

**WORKS AND DAYS**

**59/60**

in collaboration with

**Cultural Logic**

**Culture and Crisis**

Edited by

**Joseph G. Ramsey**

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**Volume 30**

**2012**

**ISSN 0886-2060**

## Editorial Policy

*Works and Days* provides a scholarly forum for the exploration of problems in cultural studies, pedagogy, institutional critique, and critical university studies. Each issue of the journal is organized around specific inquiries conducted as shared disciplinary or postdisciplinary research projects.

*Works and Days* aims to serve not only as a forum for collaborative research and teaching, but also as an environment in which mutual inquiries may flourish. Thus, we are eager to hear from collaborators who are already at work on projects suitable for publication in *Works and Days*. We also encourage proposals for joint projects and will assist in their formation.

### Subscriptions:

Individuals: \$15; Outside U.S.A.: \$20

Libraries/Institutions: \$50; Outside U.S.A.: \$60

**Acknowledgments:** Front cover design by Zachary A. Rhone. Cover photo credit courtesy of *Adbusters*.

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**Web site:** [www.worksanddays.net](http://www.worksanddays.net)

**Indexing:** MLA, Humanities Index, CompPile

**Publication:** *Works and Days* is partially funded by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences of Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

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**Volume 30, 2012**

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## Foreward, in Solidarity

*David B. Downing*

Today, we do not know what we have to do, but we have to act now, because the consequences of inaction could be catastrophic. (480)

--Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times*

In July, 2011, when the online magazine *Adbusters* created the striking image of the bull and ballerina, few people probably could have predicted that this very image would soon resonate around the world as an inspiration for the Occupy Wall Street movement. There is something so visceral in the contrast between the charging bull from Bowling Green in lower Manhattan as an iconic image of Wall Street aggression and the strikingly poised female beauty of the ballerina, all caught within the background fog (or smoke) from out of which a host of menacing figures threatens to overtake the whole scene. In a world so polarized by economic and political inequalities, the image energizes the public imagination represented by the 99%: it becomes possible to imagine new forms of solidarity emerging to combat the perpetual capitalist diversion of global resources and labor power for the many away from common human needs and towards ruthless profit and speculation for the few.

As Slavoj Žižek puts it in the title of his recent book, we are *Living in the End Times*, when the capitalist world-system has exhausted all the dumping grounds for toxic waste, all the rural areas for providing cheap labor, and all the natural resources required for endless accumulation. In these end times, many people experience daily life as riddled with crisis, uncertainty, precariousness, and violence. We don't know what will emerge in the next twenty-five to fifty years, but as many have now argued, the global economic system cannot just adapt itself as it has in the past by way of increasing expansion and more global hegemony by one nation or region (whether U.S. or China). We are living through a process whereby something other than just another capitalist cycle of boom and bust will have to come into being on an international scale--for better or for worse remains to be seen. Perhaps more so than in other times, we now have to act without always knowing what the consequences for those actions will be. Indeed, as all the contributors to this volume argue, the time has come. Let's hope we don't let it pass.

Above all else, this collaboration between *Cultural Logic* and *Works and Days* represents a tangible solidarity in these times of seemingly permanent crisis. For all of us on the staff, as we read through the remarkable online version of "Culture and Crisis" edited by Joe Ramsey, we were struck by its importance, as well as by our shared commitment to the work represented in this collection. It is therefore with great pleasure that we now offer this work in a significantly edited print edition.

"Culture and Crisis" needs to be as widely disseminated as possible in both online and print versions. These are key resources for understanding where we have been, what has happened, and what possibilities we might have for a different future. All of us at *Works and Days* are pleased and honored to be able to present "Culture and Crisis" as a special joint volume of our respective journals. We wish to express our gratitude to Joe Ramsey, and to all the contributors to this project, for their remarkable efforts to bring this work into being.



# Works & Days

*Cultural Logic*

