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Keynote Revisits Neoliberalism

By Casey McAlpin

The "Geographies of Power" conference, held April 26th -27th at the Nittany Lion Inn, was honored to host two featured two keynote speakers, Dr. John Esposito and Dr. Wendy Brown. Brown, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, brought our first day of the conference to a close with her speech titled, "Austerity Politics and the Inversion of Neoliberal Freedom."



Brown's talk focused on the downside of neoliberalism. Her speech analyzed the way neoliberal governance and economic policies turn human citizenship into mere capital. Brown exemplified the United States government's obsession with economic growth when she explained that Obama's inauguration speech, which was described as a social justice oriented speech, mentioned "economic growth" eighteen times. Brown emphasized that this type of neoliberalism is centered upon sacrifice. In the neoliberal world described by Brown, individuals are sacrificed for the whole's survival because it is their duty as citizens. The individual accepts unemployment, recession and other hardships for the sake of the country's economic prosperity.

Brown's analysis of the suffering of citizens due to neoliberal doctrine was a thought-provoking conclusion to a day spent analyzing the role of democracy in Muslim cultures and revolution. Brown's keynote speech left the conference participants contemplating the sacrifices of individual citizens for the sake of the greater good.

CIA in the Spotlight

By Katie Black

Dr. Moustafa Bayoumi gave one of the most interesting and informative speeches of the 2013 "Geographies of Power" conference. His speech was about the popular television show *24* and the recent movie *Zero Dark Thirty* and their portrayals of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Though it was a satirical performance that humorously poked fun at the popular media portrayals, the result was a completely serious analysis of the dark side of the 'War On Terror.'

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Check the CGS website for Fall 2013 events: <http://cgs.psu.edu>

May 2013



CGS Fall 2012 intern, Mary Rish, will be teaching English in Austria during the 2013-2014 school year.



The final panel makes its statements to Dr. Elmarsafy's and Dr. McClennen's concluding questions. The conference received high reviews, and ended with the promise of continued interdisciplinary conversation.

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Accepting Diplomas and Stamping Passports

By Kate Milliken

Austria awaits Mary Rish, new Penn State graduate and former CGS intern. Rish has recently received a Teaching Assistantship from the Austrian-American Educational Commission, the same body that manages the Fulbright Program in Austria. The program employs the US teaching assistants from May to October, during which time Rish will teach English in secondary schools in the state of Lower Austria.

Rish's work at Penn State has certainly prepared her for the work ahead of her. At Penn State, Rish studied German, Global and International Studies, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; it was through the German Department that she first learned of the US Teaching Assistant (USTA) program. She has also worked as a German and ESL tutor. Her internship at the Center for Global Studies in the fall of 2012 afforded her the opportunity to teach her own class—an after-school German club at the Young Scholars of Central Pennsylvania Charter School (YSCP). In fact, she is confident that all of the skills and insights that she gained during her time at CGS will help her in this new chapter of her career. She now looks forward to utilizing her degrees, and professionally representing Penn State and the United States abroad.

Looking ahead, Rish expects that practical experience and global perspectives that she will gain through the USTA position will aid her future career in education, and certainly influence her teaching style. She has never been to Austria before, but plans to immerse herself in the culture and make the most of her time abroad: "I hope to experience as much as I can; from teaching to travel, I don't want to miss out on a single opportunity."

The entire staff at the Center for Global Studies wishes Mary all the best in her new adventure!

Our Mission	Our Staff
<p>The Center for Global Studies (CGS) has been designated a Title VI National Resource Center by the Department of Education. Working in collaboration with Penn State's many excellent international initiatives, faculty and students from multiple disciplines, and K-12 schools in the region, the CGS is dedicated to the growth and support of global studies.</p>	<p>Dr. Sophia McClennen, Director Sarah Lyall-Combs, Associate Director April Cole, Administrative Support Assistant Jeff Resta, Graduate Assistant Matthew S. Hoffman, Lead Intern Kathryn C. Black, Intern Casey M. McAlpin, Intern Katherine I. Milliken, Intern</p>

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Dr. Bayoumi argued that, in the program *24*, the CIA is shown to be constantly breaking rules and pushing limits to make sure that America is safe. This is a common theme seen during the George W. Bush administration, which argued for pushing limits of individual rights and even national sovereignty, to ensure security. Dr. Bayoumi said, "*24* is a love letter to a fantasy CIA, an epic battle between good and evil." He argued that the way in which the CIA was portrayed made it apparent to everyday Americans watching the show that *we* are 'the good guys,' and always right. Special Agent Jack Bauer breaking hands and necks in the name of freedom is not so far from the truth, as we have seen the United States accused of human rights abuses since 9/11.

Dr. Bayoumi then began to discuss the new portrayal of the CIA, as seen in *Zero Dark Thirty* and *Argo*. He argued that this was a new CIA, one focused on following strict procedure and suspicion. This is quite the contrast with the action movie gore of previous representations. The new representation is focused on following the rules instead of breaking them. Dr. Bayoumi then pointed out the extremely close link between Hollywood and the actual CIA, as the CIA website declares that the organization offers "inspiration for future storylines." The CIA offers to help movies and television shows by giving them information and permitting productions use stock film of the headquarters in Langley. Dr. Bayoumi argues that this close link between the movie industry and CIA makes it extremely easy for the CIA to hide any failures that they might have. Dr. Bayoumi gave one of the most entertaining and enlightening talks of the conference and left us all with a new perspective—one of skepticism—on popular renditions of the CIA in mainstream media.



Top: Dr. George Pavlich of the University of Alberta led Panel 2 in its discussion of "Revolution and Rule: Rethinking Constitutional Law and Democracy." **Middle:** Dr. Bayoumi discusses his paper, "Chaos and Procedure: the Late Aesthetics and Politics of the Long 'War on Terror.'" **Bottom:** A full room of attendees listened to Dr. Mohammed Bamyeh's presentation.

Cultural Reflections

By Varada Bhat

Day two of the conference featured a panel discussion on "Cultural Representation in Times of Terror and Transition," which was moderated by the Center for Global Studies (CGS) Director Dr. Sophia McClennen. Speaking on "Chaos and Procedure: the Late Aesthetics and Politics of the Long 'War on Terror,'" Dr. Moustafa Bayoumi, from The City University of New York, enthralled the conference by drawing parallels from popular television series *24* and Hollywood films, *Argo* by Ben Affleck and Katherine Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty*. He also argued that we are spectators of democracy rather than active participants.

Dr. Keith Feldman, traveling from the University of California, Berkeley, spoke about visualizing race and space in the age of permanent war. He discussed how the nexus between race, space and 'visuality' has developed into the central theme of Homeland Security. He summarized the key elements of 'counter-visuality.' Dr. Feldman illustrated the differences between the borders of the United States as a nation-state and the borders of the United States as a homeland. He questioned how these borders are defined, and how that definition has innovated processes of racialization. "These types of questions remain pressing, given the advancement in name of homeland security with counter insurgencies in West and Central Asia," he concluded.

This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Peter Hitchcock from The City University of New York, whose presentation was entitled "Immolation." He explained how self-immolation is viewed as a moralized sacrifice and how this logic guides the political and cultural imagination in understanding immolation, which can be a preliminary sketch to uprisings. His examples included the Arab uprising in North Africa and West Asia, and Cold War geopolitics (especially Kuwait). He explained how immolation marks the controversial side of conflict, struggle and violence. "Sacrifice was



Dr. Singh presented his paper, "The Globalization of Settlers" on Day Two.

considered sacred in various religions like Hinduism and Buddhism, but now self-immolation is seen as political moment where it shows individual commitment to a cause, and his conviction leading to revolution," he added. He closed the presentation with the example of a Turkish street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, who set himself on fire, and thus acted as a catalyst for the wider Arab Spring.

The panel ended with "The Globalization of Settlers," presented by Nikhil Singh from New York University (*see photo above*); he emphasized that the central theme of future U.S. policy making will be endangered by the opacity of the world beyond the borders of the United States. He quoted a former CIA Director, saying, "The oceans have shrunk and Europe and Asia share borders with the United States, just like Canada and Mexico." He suggested that the anxiety of external borders is seamlessly transforming into the internal borders. Dr. Singh explained that, despite the African-American gains in modern America, the end of racism is not yet in sight. He pointed out how, hidden within the universalizing tones of the reform-minded liberalism at home and global democratic imperatives abroad, race radicals are still alienated and seen as dangerous and separatists.

Varada Bhat is a guest columnist for GPSU. She has previously worked in India as a financial journalist covering the media and entertainment industry.