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**Christopher J Leininger\*** ([clein@math.uiuc.edu](mailto:clein@math.uiuc.edu)), Department of Mathematics, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, 1409 W. Green St., Urbana, IL 61801, and **Benson Farb** and **Dan Margalit**. *The lower central series and pseudo-Anosov dilatations.*

The dilatation of a pseudo-Anosov mapping class is a basic measure of its dynamical complexity. I'll explain how "high algebraic complexity" of a pseudo-Anosov mapping class implies large dilatation. The proof is elementary and mostly geometric in nature. (Received January 22, 2007)