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Correction

The article by Svati P. Shah, “Born into Saving Brothel Children,” which appeared on pp. 521–23 of the October 2005 (vol. 17, no. 4) issue, was inadvertently left off the table of contents. We apologize for the omission.

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Editors' Introduction

In this issue

we highlight both the often-undervalued practice of translation and the significance of rereading—and rethinking—classic Marxian texts with a symposium on Joseph Buttigieg's new edition of Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. Until recent years, English-language access to Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis" was limited to a few thematic anthologies of selected texts (plus a large secondary literature based on those volumes). Now, with Buttigieg's ongoing translation of all 29 notebooks, consisting of six volumes (three of which are now completed), students and scholars in the English-speaking world will have access to the complete texts, in the sequence and context in which they were originally composed.

David Ruccio begins by noting that reading Buttigieg's edition represented for him "the discovery of a new Gramsci," including both new concepts and themes and new contexts for familiar ideas. He cites as examples Gramsci's comments on intellectuals and hegemony in Notebook 1 and the way they can be used to make sense of contemporary issues, such as the global justice movement and the rise to power of the Bush administration. The unfinished nature of Gramsci's work invites us to extend his unique contributions to Marxian theory and to recognize that our own work as Marxist analysts of the present conjuncture remains unfinished. Joseph Childers explains that his own first encounter with Gramsci's writings was influenced by the work and teachings of Raymond Williams and Edward Said. For Childers, what connects these two critics with Gramsci and Buttigieg is their shared concern with the "larger structural role of . . . orthodox habits of mind" and the forms of "resistance and change" that can take place with and through culture. Childers also notes that the critical apparatus supplied by Buttigieg—the prefaces and introductions, informational and explanatory notes, and pointers to other notebooks—provides readers "a sense of the topicality and the intellectual urgency that underpins Gramsci's project" and, at the same time, an example of the combined role of teacher and student associated with being a Marxist intellectual.

Noting that Gramsci himself devoted four notebooks to translation (to "provide purpose to his prison life" but also to "contribute to the struggle against fascism and capitalism"), Peter Ives argues that Gramsci used translation as a central metaphor for political and cultural analysis. If for Gramsci translation was not merely a technical exercise, the transmission of ideas from one linguistic or cultural context to another, but rather a way of altering the vocabulary and way of thinking of those who speak the original and target languages, both Buttigieg's translation of the *Prison Notebooks* and Gramsci's references to translating the experience of the Soviet Revolution to the Italian context take on added significance: each is productive of

something new. For William Spanos, Buttigieg's translation of and introduction to the method of the *Prison Notebooks* has the additional merit of shedding light on the "structural principle" and the particular method of investigation that guided Gramsci's work. Spanos regards as Gramsci's major contribution his critique of the "metaphysically grounded base-superstructure model that leads to a privileging of economics, and his ontological insight that being is an indissoluble continuum, which demands a "transdisciplinary mode of inquiry." This insight is affirmed in the features of Gramsci's writings that others have overlooked or misrepresented: the attention to the "emancipatory possibilities of the intellectual," the open-ended historicity of history, and the negative consequences of privileging the answer over the question.

In his response, Buttigieg explains that all attempts to compensate for the fragmentariness of the *Notebooks*, to remedy their supposed incompleteness, presume that the text must have a center, which identifies its "true meaning." In losing sight of or directing attention away from the "materiality" of Gramsci's text, such interpretations violate Gramsci's own injunction to search for the "rhythm of thought" of an author. Buttigieg summarizes the rhythm of Gramsci's thought as "paying attention to small things, focusing on the particular" and avoiding the tendency both to homogenize singular elements and to reduce social reality to deterministic laws—in short, as philology. It is this method that Buttigieg finds in the complete text of the *Prison Notebooks*, a method that kept Gramsci's Marxism open in his time and that gives his writings additional relevance in our time.

We want to thank another translator, Craig Carson, for providing us with an English-language version of Katia Genel's essay on the different uses of the concept of biopower in the writings of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. Biopower, for Foucault, involved a redefinition of power and a shift in the regime of power—a transformation in the way power is exercised that in turn demands a new method for analyzing the technologies of power. Thus, when power includes life in its calculations, and especially the population as a set of collective phenomena, it shifts the regime of power away from the old ability of the sovereign, "to take life or let live," toward a new set of disciplining and normalizing mechanisms, "to make live and let die." According to Genel, this shift led Foucault away from studies of sovereignty and law (of who within the political order was invested with certain repressive powers) to an analysis of the subject (wherein power is a positive mechanism, which leads to the intensification and increase of life). What is peculiar about Agamben's approach to biopower is that, in contrast to Foucault, he seeks to define a biopolitical structure within, not apart from, sovereign power. This provokes Genel to ask whether Agamben's theory of biopower, according to which sovereign power establishes itself by producing a biopolitical body on which it is exercised, is a way of completing Foucault's project or of criticizing it. Her answer is that, once Agamben redefines sovereignty as biopower (established not on the basis of an idealized social contract but, rather, through an act of exception, by life's exposure to death), he is ultimately led to a scheme that is "fundamentally incompatible with Foucault's work." While finding much that is worthwhile in Agamben's depiction of the logic of power as redefining what is human, Genel sees his work as committed to a unitary notion of power. Therefore, Agamben abandons not only Foucault's discovery

of a plurality of forms and mechanisms of localized power but also the possibility of an oppositional politics grounded on something other than a problematic notion of bare life.

Do Keynesian policies represent a viable alternative to the free-market shibboleths of neoliberalism? Can they effectively forestall an economic crisis and improve laborers' working and living conditions? It would seem so, to judge by the pronouncements of many radical economists and activists but, from the perspective of Marxian value theory, the answer is a resounding no. So argues Guglielmo Carchedi, who begins his critique with a primer on Marxian crisis theory, focusing particular attention on the rise and fall of the average rate of profit. Carchedi's view is that typical civilian Keynesianism—whether Capital-financed (public works financed by expropriating private money-holders), Labor-financed (state appropriations of workers' savings), or credit-financed (increasing government deficits)—“cannot create the conditions for a sustained upturn and boom.” What then of “military Keynesianism,” that is, the state-commissioned production of weaponry? This can only be effective in times of war, and only for the imperialist countries. While Carchedi encourages the working-class to reject Keynesian economic policies on their own terms (a stance which, he acknowledges, may be politically unpopular at this juncture), he does advocate “state-induced, Capital-financed public works” in order to move in the direction of new social relations based on “cooperation, equality, and solidarity.”

While expressing his appreciation for the theoretical openings created by the concept of overdetermination, Julian Markels expresses a deep concern for the “subsequent development of AESA thinking.” The main problem Markels identifies in essays by members of the Association for Economic and Social Analysis, George DeMartino, J. K. Gibson-Graham, and David Ruccio (whose work was published in the January 2003 issue of *RM*), is that they “abandon the historical logic of Western Marxism” in favor of a “floating contingency of personal or collective agendas drawn from randomly available discourses.” DeMartino, for example, stands accused of “reading history out of Marxism” by disavowing the historical dominance of capitalism in favor of a disaggregated notion of distributive class justice. Similarly, Gibson-Graham are criticized for encouraging the emergence of communal and other noncapitalist imaginaries without understanding that capitalism is the “governing practice” that renders the chances of success unrealistic. While Markels characterizes DeMartino and Gibson-Graham as equivocating on the issue of the historical logic that governs the development of capitalism (and, with it, the rest of the social world), he considers Ruccio's theory of imperialism to represent a final rejection of any such logic, “throwing out the historical baby with the ontological bathwater.” Markels favors, instead, the approach contained in Ellen Meiksins Wood's account of the origins of capitalism and in the work of another AESA author, Richard Wolff (published in the same issue of *RM*). Markels applauds in Wolff's essay on colonial reparations in Africa what he admires in Wood: a focus on a historical logic whereby capitalism has become dominant and continues to expand its dominance over all instances of noncapitalism. It is this attention to the processes of history, “outside theory,” that Markels finds in Barbara Kingsolver's novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, and recommends as the way forward for contemporary Marxist thinking.

The official doctrine has always been to take the war to “them,” over there, in order to safeguard “our” life here at home. In “Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful,” a series of photographic collages produced from 1967 to 1972, Martha Rosler inserted images (all of them culled from the pages of *Life* magazine) of the imperialist war in Vietnam into scenes that enacted the gender roles and forms of commodity consumption of suburban domesticity in the United States. In the “new series,” composed in 2004 using an updated technique of photomontage, Rosler invites us both to relive the experience of recognizing the representational gap that exists between the brutal war “over there” and hyperconsumerism back at home and to confront the ideological distance between the circumstances surrounding the U.S. invasion and occupation of Vietnam and the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. To judge by recent events, the representational strategies and ideological structures supporting the current wars are finally beginning to crumble, at least in part because of the trenchant critiques assembled by artists like Rosler.

The so-called transformation problem has been one of the most contested topics in the history of debates concerning Marxian value theory. Kepa Ormazabal’s contention is that most approaches to the issue of how to theorize the relationship between the production values and exchange prices of commodities (once, as in volume 3 of *Capital*, a uniform rate of profit is posited) have mistakenly presumed that it is a quantitative problem. Since value, as Ormazabal interprets Marx, is a universal whose substance is social labor, it has neither an objective existence nor a quantitative dimension. Rather, price is the appropriate expression of value under capitalism and, in consequence, “there is no such thing as ‘quantities of value.’” How, then, should we interpret the transformation of value into price in Marx’s text? Ormazabal argues that Marx is criticizing Ricardo and his followers for their “superficial conception of value”—for believing that competitive prices, which are partly determined by the distribution of social labor among different capitalists to achieve a uniform rate of profit, actually create value—and that, in rejecting Ricardo’s methodology, Marx is simply showing that, under capitalist conditions, competitive pricing only appears to contradict the determination of value by labor. The deception comes from believing that the labor theory of value is a theory of the quantity of exchange-value, which can be empirically validated or refuted by the proper transformation of labor-values into competitive-prices. For Ormazabal, what is lost in the transformation problem exercise is Marx’s principal contention that labor is the substance of value which, within the capitalist stage of history, comes to be expressed—objectively, without distortion—in the prices of commodities.

Capital’s invasion into the realm of medicine—what Adrian Daub calls the new “sickness industry”—has the paradoxical quality of adopting the conceptual strategies employed by left-wing critical discourses of the body: supposedly normal states of the body are questioned; previously marginal conditions are normalized; individual problems are made universal; and the sick are encouraged to empower themselves through advocacy groups. In reaction to this new “marketing” of the body, critics have, equally paradoxically, resorted to naturalized images of personhood and corporeality. Daub, in order to make sense of this “uncanny constellation of strategic reversals,” turns to Theodor Adorno’s hermeneutic of natural history. What Adorno allows us to see is that the pharmaceutical industry and the medical

establishment first remove the body and humanness from the realm of nature, and then position themselves above human subjects as a force of nature. Yet, they cannot follow up the promises of technical progress embodied in their infomercials with actual social progress; in the terms of Adorno's philosophy, they abolish the necessity of death by fiat and therefore expropriate from us the experience of death, which otherwise comes to us as "half necessity, half accident." For Daub, what is occurring in the capitalist medicalization of the human body is merely an extension of the usual palliatives offered by late capitalism: "it prescribes painkillers for History, for 'what hurts'."

The two essays in the *Remarx* section take up themes that are central to Marxian class analysis: the issue of American "exceptionalism" and the role of the nonexclusion principle in achieving class justice. In the first essay, John Manley challenges the theory of American exceptionalism (according to which U.S. history runs counter to Marx's predictions), as well as Theda Skocpol's theory of state autonomy (wherein state activities are explained independently of social forces), both of which seek to distance our understanding of the U.S. welfare state from classes and class struggles. Manley turns to the historical evidence to argue that, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, class was central to the activities of and the events surrounding three U.S. social movements: the labor movement, populism, and progressivism. He also demonstrates both that the U.S. welfare state is less exceptional compared with Western Europe than is often assumed and that it is a mistake to prioritize the state and to explain its activities independently of social forces outside the state. For Manley, Marxian class analysis has much to contribute to an explanation of both the rise (e.g., to prevent or contain socialism) and the more recent retrenchment (e.g., to give freer reign to capitalist competition) of welfare-regulatory regimes in the United States and elsewhere.

For his part, Robert Tanner takes issue with the way two recent *RM* authors, Stephen Cullenberg and George DeMartino, conceive of class justice. Since Cullenberg and DeMartino define exploitation as occurring when the performers of surplus labor are excluded from its appropriation, they argue that justice can be achieved when the performers are not excluded from appropriating the surplus. Not only does Tanner contrast this "nonexclusion" principle with what he considers to be Marx's principle, "sole appropriation"; he claims that the approach utilized by Cullenberg and DeMartino would not eliminate exploitation (it might even strengthen it, in "partnership" with capital) and only the appropriation of surplus labor solely by those who perform it would lead to the elimination of class exploitation. Tanner's normative principle of class justice is therefore based on the idea that only productive workers are exploited and that exploitation is only eliminated when they are the sole appropriators of the surplus they've produced. What then of the distribution of the surplus? Do workers, now the sole appropriators, have any obligation to distribute the surplus in a just manner? Tanner turns to Lenin to answer these questions: workers universalize their struggle to end their own class exploitation by distributing the surplus to end all other social oppressions. In Tanner's view, only sole appropriation, and not the principle of nonexclusion, both functions to eliminate exploitation and to ensure that it cannot return.

Cecilia Rio describes Richard Ohmann's *Politics of Knowledge: The Commercialization of the University, the Professions, and Print Culture* as an "inspiring and courageous book." While in the end Ohmann's essays do not provide a "rigorous analysis of exactly how capitalism impacts knowledge production," they do draw much-needed attention to the profound changes—such as drastic cutbacks in public funding, the restructuring of programs and disciplines, the privatization of universities, and the contingent nature of academic labor—currently taking place in higher education. According to Rio, the author's great achievement is to establish the connections between his own experiences as a teacher, scholar, and activist to larger trends within the economy and society. In this sense, "Ohmann is a master of locating the historical and the political within the personal."

Plans are well underway for the Rethinking Marxism 2006 conference that will take place in October at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. The organizers welcome proposals for papers and panels that examine the state of contemporary Marxism, including the intellectual traditions and activist movements that continue to draw their inspiration from Marxism and the events that require a rethinking of old and new Marxian concepts. Readers will find additional information—including the call for papers, registration details, and much more—on the conference web site: www.rethinkingmarxism2006.org.

The Editors

SYMPOSIUM

**Translating Gramsci:
Joseph Buttigieg's Edition of the
*Prison Notebooks***

David F. Ruccio
Joseph W. Childers
Peter Ives
William V. Spanos
Joseph Buttigieg

The experience upon which the philosophy of praxis is based cannot be schematized; it is history in its infinite variety and multiplicity, the study of which can give rise to "philology" as a method of scholarship.

—Antonio Gramsci

Unfinished Business: Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*

David F. Ruccio

Reading Joseph Buttigieg's edition of Gramsci's Prison Notebooks represents for me and, I imagine, for others, the discovery of a new Gramsci—at each turn of the page, either stumbling upon themes and concerns of which we had been largely unaware or encountering familiar concepts in an entirely different context. Gramsci pushes Marxian theory forward, and the text of the Notebooks allows us to do the same with Gramsci's work. But for all their richness concerning the issues of culture, politics, and intellectuals, one of the traditional areas of Marxism—political economy—appears to be largely overlooked in the Notebooks.

Key Words: Antonio Gramsci, Joseph Buttigieg, Hegemony, Political Economy

In thinking about the significance of the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, especially his *Prison Notebooks*, I often think of my grandfather. Not because my ancestor was a socialist or communist. Far from it. Like many in his immigrant generation of the first quarter of the twentieth century, particularly those from the south of Italy, he voted Democratic in the United States (the result of being victimized by nativist prejudice and “schooled” in factory life) and, at the same time, expressed sympathies for monarchism, Mussolini, and the fascist-era colonial adventures of his country of origin.

The connections I am drawn to make between my grandfather and Gramsci are of a different order. My first encounter with Gramsci's unfinished notes “On Some Aspects of the Southern Question” helped me to understand the conditions that, in addition to the immigrant experience itself, produced the contours and horizons of my Italian family's world-view. Even before I arrived in the village that my maternal grandparents were forced to have the freedom to abandon, I was struck by Gramsci's “sympathy” for the south (he was born and raised in Sardinia, before leaving for the continent) and his decidedly unsentimental analysis—of “the great amorphous, disintegrated mass of the peasantry,” the “politicking, corrupt, and faithless” layer of Southern intellectuals, their role in mediating the relations between big land-owners and the peasantry, the three groups forming a “monstrous agrarian bloc” whose “single aim is to the preserve the status quo,” the coexistence in the South of “great accumulations of culture and intelligence” and a lack of “any organization of middle culture.” While Gramsci made these observations in 1926 (just before being

sentenced to incarceration by the fascist regime), my own series of visits to the ancestral village beginning in the 1970s have confirmed their continued validity.

And I consider myself fortunate to have had my grandfather around for as long as I did (he died at the age of 101), having had the opportunity to learn about both the “old country” and immigrant life in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. As it turns out, my grandfather was born one year before Gramsci, that mythical historical figure! This natal coincidence just shows that the lives of many of us (of a certain age) could have overlapped with that of Gramsci. Our generation could have conversed with him directly. But, due to his own ill health and the punishing conditions of fascist prisons, Gramsci died in 1937. What we are left with, now that the political party he founded has been summarily undone, is a distant memory and a set of remarkable writings.

None is more powerful than the *Prison Notebooks*. Until recently, all those of us in the English-speaking world had access to were the Hoare and Smith *Selections*. Now, Joseph Buttigieg—whose insightful commentaries on various aspects of Gramsci’s work have already raised the standard for Gramscian scholarship (especially, in English, Buttigieg 1983, 1987, 1990, 1994, and 1995), and who, as secretary for the International Gramsci Society, has worked with a close-knit group of international Gramscian intellectuals, many of whom have published essays in *Rethinking Marxism*,¹ to expand access to both Gramsci’s texts and the interpretive work that has been carried out—has embarked on an ambitious and carefully rendered project of making the entire set of notebooks available in English for the first time. The first two volumes of a projected six have already been published, while the third should appear soon.

What is the significance of this enterprise—of making available to an international readership (to the extent that English has become the world language) the text of all twenty-nine notebooks (along with the critical apparatus originally supplied by the late Italian editor Valentino Gerratana, corrected and supplemented by Buttigieg’s own meticulous notes)? As Buttigieg makes clear in his introductory essay to the first volume (comprising notebooks 1 and 2), it is unlikely that readers of the complete *Prison Notebooks* will approach them without some prior acquaintance with or knowledge of Gramsci’s contributions to Marxist theory. That is, those who are approaching Gramsci for the first time will probably start elsewhere (perhaps, for the English-speaking world, with the *Selections*, *Letters*, or *Reader*, one or another recent synthesis of Gramsci’s work, in article or book form, or even with one of the growing list of Web sites that focus on Gramsci).² In my case (since you already know the intimate details of my family), I opened the first volume of the *Prison Notebooks* with limited exposure, which included the combination of praise and critique aimed at Gramsci’s contributions to Marxian philosophy in Althusser’s essay “Marxism Is Not a Historicism,” various selective readings of the *Selections*, and a familiarity with certain basic concepts closely associated with Gramsci (such as hegemony, passive revolution, and subaltern groups) that one generally picks up in Western Marxist

1. See the list of texts in the Appendix and the insightful review essay by Jonathan Diskin (1993).

2. The International Gramsci Society (<http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/>) maintains an updated list of publications on Gramsci. It also has links to other online Gramsci bibliographies.

intellectual circles. For me, reading Buttigieg's edition of the *Notebooks* therefore represented the discovery of a new Gramsci—at each turn of the page, either stumbling upon themes and concerns of which I had been largely unaware or encountering familiar concepts in an entirely different context.

A good example of what I'm referring to is a pair of notes in the first volume: notes 43 and 44 to Notebook 1.³ Note 43 starts out in a relatively innocuous fashion, with the continuation (from notes 35 and 38) of Gramsci's ruminations on "different types of periodicals" and then opens up a discussion of the relationship between different cultural movements and the North/South divide in Italy, finally focusing his attention on the roles of the main political parties in the Risorgimento. These are not topics that, per se, attract the nonspecialist. However, along the way, Gramsci is drawn to make thought-provoking comments concerning the relationship between language and politics ("In reality, every political movement creates a language of its own" [126]) and the existence of different kinds of cultures ("A very common error is that of thinking that every social stratum elaborates its consciousness and culture in the same way, with the same methods, that is, with the methods of professional intellectuals" [128]), and to produce the first version of his distinctive treatment of intellectuals. To wit, "By intellectuals, one must understand not [only] those ranks commonly referred to by this term, but generally the whole social mass that exercises an organizational function in the broad sense, whether it be in the field of production, or culture, or political administration" (133).

Gramsci's analysis of the different political currents in the Risorgimento spills over into note 44, where readers will now be on more familiar terrain. As is almost always the case in the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci begins with a concrete case (in history or the current conjuncture, from memory or an item he picked up in one of the books or journals he managed to procure while in prison) and then produces the appropriate concepts. In this case, he notes that "historically, the Action Party was led by the Moderates," which leads him to make a distinction between the role of a class in "leading" and being "dominant" and to create for the first time his notion of hegemony. He writes, "There can and there must be a 'political hegemony' even before assuming government power, and in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony one must not count solely on the power and material force that is given by government" (137).

Here, in condensed form, one can find all the major elements of what Gramsci will continue to elaborate in the remainder of the *Notebooks*, which will be codified by later scholars as his theory of hegemony. Hegemony represents a combination of leadership (of allied forces) and dominance (over opposing forces). It is created—it can and, for Gramsci, must be created—before assuming power, through "passive

3. As is easy to determine from Buttigieg's notation at the end of each note, number 43 reappears, in modified form, in Notebooks 20, 24, and 19 while a version of number 44 can be found in Notebook 19. According to Marcus Green's concordance tables (http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/resources/concordance_table/, accessed: 18 October 2003), neither of these notes is reprinted in any of the three major anthologies. Their later versions, from notebook 19, are included in the *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, although in a different context and order.

revolution,” an important term that he simply adds at a later date in the margin. And, once a group is in power, its hegemony is maintained not solely by “material force” but, presumably (as he alludes to in the previous note), through culture and the work of intellectuals.

Even in this embryonic form, various aspects of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony can be utilized to illuminate contemporary issues and problems. Given the limitations of time, I would like to mention only two. The first concerns what I consider to be a disturbing tendency within the current antiglobalization or “global justice” movement to focus on the coercive exercise of power, while downplaying the other dimensions of hegemony. This can be seen in the coverage of many events, including the documentary produced and disseminated by the video team of the Independent Media Center in the wake of the anti-FTAA protests in Quebec City in April 2001, *Trading Freedom: The Secret Life of the FTAA*.⁴ I agree that it is important to record instances of police brutality and limitations placed on free speech and freedom of assembly—what the videographers refer to as the “state repression of dissent.” However, an exaggerated interest in the creation and maintenance of hegemony through coercion has two negative consequences: one tactical, the other strategic. In terms of tactics, it romanticizes violent confrontation, thereby leading to one-sided conceptions of and preparations for antiglobalization activities and, perhaps even more significant, the alienation of potential allies. Strategically, the tendency to forget about the other dimensions of hegemony overlooks, on one hand, the roles played by the broad group of intellectuals and cultures distinct from that of the intellectuals (what Gramsci will later, in Notebook 1, note 64, refer to as common sense) in creating the conditions whereby the current hegemony of neoliberalism is produced and reproduced over time and, on the other hand, the cracks and fissures in that hegemony (along with the existence of alternative notions of global justice) that can be marshaled for the “passive revolution” whereby neoliberalism (both at home and abroad) can be successfully opposed.

The second example is the sequence of events that brought Bush and the rest of his administration to power in the United States. While much of the liberal media has centered attention on the machinations that took place during the 2000 voting (especially in Florida) or the role of neoconservative figures within the administration after the election (especially after 9/11) or the role of “values” in the 2004 campaign and ultimate reelection of Bush, the Left is in the position to conduct a great deal more analysis of the right wing’s creation of “political hegemony” even before it assumed government power. In the remainder of note 44, Gramsci provides an example of the kind of concrete investigation that might be carried out in order to understand the ways in which, through a long and patient preparation, a neoconservative hegemony was established such that, in the aftermath of the 2000 election and the events of 9/11, the right wing was in the position to assume and maintain power. What we can retrieve from Gramsci is less an overarching theory that, in its application, would yield the “correct results” than an orientation and set of research

4. The video is available for downloading at <http://tacticalmedia.mine.nu/index.html> (accessed: 18 October 2003), a Web site that also contains details about the making of the video and the growth of the Independent Media Center project.

criteria offered by the method of concretely determining the conditions within which one movement is successful in “establishing the apparatus of their political leadership” (137). In the case of the United States, one would have to analyze the changes that have taken place over the course of the past twenty years in economic thought and policy (from which the likes of Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz have now chosen to defect), national defense planning (culminating in the formation of the Project for the New American Century in 1997), political theory (especially around the figure of Leo Strauss), and much more. We might then conduct research on specific intellectuals as well as larger intellectual movements, on sources of financing and influential organizations (from obscure think tanks to radio talk shows), on the failures of liberal and radical thought as well as the ability of right-wing intellectuals to create “such a power of attraction” for others (137).⁵

Of course, that would only be the start. But it does offer an indication of the wealth of contributions to Marxian theory that can be found in working one’s way through the *Prison Notebooks*. The benefits consist, partly, in capturing and utilizing the results (the suggestive observations, the powerful concepts); but what one also has the opportunity to see is a method of working, a process of intellectual production, the step-by-step generation of new insights and theoretical categories. And that is precisely because the *Notebooks* remain unfinished. Etienne Balibar’s remarks concerning Marx’s “incomplete work” would thus seem to apply equally to Gramsci’s: “We have the right then to interpret the implications of what Marx wrote. Not to consider the fragments of his discourse as cards to be infinitely reshuffled at will but, nonetheless, to take a foothold in his ‘problematics’ and ‘axiomatics’—in other words, in his ‘philosophies’—and push these to their conclusions (to find the contradictions, limits, and openings to which they lead)” (Balibar 1995, 117–8).

Gramsci pushes Marxian theory forward—and the text of the *Notebooks* allows us to do the same with Gramsci’s work. But for all their richness concerning the issues of culture, politics, and intellectuals, one of the traditional areas of Marxism, political economy, appears to be largely overlooked. It’s not that Gramsci was uninterested in economics. Various passages (e.g., the sequence of notes on Americanism, beginning with Notebook 1, note 61, his observations on the “*problemi finanziari*” of the Italian state in Notebook 2, note 6, and so on), not to mention his relationship with the famous Cambridge University economist Piero Sraffa, indicate that he had more than a passing interest in and knowledge of economic matters. But it appears that, by virtue of a specific combination of his intellectual training and political sensibilities, Gramsci was drawn to the concerns raised in some Marxist texts and not others.⁶ The fact that he focused his attention on questions of ideology, hegemony, and the state and not on other questions, such as those suggested by commodity fetishism, the appropriation of surplus-value, and the accumulation of capital, forces us to recognize that, while Gramsci opens up and adds to one wing of the Marxian

5. A good example is the prowar stance of liberal intellectuals such as Michael Walzer, Christopher Hitchens, Michael Ignatieff, and Paul Berman.

6. It would be a fascinating study, if one does not yet exist, to determine which texts of Marx and Engels that Gramsci had an interest in and access to and which he did not.

tradition, much work remains to be done to integrate his insights into other wings of that tradition.

One of the topics that cut across these various lines of thought is class. Indeed, in my remarks above, I glossed over the fact that, in the note in which he introduces the concept of hegemony, Gramsci refers not just to political or social forces but also to dominant and leading *classes*. However, in much of contemporary leftist thought, references to class have virtually disappeared, at least when conducting more conjunctural analyses of political events and projects. We seem to be more inclined to name and to focus our attention on such phenomena as the neoconservative shift within the Bush administration or neoliberal policies or imperialist wars and occupations than on “allied classes,” “opposing classes,” or a “historically progressive class” (Notebook 1, note 44). While we now have a rich tradition of deconstructing the Marxian class categories that have been handed down to us, and elaborating the concrete modalities of fundamental and subsumed class processes (stemming from the work of Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff), what appears to be missing in the *Prison Notebooks*, as in contemporary Marxian thought, is a set of concepts and conceptual strategies that allows us to draw the connections between, on one hand, changing class structures and class groupings and, on the other hand, the kinds of cultural and political events and movements to which Gramsci devoted so much of his work.

This is only to say that our work is as unfinished as Gramsci’s. Fortunately, however, in order to pursue the projects that fall to us, we have Gramsci’s legacy and, now, Buttigieg’s magnificent edition of the *Prison Notebooks*.

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Appendix

The Presence of Gramsci in *Rethinking Marxism* (1988–2003)

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Of *Prison Notebooks* and the Restoration of an Archive

Joseph W. Childers

This essay examines the ways in which Antonio Gramsci's work has become more accessible through the translations of the Prison Notebooks undertaken by Joseph Buttigieg. While many scholars have had only limited and, often, intellectually mediated access to Gramsci's work, Buttigieg's translations offer the possibility of reading the Notebooks not only in their entirety, but also in context. The critical apparatus surrounding this translation is impeccable and provides insights into Gramsci's thought that have hitherto been unavailable to those unable to read the original Italian. Consequently, Buttigieg's translations revivify Gramsci's work, opening it to a new generation of scholars, to be sure, but also underscoring its prescience and continued timeliness.

Key Words: Culture, Hegemony, Antonio Gramsci, Edward Said, Archive

As I comment on Joseph Buttigieg's contribution to Gramsci studies, I must confess myself something of an impostor. Unlike my colleague David Ruccio, whose facility with the Romance languages is impressive—even when he is not swearing—my own knowledge of Italian is no better than several years of now largely forgotten undergraduate Latin. For me Gramsci's work, and especially his intimate connections to the Italian cultural turmoil of the 1920s and 1930s, has remained a foreign country, beckoning and exotic, always a bit mysterious, welcoming my explorations and wanderings yet steadfastly refusing my attempts to become completely comfortable and familiar there. It did not help that, as a literary critic and theorist, my exposure to Gramsci's thought came to me second hand, filtered through the work of others from whom I imbibed much of my own early notions of what it means to do cultural criticism and what shape such critique can take. Unlike many Marxist theorists, who have come to terms with insistent forms of poststructuralist thought via a thorough grounding in leftist materialist philosophies, it was only after several breathless tours of works by thinkers like Derrida, Heidegger, and Gadamer that I began to realize my abiding interest in Marx and his interlocutors. Already thinking of the fluidity of the subject, of the continual play of signification, and ready to acknowledge the radical break between my own historicity and that of the objects of my study, I had my first brush with Gramsci.