EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVES

AN EMBRACE ACROSS THE GENERATIONS, AS WE BEGIN OUR FOURTH QUARTER CENTURY

Last July (Vol. 75, No. 3) this space was devoted to our own retrospective reflections on having carried *Science & Society* through its first three quarter centuries. Now we have two items that, each in its way, adds to these reflections. Together they constitute our "Editorial Perspectives" for the first issue of the fourth quarter century.

The first has special meaning for us as we contemplate the important task of passing S&S along to new generations. One of the newer members of our Editorial Board and Manuscript Collective, Dr. Raju Das, sent us a poem written by his 13-year-old daughter, Kriti — not for publication, but simply to share it, and with the understandable pride of a father! He informs us that the poem won first prize from the school district of which her school is a part. While Kriti may or may not come to be part of the S&S family in later years, we instantly experienced what her father Raju calls his "little feeling of happiness" in reading this poem, and so we all have, so to speak, adopted her! Like much good poetry, Kriti's poem is both simple and profound, and with her permission we share it here with our readers. I must admit to feeling that it offers a glimmer of light and hope against the darkness and evil that we so often must report, and analyze.

At the Left Forum in New York City last March, *Science & Society* held a session in honor of our 75th Anniversary. Another of our Editorial Board and Manuscript Collective members, Dr. Sheila Delany, made a formal presentation at that session, about the literary tradition at S&S. That presentation speaks to the other end of the generational spectrum, the contributions of the founding editors (in the person of Dr. Margaret Schlauch) and, somewhat later, Dr. Annette T. Rubinstein. Both women combined deep scholarship, intense political activism and fine literary sensibilities. The first two qualities, it must be said, are not so often found together among us "younger" folks, who have been confined within the walls of academe in ways that were

not characteristic of the early-20th-century left intellectuals. Their story is fascinating, and it is part of S&S' story; so we present Sheila's brief but pithy account as our gesture toward the past, just as Kriti Das' poem is our gesture toward the future. What was that grand old Marxist slogan? *Preserve and create!*

D. L.

Fight With Me . . .

KRITI KRANTIKA DAS

I found a world
In the depths of my dreams

Where beauty resided
Agony free

Peace and love
Abolished the hate
All in one silent blow

Ethnic division had no place
It got lost in the numbing
Of darkened gloom

Poverty faded
From each inch of this globe
It was stabbed by blades
Of vicious rage

But happiness prospered
And echoed in the winds
It showered each living soul
In golden light
Giving the world
Such a radiant gleam

I found a world
In the depths of my dreams
Where beauty resided
Agony free

If you want to see it
Fight with me!

Science & Society's 75-Year Literary Footprint

SHEILA DELANY

To prepare this short talk on the literary–cultural aspect of S&S at 75, I went through the journal's archives, now available on JSTOR complete from the very first issue of 1936. This was the second time I'd dipped into the archives; the first was pre-JSTOR, around 1999 or 2000, so it was in the old S&S office at John Jay College and using the physical issues, of which there was a complete run. I was looking for articles written by Margaret Schlauch, one of the founding editors, a well-known medievalist in linguistics and author of a once-famous book on Chaucer (full disclosure: I am also a medievalist and Chaucerian). Schlauch died in 1986, and in her honor I was helping to organize a conference in Poznan, Poland, which took place in 2002. Why Poland? Because that is where Margaret Schlauch went into exile in 1951 when she, along with many of her NYU and other academic colleagues, was commanded to appear before HUAC. In Warsaw she became head of the English Department at the university there and continued her teaching as well as her prolific scholarly career. My co-organizer for this conference was a former Minister of Education in a pre-Solidarity Polish government; he had studied linguistics with Margaret at Warsaw University; needless to say, he was able to arrange everything wonderfully for this small invitational meeting and we had a splendid time.

Annette Rubinstein, who died recently at the age of 97, was another S&S literary colleague. I was at her 95th birthday party at which we were entertained by Editor David Laibman, who is an accomplished musician. Annette had been blacklisted from university jobs both for being Jewish, and for being a communist.[1] Annette had her PhD in philosophy; she wrote

1 Annette had once been asked to change her name, in deference to anti-Semitism, when applying for an academic post. In place of "Rubinstein" she offered her mother's maiden name: "Shapiro"!

extensively on American literature and her books were and still are used as textbooks in China, where she often traveled and lectured. As a close friend of Schlauch, Annette supplied me with a lovely memoir of Margaret's life. It includes the following anecdote, which I think beautifully represents the blend of scholarship and activism that characterized both their lives, and the lives of many of us in the S&S community. The incident is set in Manhattan in 1949. In Annette's words:

> Vito Marcantonio, the veteran radical congressman, had decided to run in the mayoralty election, and I was campaign manager. We planned an early morning sound-truck appearance at the lower west side docks, which were almost entirely worked by Italian–Americans. Since the "shape-up" for the day's job took place at 5 a.m., our meeting began at 4. . . . Marc and I rode down on top of the truck, and as we approached the designated corner we saw Margaret chatting with a group of longshoremen. She had climbed a ladder and was with us before we could greet her. Maggie took over, said a few words of English, then smoothly slid into Italian. When she ended her introduction of Marc (Vito) with a quotation from Dante there was a roar of recognition and approval.

What I love about this anecdote is both Schlauch's use of Dante (himself a thoroughly political writer) in her organizing work, and the dockworkers' obvious familiarity with this 14th-century writer — a tradition going back to Dante's own day.

Although the circumstances were different, my experience of the S&S archives twelve years ago and now was similar: both times it was a treasure-trove, and a voyage of personal recognition for me, and it shattered every stereotype that might have lurked in my subconscious in spite of myself. I say this as a Trotskyist, a medievalist, a historicist literary scholar, and a practitioner and appreciator of the arts — all of these for the past four decades. So let me give you some idea of what I found that so impressed me and continues to impress me.

To step back a bit, and to begin with, *Science & Society* kept alive a critical tradition that was under attack in the United States. I am not speaking of the attack under cold-war McCarthyist anti-communism — and indeed S&S was never an exclusively communist or CP journal — but of a much longer conservative impulse in American scholarship and culture. I'm going to start with 1929 in France, when a group of historians started a journal called *Annales d'histoire economique et sociale*. Their aim was to rewrite the traditional history of names and dates, of kings and major cities, by replacing it with cultural history. This meant a few things: the history of all classes — workers, peasants, the unemployed; it meant the history of so-called marginal groups — prostitutes, lepers, the poor, women (who were long considered "marginal"); and it meant the long-term evolution of social structures and world

views (*mentalité*) as having explanatory power. Although this group considered their work strictly academic, not politically partisan, and although not all of them over the years were Marxists, it did share certain premises with a Marxian approach. We also may look to French historians who were Marxist and indeed in the French CP (PCF), particularly those whose specialty was the French Revolution — great scholars like Soboul, Mathiez, Duby. These are the historians who wrote about the *sans-culottes* as major players in the Revolution, and about the peasantry; who went to the small regional archives; who dug into the Parisian neighborhood and hospital and church archives. Some who left the PCF became influential literary and cultural critics of the 20th century, even when they turned against the Party or against Marxism — Michel Foucault, to name the one most recognizable here, or François Furet. Other leftist writer–activists such as Roland Barthes or Jacques Derrida , while not PCF members, did share basic aspects of its approach to culture, as can be seen from a perusal of Marx's, Engels' or Trotsky's writings on literature, art and culture. We also need to recall that in France, the PCF was a fairly prominent presence, not only in Parisian intellectual life but everywhere, with Communist mayors, town councils, teachers, newspapers, magazines, etc. So there was and has been for nearly a century in France a strong current of what we could call class-conscious, historicist broad cultural scholarship that was out of fashion in the United States until relatively recently.

Science & Society, I suggest, kept this tradition alive in the United States not only during the cold-war period but from its inception in the late 1930s. The journal thus became a venue for publication for scholars whose work was too left-wing for mainstream scholarly journals. I benefited from this option as a Marxist medievalist during the 1970s, before historicism, whether old or new, became fashionable in academic circles and before Marxism ceased to be a dirty word. S&S was one of the few venues that would publish explicitly class-conscious work, and I've been proud to publish articles and reviews in it from the 1970s until the present.

What sorts of things might one find, then, in trawling the archives? Who wrote for the journal? A partial list of some of the more recognizable names would include Kenneth Burke writing on William James (1936), Philip Rahv on Marxist lit crit, Granville Hicks, Dorothy van Ghent (whom I studied with much later) on Archibald MacLeish; there is Maurice Dobb, Paul Sweezy, Herbert Aptheker, Corliss Lamont on John Dewey, Antonio Gramsci on Croce (1946), Christopher Hill on the English Civil War, W. E. B. Du Bois on Frederick Douglass, Eric Hobsbawm, James Petras (1965) and many more. What did they write about? Everything! They reviewed new books in every field and from every country; they wrote articles on issues of importance in every area. They wrote about Picasso, Diderot, T. S. Eliot, Abraham Lincoln, Heraclitus, Plekhanov, Robespierre, about Van Wyk Brooks' classic *The Flowering of New*

England and Arthur Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*, about the 1381 peasant revolt in England, about economic factors in primitive religion; they wrote about Freudian theory, linguistics, science, art; more recently about women's issues, ecology, China, Cuba. In short, they were and are not sectarian, and the enthusiasm with which over the years the journal's writers and reviewers have plunged into the cultural *milieux* of their day is for me one of the most impressive features of the journal.

So I hope you will make sure that your library subscribes to it, and that you will think about joining this distinguished tradition by both reading and writing for *Science & Society*.

IN THIS ISSUE

We begin this issue — and this quarter century — with a pair of complementary articles, by Helen Yaffe and Steve Ludlam, on "Cuba and Socialism: Early and Current Debates and Challenges." In this time of hope and renewal in Latin America (at this writing, the Peruvian election results are in, and the turn to the left on that continent appears to be gaining strength), the Cuban "experiment" (socialism in a formerly underdeveloped country, built against great odds) is looking better and better, and the process of change and discussion there has disproportionate importance for the world as a whole. Yaffe and Ludlam, in different ways, link the Cuban present to its past, especially to the legacy of Che Guevara, showing, first, that that legacy is much richer and more complex than many have realized; second, that those who see in Cuba today nothing but a stubborn rear-guard action against the "inevitable" triumph of the "free market" understand very little about either socialism or Cuba.

Political economist John Weeks re-examines the theory of money in the Marxist tradition, linking this issue to the current seemingly chronic turbulence in capitalist financial markets. Many writers on this topic have followed the neoclassical mainstream in positing a historic transition from commodity money — money backed by gold — to fiat money, with the associated quantity-based explanation of the price level. Weeks, to the contrary, argues that the quantity theory is unsound; that the commodity-based theory can be re-developed and perfected, and can also be shown to be empirically valid.

Review articles in this issue cover two important new works: Terry Eagleton's *Reason, Faith and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate*, and Peter D. Thomas' *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*. Alex

Saxton's study of Eagleton focuses on the latter's attack against the "New Atheists," and problematizes his association with the new syncretic post-Fundamentalist ideology as related to the lures of upper-level academic legitimation. Panagiotis Sotiris examines Thomas' new study of Gramsci, associating himself with the author's call to free this study from arbitrary present-day political designations (especially "Eurocommunism"), but questioning other aspects of the Gramscian legacy, perhaps especially the idea that the historicist philosophical standpoint adequately replaces all attempts to elaborate a distinctively Marxist (historical materialist) social theory, one that embraces the claims of science to be studying some sort of objective social reality.

D. L.

ERRATUM

Owing to last-minute editorial (and personnel) adjustments, the review by John Weeks of Howard J. Sherman's *The Roller Coaster Economy* was listed in the Table of Contents for the October 2011 issue, and also in the Index for the 2011 volume year. The review actually appears in this issue. We regret the error.