

Dear Colleagues,

I'm writing to bring you up to date on my professional activities since May 2004, as suggested in Andrew Hill's letter concerning my departmental review. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to highlight my accomplishments in the past year, and to underscore my commitment to the Department and the University.

Since this is a formal review, I have turned to the Faculty Handbook for guidance on the appropriate criteria and examined the section on promotion to term associate, since this would appear to be the most relevant text. It reads:

Associate Professor on Term. Associate professor on term is normally the rank of promotion from assistant professor or the rank of initial appointment at Yale for an individual with scholarly or artistic achievement and substantial previous teaching experience. Achievement and promise as a teacher and scholar or artist should be such as to qualify for tenure at a major institution within five years. To be considered for this appointment candidates must present a substantial work or body of scholarship that represents research undertaken after the dissertation and extending beyond the scope of the dissertation (Yale Faculty Handbook, page 28).

Allow me, then, to outline my scholarly and teaching activities since the time of my promotion review a year ago in the light of the above-mentioned criteria. In the final section I will turn to some of the concerns mentioned in my reappointment letter.

Scholarship

The Faculty Handbook specifies that to be promoted to term associate, "candidates must present a substantial work or body of scholarship that represents research undertaken after the dissertation and extending beyond the scope of the dissertation." I have since my dissertation undertaken two such research projects that have each already produced monographs: the first on value theory, and the second, on the ethnography of direct action. The first book, ***"Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams"*** came out from Palgrave in 2001, and has been receiving increasing attention within the discipline ever since, having been adopted as a text-book in graduate courses from the University of Chicago to Taiwan. Additionally, I signed a contract this year with Rutgers for an ethnography of direct action, due out approximately by Spring of 2006. What follows is a list of publications that have come out, been accepted, or appeared in translation in the year since my last review.

- A new ethnography, tentatively entitled ***"Direct Action: An Ethnography"***. Largely completed last summer, this manuscript was submitted to Rutgers University Press and a contract for its publication signed in February. This will be my third published volume. (A fourth—based on my dissertation, now

entitled “*On the Nature of Politics: Narrative and Historical Agency in Central Madagascar*”—has also been sent to Indiana University Press, and I hope to receive a contract by the end of the year. I am also discussing with the editors there the prospect of putting together a fifth, a collection of essays.)

- “*Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*” (University of Chicago Press, 2004) will be appearing in a French edition in May 2005, as part of the «Instinct de liberté» series from *Lux Éditeur* in Québec. Informal discussions are currently underway concerning future editions in Turkish, Portuguese, Italian, Korean, and Serbo-Croatian.
- I’m currently in the process of collaborating on editing a volume entitled “*Constituent Imagination*”, with co-editor Stephen Shukaitis: over thirty essays have been submitted, and we are currently in the process of selection and editing. The proposal is currently being considered at Monthly Review Press.
- **Essays in English:** aside from these book projects, several essays have appeared or been accepted over the last year. Let me list here only the most salient scholarly essays in English, then continue with those in other languages:
 - “The Political Metaphysics of Stupidity”, an essay that has just appeared in the British journal *The Commoner*, as an introduction to a chapter from my book “Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value”.
 - “Turning Modes of Production Inside Out: Or, Why Capitalism is a Transformation of Slavery (short version),” to appear in a special issue of *Critique of Anthropology* dedicated to Terence Turner, due out January/February 2006.
 - “The Auto-Ethnography that Can Never Be and the Activist Ethnography that Might Be,” to appear in an edited volume entitled *Academic Life Passages*, edited by Donna Young and Anne Meneley (University of Toronto Press, 2005).
 - “Fetishism and Social Creativity, or Fetishes are Gods in Process of Construction: a Contribution from West Africa”, due to appear in *Anthropological Theory*, Fall 2005.
 - “Towards An Anarchist Anthropology”, to appear in the volume *Beyond Resistance: The Future of Freedom* (Nova Science Press, Robert Fletcher, editor) – likely to appear in 2006.
 - I am currently preparing a theoretical essay on re-imagining world-systems analysis for *Review, Journal of Fernand Braudel Society*, co-written with sociologist Andrej Grubacic.
- **In Italian:** one long essay (“Azione Diretta e Anarchismo da Seattle in Poi”), just published in a collection entitled *Affinità sovversive: i movimenti sociali americani nella Guerra globale* (Franco Barchiezi, editor. Derive Approdi,

Roma, 2005). The book consists of three such essays: one by Michael Hardt, one by Stanley Aronowitz, and one by myself. The editor is currently looking for an American publisher.

- **In French:** one essay ("La sociologie comme science et comme utopie.") appeared in late 2004 in *Revue du MAUSS Semestrielle No. 24* ("Une théorie sociologique générale est-elle pensable?" Second Semestre 2004), and another (for the issue entitled "Que reste-t-il de l'idéal démocratique ?") has been accepted and is due to appear in the first semester of 2005 (*Revue du MAUSS Semestrielle No.25*, Première Semestre 2005). The editors have also asked me to prepare an essay summarizing my position on value theory to appear in No.26. I have also been added to the Revue's editorial collective.
- **In Portuguese:** an essay ("O Comunismo de Mauss"), co-written with anthropologist Marcos Lanna, to appear in the Brazilian journal *Revista de Antropologia*. Another essay, on Madagascar, is due out in the Brazilian journal *Campos* no. 5, Spring 2005. (A third essay, an introduction to the MAUSS group originally published in English, appeared in Portuguese translation as the introduction to a collection of their writings entitled *A Dádiva Entre Os Modernos: Discussao Sobre Os Fundamentos E As Regras Do Social* (Paulo Henrique Martins, ed. Petrópolis:Vozes, 2004).
- **In Danish:** an interview entitled "Værdi og penge. Interview af Kåre Jansbøl" (Value and money, an interview by Kaare Jansboel) due to appear in *Tidsskriftet Antropologi* this summer, in a special issue composed of essays emerging from the value seminar I conducted in Copenhagen in May 2004.
- **Other Languages:** several previously published essays have also appeared in translation over the course of the last year. "The Twilight of Vanguardism" appeared in German and Spanish editions of the World Social Forum compendium, "The New Anarchists" appeared in the Japanese magazine *Gendai Shiso* and "The Globalization Movement and the New New Left" has appeared in a recent Chinese translation of the volume *Implicating Empire*.

During this year I also presented papers at Haverford College and the University of Chicago, led a seminar on democratic theory at the European Social Forum, and will be presenting a paper in April at Cornell. I will also be presenting at the 4th Rhetoric Culture Conference in Mainz this July.

This spring, I was asked to present the first lecture in Cardozo Law School's seminar "Why Law?" organized by Peter Goodrich and Simon Critchley. I have been an active participant in the seminar, which has also included lectures by Jacques Ranciere, Alain Badiou, and Peter Sloterdijk. An edited volume is planned.

As you can see, I've been working hard to extend my own, and hence the department's visibility in anthropology and related disciplines. Please consult the accompanying CV for further details and information.

Teaching

The Faculty Handbook also mentions "achievement and promise as a teacher", and I consider teaching and advising graduate and undergraduate students to be the most important, and rewarding, aspect of my work. This year (2004-2005), I offered the following courses as part of the departmental curriculum:

- **"Anthropology and Classical Social Theory" (Anthro 592).** Designed to introduce socio-cultural graduate students to the historical and intellectual foundations of European Social Theory, with a specific emphasis on the relevance of this tradition to anthropological concerns, the course is structured around the classical texts by Durkheim, Marx, and Weber. It also aims to provide lucid explanations of fundamental theoretical concepts (dialectics, hermeneutics), as well as explaining how they have informed the practice of ethnography. Designed to complement Anthro 500a and 500b, I have been teaching this course every Fall since I arrived in Yale, and it has had regularly strong enrolments each year. It is particularly popular with students preparing their qualifying exams.
- **"Societies and Cultures of the Indian Ocean Region" (Anthro 220).** This is an area course that acquaints students with the cultures of the Indian Ocean region, with a particular focus on Indonesia, Madagascar, and the Swahili Coast. It simultaneously serves as an introduction to world-systems theory, historical anthropology, and the Austronesian world. It is a unique offering that is distinctive to Yale – only a handful of American universities offer courses on the Indian Ocean and none to my knowledge which combine it with an emphasis on the Austronesian world—which is something that students—both anthropology majors and others—clearly appreciate. In the fall, it was the most popular area course offered by the department. It also had the second highest enrolment of all socio-cultural courses offered that term. This class is currently being considerably updated, in relation to exciting new developments in the field, and my own current research on the subject.
- **"Theories of Value in Anthropology" (Anthro 594).** This is a seminar structured around the themes of my 2001 book on the same subject. It serves both as one of the primary graduate-level economic anthropology classes in the department, and as an expansion on the themes of Anthro 592, introducing students to the seminal work of Mauss, Polanyi, Appadurai, Strathern, Godbout, and many others. It has become a particularly important class for students wishing to integrate cultural approaches and political economy/development concerns. Recognizing the international interest that my book, and theories of value in general, have recently inspired, I was invited

to teach an abbreviated-version of the course at the University of Copenhagen last Spring (May 2004).

- **“Myth and Ritual” (Anthro 289)** has become one of the anthropology department’s largest and most popular courses. Although I inherited it from a predecessor whose enrolments averaged around 12 or 15, mine have run as high as 180. This year at midterm I had an enrolment of 137, making it not only the largest anthropology course this spring, but one of the most popular courses in the social sciences at Yale. Not surprisingly, given student enthusiasm, this is a course I very much enjoy teaching. At those numbers, however, it is also a departmental service to the University.

At the risk of proclaiming my success a little too loudly, I’d also like to mention that my Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course (Anthro 110, Spring 2004) -which I am scheduled to teach again in 2006—was, with 70 students, also one of the most popular in recent memory, and that the numbers of undergraduate Anthropology majors have increased this year, partly, it seems, as a result. I consider teaching these large classes, which also help employ graduate students as TAs, an important part of my service to the University and the Department.

In recognition of my success in undergraduate teaching, I was asked to give one of four “Object Lessons” talks at the Yale Art Gallery. This is a student-nominated process and, I am told, an honor reserved for the most popular undergraduate instructors

I am also deeply committed to undergraduate and graduate advising. This year, I am the chief reader for three undergraduate senior papers. I sat on five graduate exam committees, and I was signatory to four prospectuses. I’m currently teaching two directed reading courses with graduate students, and a third with three undergraduate anthropology seniors. This latter is, effectively, a class unto itself, since we meet weekly to discuss the readings. I expect at least one of these students will go on to graduate work in the next few years.

Service To The Department

My main contribution to departmental life this year was the organization of the department’s colloquium series. My approach was to the colloquium’s organization was somewhat innovative. During the Fall semester, usually lacking in colloquia, I used the opportunity allow professors in the department an opportunity to present their current projects to their colleagues—something that has not generally speaking happened in the department in the past. Then in the spring, I alternated between “big names” (established leaders in the discipline such as Michael Taussig, Catherine Lutz, Terence Turner) and younger scholars doing cutting-edge work (to whose ideas students would otherwise likely have to wait many years for exposure). Overall, I think the colloquium series has been quite a success, helping to reinforce and develop our position as a significant center for the exchange of anthropological ideas.

In addition I have served twice on Williams Fund committees, and also will be on the Silver Prize committee. I've been one of the few faculty members to have regularly attended many of our department's job talks and undergraduate functions, as well as the agrarian studies seminar. I have also formally requested to take part in any of the various review committees but so far without success.

At this point I should address some of the allegations made about me at my last reappointment hearing, concerning "citizenship" and "collegiality". These are a bit difficult to address because these are not terms that are defined or even mentioned in the Faculty Handbook—in fact, even service work is not, according to the Handbook, a relevant criterion for consideration in promotion to term associate (though it is considered relevant for tenure). Nonetheless, I obviously appreciate that collegiality is important, and I am glad to have the opportunity to address some of the claims put forward against me in my earlier review, claims to which I was given no opportunity to respond at the time. Many of these claims are patently erroneous. For example: it was stated that I am regularly late with my grades. The fact is that in the seven years I have been at Yale I have never, once, turned in a late grade sheet. The registrar's office could have confirmed this; they were never consulted. Repeated allegations have also been made about my revealing confidential information from faculty meetings: insofar as I have been able to track down the specifics of such accusations, they have always proved to be false, or even impossible (for example, the one allegation most regularly leveled against me is that I am supposed to have revealed to one graduate student which faculty members voted against his prospectus in a meeting – this despite the fact that I could not possibly have had this information since the vote was made by secret ballot!) I could multiply examples of similar unsupported, and indeed unsupportable, claims, but suffice it to say such claims could only circulate in an environment where employment decisions can be made on the basis of unsubstantiated rumors and the accused is not allowed to even know what is being said of them, much less reply.

As for the more general allegation that I am "unreliable": I find this slightly confusing because it implies that I cannot be depended on to perform work I have been asked to do. In fact, in all my years here, I have never once declined a task assigned to me (the only time I even came close was one single occasion when, just having learned of my brother's terminal illness, the head of a committee I was on kindly offered me a reprieve from it). In fact, I have been quite assiduous about my responsibilities to Yale. I have never once in seven years taken a sick day or asked another professor to substitute for me in class—in fact, I have been known to teach classes despite high fevers or pneumonia. What committee work I have been asked to do I have always carried out and have never heard any complaints about my performance. Nonetheless I have been asked to do almost none, sometimes, despite specific requests on my part to be assigned such work.

This being said, there are certain areas in which I do wish I could have been able to be more active and present in the department. The fact is that my early years at Yale were marked by certain difficulties: particularly the long terminal illness of my brother, during which I was forced to provide much of the primary care in New York. This, and my involvement with a new research project beginning with my sabbatical, meant that I was only on campus 3 to 4 days a week, and while I was always careful to make myself available to students, I can imagine this could have contributed to the impression that I was not as available to my

colleagues as I might have been. I have always regretted this. As soon as I was made aware that some of my colleagues objected, I immediately made efforts to make myself more of a presence on campus, and to do whatever service work I was allowed to do.

At this point let me return to the Faculty Handbook. I have more than satisfied the requirements that are actually specified. Where it is there specified that a candidate for promotion should have completed one major research project beyond the dissertation, I have now completed two. Where it specifies that such a candidate's work should be "such as to qualify for tenure at a major institution within five years" I in fact qualify now (most elite institutions demand one or two books from a candidate for tenure, I already have three and will soon have a contract for a fourth.)

I think in my own way I have added to reputation of the Yale anthropology department; in fact, I myself have been rather surprised by the enthusiastic reaction my work has received—especially internationally. I am quite excited by the prospect of taking part in what appears to be an emerging global debate on the larger social and political relevance of anthropology, and related disciplines. At the same time my courses continue to help attract students to departmental courses and to popularize the major. My outside letters of evaluation were in every case extremely positive and I enjoy strong support from the graduate students and undergraduate majors. I will continue to run the departmental colloquium through next fall, and I would be happy to undertake other appropriate administrative responsibilities.

If there have been miscommunications with my colleagues in the past, I hope it is clear that I have actively undertaken to correct these over the course of this year—and that I will always do so. I am committed to nurturing and furthering the intellectual life and educational mission of the Anthropology Department and Yale as a whole. I look forward to continuing to contribute to our collective task.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

David Graeber