encyclopedia
Joanna Stalnaker, French and Romance Philology | Cornell University Press

Stalnaker offers a fresh look at the French Enlightenment by focusing on the era’s vast, collective attempt to compile an ongoing and provisional description of the world. Through a series of readings of natural histories, encyclopedias, scientific poetry, and urban topographies, the book uncovers the deep epistemological and literary tensions that made description a central preoccupation for authors such as Buffon, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Diderot, Delille, and Mercier.

Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World: Rituals and Remembrances
Edited by Mamadou Diouf, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies, and Ifeoma C.K. Nwankwo | University of Michigan Press

Along with linked modes of religiosity, music and dance have long occupied a central position in the ways in which Atlantic peoples have enacted, made sense of, and responded to their encounters with each other. This unique collection of essays connects nations from across the Atlantic—Senegal, Kenya, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, and the United States, among others—highlighting contemporary popular, folkloric, and religious music and dance. By tracking the continuous reframing, revision, and erasure of aural, oral, and corporeal traces, the contributors to Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World collectively argue that music and dance are the living evidence of a constant (re)composition and (re)mixing of local sounds and gestures.
The Quest for Religious and Community Identity:
The Story Behind the Architecture and Evolution of All Souls Church, New York City

The Unitarian-Universalist All Souls Church stands on East 80th Street and Lexington Avenue in New York City. The church's architecture is aptly described as New England Georgian, and its cornerstone was laid in 1932. The congregation has a longer history, having been founded in 1819, and has occupied three other church buildings in the borough of Manhattan. This is the story of All Souls' migration, its churches' architectural narratives, and their place in the architectural history of the city.

The Quest for Religious and Community Identity: The Story Behind the Architecture and Evolution of All Souls Church, New York City

In Rollback, Thomas E. Woods, Jr. explains that we may still have a chance to avert total economic disaster—but only by completely changing our understanding of government. With candor, he dissects just how the political class has nearly destroyed America's economy. Woods presented his new book at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) held in Washington, D.C., in February.

"If Congress and the Administration really wanted to learn how to eliminate the deficit, limit government, and protect liberty they would ... read Rollback."
—The Honourable Ron Paul, Member of Congress

ROLLBACK
REPEALING BIG GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE COMING FISCAL COLLAPSE

THOMAS E. WOODS, JR.
New York Times Bestselling Author and Senior Fellow at the Ludwig von Mises Institute
Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology
Oscar Pineda Catalan, Effects of human consumption on three vulnerable species of freshwater turtles (Podocnemis expansa, P. Sextuberuculata, and P. unifilis; Testudines: Podocnemididae) in the Peruvian Amazonia

Economics
Daniel Carvell, Essays on environmental regulation, tort law, and public health
Ying hua He, Essays on public policies
Yoichi Sugita, Essays on international trade and foreign direct investment with heterogeneous firms (Distinction)

Electrical Engineering
Hoon Kim, Selection of disease-associated gene sets
John Watkinson, Synergistic associations in systems biology

English and Comparative Literature
Andrea Andersson, Disconcerting landscapes: Seriality, system, and subjectivity in postmodern American poetry
Alyssa Meyers, Telling time: Temporality and narrative in late medieval English literature
Sailaja Sastry, Bureaucratic belonging: Immigration, citizenship, and the literary creation of the South Asian American subject

Epidemiology
Dana March, Place, race, and psychosis (Distinction)
Barun Mathema, Mycobacterium tuberculosis: Studies in pathogen-driven epidemiology

Genetics and Development
Hae Young Lee, Role of ATF5 during cerebellar development

History
Sagi Schaefer, Ironing the Curtain: Border and boundary formation in Cold War rural Germany

Industrial Engineering
Masoud Talebian, Essays on pricing and contract theory

Materials Science and Engineering
Yikang Deng, The mechanism of solid nucleation in excimer-laser-quenched liquid silicon on silicon dioxide (Distinction)

Microbiology, Immunology, and Infection
Geoffrey Catalanou, Fc gamma receptors on conventional dendritic cells for antigen transfer and bystander activation
Karim Kram, Regulation of adherence in Aggregatibacter actinomycetemcomitans
Eleonore Mimitou, DNA end resection in Saccharomyces cerevisiae: Mechanism and implications (Distinction)

Middle East, South Asian, and African Studies
Tsolin Nalbantian, Fashioning Armenians in Lebanon, 1946–1958

Music
Daniel Chiarilli, Concertos without virtuosity: Virtuosity, composition and critical distortions of the violin concerto in the nineteenth century

Neurobiology and Behavior
Daniela Hernandez, Establishing a role for macroautophagy in synaptic structure and function
Grace Lai, Functional and structural neurocircuitry of language and music systems in autism spectrum disorder
David Malito, The role of closed-state inactivation in modulation of L-type calcium channels by dihydropyridine antagonists
Ellen Penney, Genetic regulatory cascades governing synaptic development and function
Erin Savner, Regulation of synapse size and function by pre-mRNA splicing (Distinction)

Yixing Xu, The time course of eye position signals in the macaque cerebral cortex (Distinction)

Nutritional and Metabolic Biology
Sonia Hernandez Benitez, The role of notch in neuroblastoma angiogenesis

Pathobiology and Molecular Medicine
Magda Tumpfová, Role of the immunosuppressive surface ligand CD200 in normal and neoplastic skin

Pharmacology and Molecular Signaling
Marisa Evelyn, Angle-based computational analyses of conformational changes in alpha-helical protein structures

Philosophy
Christiana Olfert, Building the soul: Aristotle’s constitutive view of virtue (Distinction)
Sabastian Watzl, The significance of attention (Distinction)

Physics
Seth Caughron, Search for vector-like quark production in the lepton+jets and dilepton+jets final states using 5.4 fb of run II data
Jameson Rollins, Multimessenger astronomy with low-latency searches for transient gravitational waves

Political Science
Amy Widsten, Parties in conflict: Domestic politics, dispute settlement, and international trade
Walter Zaryckyj, William Lovett: Poor man’s prophet. A reassessment of the life and legacy of the ‘Author of the People’s Charter’

Psychology
Matthew Kirkpatrick, Acute and residual effects of amphetamine derivatives in humans

Religion
Jared Calaway, Heavenly Sabbath, heavenly sanctuary: The transformation of priestly sacred space and sacred time in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Epistle to the Hebrews (Distinction)
Rosemary Hicks, Creating an ‘Abrahamic America’ and moderating Islam: Cold War political economy and cosmopolitan Sufi Muslims in New York after 2001

Social Work
Kimberly Westcott, Fictional citizenship: A genealogy of the social construction of the black male and the penal process in the United States, 1790–1930

Statistics
Chia-Hui Huang, Semiparametric stochastic modeling for epidemic data

Sustainable Development
José Orihuela Paredes, Journeys toward sustainable development: Policy entrepreneurs and the rise of the green state in Chile and Peru

Teachers College: Applied Behavior Analysis
Joan Broto, The effects of functional writing contingencies on second graders’ verbally governed and verbally governing mathematical algorithms

Teachers College: Behavioral Nutrition
Lauren Weiss, Associations of serum ferritin, polyunsaturated fatty acids, ferritin, and ghrelin on bone health

Teachers College: Clinical Psychology
Aurélie Athan, Postpartum flourishing: Motherhood as opportunity for positive growth and self-development
Karen Shoum, Grief and depression following miscarriage: Examining unique and shared correlates and patterns of change at six months post-loss
Teachers College:
Cognitive Studies in Education

Yi-Chun Chen, The psychological process of budgeting: Effects of goals, categorization processes, and psychological distance

Janet Eisenband Sorkin, Young children’s abilities to generalize functional relationships with cube towers

Teachers College:
Counseling Psychology

Chelsea Dize, Contemporary racial attitudes as predictive of whites’ responses to discrimination against blacks

Teachers College: Developmental Psychology

Clarice Wirkala, Problem-based learning in K-12 education: Is it effective and how does it achieve its effects?

Teachers College:
Economics and Education

Sung-Woo Cho, Essays on developmental student success and program impacts in community colleges

Teachers College:
Kinesiology

Sharon Phillips, Upper elementary school students’ attitudes and perceptions toward physical education

Teachers College:
Mathematics Education

Craig McCarron, Comparing the effects of metacognitive prompts and contrasting cases on transfer in solving algebra problems

Marash Mernacaj, The reforms in mathematics education for grades 1 through 12 in Albania from 1945 to 2000

Teachers College:
Measurement and Evaluation

Maritsa Toro, A multidimensional scaling approach to dimensionality assessment for measurement instruments modeled by multidimensional item response theory

Teachers College:
Philosophy and Education

Patricia Carey, Feminism and pragmatism: Change toward a more inclusive philosophy of higher education

Teachers College:
School Psychology

Kristen Bielecki, A comparative analysis of the self-concept of traumatized youth with and without posttraumatic stress disorder relative to nontraumatized controls

Teachers College:
Social-Organizational Psychology

Sandy Koch, The influence of racial group membership and job fit on leadership perceptions of Asian Americans and Caucasian Americans

Urban Planning

Padmini Biswas, Strategic parallels: A class comparison of South Asian American immigrant labor organizing

Constantine Kontokosta, The political economy of inclusionary zoning: Adoption, implementation and neighborhood effects
Biomedical Engineering professor NICOLAS CHBAT was promoted to the Principal Member Research staff at Philips North America and recently won a two-year $1 million National Institutes of Health grant with Mayo Clinic’s Pulmonary and Critical Care Department on “In Silico Model for Acute Lung Injury Prediction and Clinical Trial Design.”

History professor ERIC FONER has been awarded the 2011 Bancroft Prize for his book The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery (W.W. Norton and Company). One of the most prestigious awards in its field, the Bancroft Prize is awarded annually by the Trustees of Columbia University. Entries are judged in terms of the scope, significance, depth of research, and richness of interpretation they present in the areas of American history and diplomacy.

The Fiery Trial was also named the 2011 winner of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Lincoln Prize and the 2011 Pulitzer Prize winner for excellence in history.

RUSSELL JOHN RICKFORD and THERESA VENTURA, both 2009 History Ph.D. graduates, were awarded 2011 Bancroft Dissertation Awards for outstanding Columbia dissertations in American history or biography, diplomacy, or international affairs. Mr. Rickford’s dissertation, “A Struggle in the Arena of Ideas: Black Independent Schools and the Quest for Nationhood, 1966–1979,” and Ms. Ventura’s dissertation, “American Empire, Agrarian Reform, and the Problem of Tropical Nature in the Philippines, 1898–1936,” were sponsored by Professor Eric Foner. Each graduate received $7,500 as a subvention for the publication of their work.

BEN LESHCHINSKY, a Ph.D. student in Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics, is one of three winners of Student Travel Grants offered by the United States Universities Council on Geotechnical Education and Research to present his work at the GeoFrontiers 2011 Conference in Dallas.

ADRIANA LLERAS-MUNEY, 2001 Economics Ph.D. and an associate professor of economics at the University of California-Los Angeles, was the feature speaker at the Oklahoma Department of Health Services Lecture Series on April 6, presenting “Education and Health: What Do We Know?”

Psychology Professor WALTER MISCHEL is the 2011 winner of the University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Psychology for his work explaining self-control, demonstrating that willpower can be learned and that it carries lifelong benefits.
Chemistry professor **SCOTT SNYDER** is a recipient of a 2011 Bristol-Myers Squibb Unrestricted Grant in Synthetic Organic Chemistry. The award is bestowed annually by researchers at Bristol-Myers, in consultation with leading organic chemists in academia, to recognize faculty near the start of their careers who have made a fundamental contribution to the field.

**ELIZABETH SPERBER** has received the first Giancarlo Doria Paper Prize, an annual award for the best paper in the field of comparative politics submitted by a candidate for the Ph.D. in political science who has not yet received the M.Phil. The prize was established by the Department of Political Science and Antonietta and Francesco Doria in memory of their son, Giancarlo Doria (M.A. 2010). Sperber’s paper, “Divided Development: A Theory of Bilateral Development Aid in Post-Colonial Relations,” develops and tests a preliminary theory of bilateral development aid in post-colonial contexts.

**GREGORY L. VERDINE**, Erving Professor of Chemistry at Harvard University and 1986 graduate of Columbia’s Chemistry Ph.D. program, will receive the 5th Annual AACR Award for Outstanding Achievement in Chemistry in Cancer Research. From his work elucidating the molecular mechanism of the antitumor drug mitomycin C to his studies on DNA methylation, DNA repair, and peptide-based agents to target intracellular protein-protein interactions, Verdine has made pioneering, creative, and significant contributions to both the basic science of cancer and toward treatment of the disease.


**SABIN CAUTIS**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics; **DIRK ENGLUND**, Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering and Applied Physics; **AARON LAUDA**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics; **NATHANIEL B. SAWTELL**, Assistant Professor of Neuroscience; and **LATHA VENKATARAMAN**, Assistant Professor of Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics, received Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowships for 2011. This prestigious annual award is given to early-career scientists and mathematicians in recognition of outstanding achievement and potential in their respective fields.

Eight faculty members received Lenfest Awards this year for outstanding merit across a range of activities—scholarship, university citizenship, and professional involvement—with an emphasis on the instruction and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students. The award recipients were **RACHEL ADAMS**, English and Comparative Literature; **STUART FIRESTEIN**, Biological Sciences; **MAHMOOD MAMDANI**, Anthropology and Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies; **STEPHEN MURRAY**, Art History and Archaeology; **PAUL OLSEN**, Earth and Environmental Sciences; **SUSAN PEDERSEN**, History; **ACHILLE VARZI**, Philosophy; and **KATHARINA VOLK**, Classics.
Professor Jahyun Kim Haboush lost her battle to cancer on January 30, 2011. She held a faculty appointment in the East Asian Languages and Cultures department and specialized in pre- and early modern Korea, particularly the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Professor Haboush was a native of Seoul and earned her M.A. in Chinese literature at the University of Michigan before coming to Columbia to complete her Ph.D. in Korean and Chinese history in 1978. She helped shape Korean Studies at the university, inspiring students from their freshman year to the defense of their dissertations. Haboush also wrote and co-edited several books, among them A Heritage of Kings: One Man’s Monarchy in the Confucian World (1988) and Women in the Pre-Modern Confucian Cultures in China, Korea, and Japan (2003). Her book The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyông: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea, published in 1996, won the Korean Arts and Culture Foundation’s Grand Prize in Translation and Criticism. Professor Haboush is survived by her husband, William; her stepmother, Yong Wha Park (Los Angeles); her siblings Soo Hyun Kim (Brooklyn, NY), Oliver Kim (Clarkville, MD), Chung Hyun Raichstadt (Queens, NY), and Ae Hyun Kim (Seattle, WA); and five nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held at Columbia’s St. Paul’s Chapel on April 8.

“When you write, you need to fly.” She often described to us a rather grueling process of writing with such dramatic flair. She asked us not to hide behind words, but to come forth with “oomph” and be bold. It was through her passion that she taught us to excel and be different. When she began her career she scrambled through different jobs until she found a position in Korean Studies. The field was nothing like it is today, and she not only had to lead but also to define the field. She did so with foresight, commitment, and devotion. Her scholarship always pioneered in the field, and likewise, she asked us to look beyond the constraints and conventional wisdom and to make our own footprints with something unique. “Interesting” was her code word for such scholarship, and she said, “You know you are doing something right when you are kept awake at night by thoughts sparkling in your mind.”

We were humbled when we discovered, upon her passing, that she had been battling cancer for many years during her most productive time at Columbia. She wanted us to see her love for life and not her illness. That is what we will remember and carry on with utmost respect and affection.

—Se-mi Oh, East Asian Languages and Cultures Ph.D. (2008)

Korean Studies is still a fresh field in the United States, but Professor Haboush taught us to see its young age as an advantage. She always said that scholars from other disciplines are looking to someone like us to come up with new ideas. It is the field-in-making that allows the most freedom and, at times, the greatest difficulty. Professor Haboush always emphasized that we have the opportunity to make a canon. Her confidence and passion—she was very striking in the way she spoke, gave written comments, or even just told you not to worry and go finish your paper—provided us with inspiration and support at the most difficult moments and will continue to inspire our work.

—Ksenia Chizhova, East Asian Languages and Cultures Ph.D. student
Born on July 4, Warren Tsuneishi grew up in California thinking himself a true Yankee Doodle Dandy, “more American than most Americans,” as he said in an interview in 2007 for the Veterans History Project. He would prove his patriotism in his adulthood, first in the military and then in his career, working against the prejudices of his time.

Tsuneishi graduated from high school at the top of his class in 1939 but was discouraged from applying to college because, as his guidance counselor told him, “professional job opportunities for Japanese-American college graduates were not readily available.” In spite of such advice, Tsuneishi attended UCLA and later the University of California at Berkeley. His education was unexpectedly disrupted on a Sunday morning in 1941 when the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 two months later, and Tsuneishi was relocated with his family to an internment camp in Wyoming called Heart Mountain. Tsuneishi called it prison. Missing his freedom, he eagerly volunteered for work on sugar beet farms in Idaho. He was later permitted to leave the camp and enroll at Syracuse University to complete his degree.

Tsuneishi’s graduation in 1943 coincided with a new War Department policy allowing second-generation Japanese Americans to enlist. His older brother Hughes was training at the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota, and he suggested Tsuneishi volunteer as well. Tsuneishi enlisted in the Army, trained at Camp Savage, and served in the Pacific with the 306th Headquarters Intelligence Detachment, XXIV Corps, translating captured documents. The Library of Congress credits his translations with giving U.S. forces great advantage in securing the Philippines and Okinawa. Tsuneishi was more modest in his memoirs, writing, “It goes without saying that knowing enemy intentions is half the battle.” He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service and honorably discharged in 1946.

Within the month, Tsuneishi enrolled at Columbia for his master’s in Chinese and Japanese literature. He earned the M.A. in 1948 and an M.S. in library science at the Columbia Library School two years later. He worked as a Japanese cataloguer at Yale University Library and completed his doctoral degree in political science there in 1960.

Tsuneishi curated the East Asian Collection at Yale University Library before taking a position with the Library of Congress in 1966. He became chief of its Asian Division and was awarded the Library’s Superior Service Award for his help in coordinating the library’s first delegation to China after Nixon normalized U.S.-China relations in 1972. His work with the Library of Congress did not end with his retirement in 1993. A member of the Japanese Veterans Association and the American Library Association, he was one of many participants in the Veterans History Project. An initiative of the American Folklife Center, an institute in the Library of Congress, the project collects and preserves stories and experiences of American veterans from World War I to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. When asked his advice to young Americans, Tsuneishi responded in his interview that America was a continuous work in progress but that one should “never lose faith in your country.”

Warren Tsuneishi died of natural causes on January 29 at age 89. He is survived by Betty, his wife of 65 years, and their three children. He was laid to rest in Arlington Cemetery.

Warren Tsuneishi’s memoirs and interview are available to the public on the Veterans History Project website at http://www.loc.gov/vets/.
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Columbia iTunes U: http://itunes.columbia.edu/
Columbia Calendar of Events: http://www.columbia.edu/events/today.html
Columbia Athletics: http://www.gocolumnialions.com/
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/
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