FAST CAPITALISM

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Volume 5 • Issue 1

FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM
FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITA
LISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST
CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM FAST CAPITALISM

FAST CAPITALISM

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Volume 5 • Issue 1

2009

Fast Capitalism is an academic journal with a political intent. We publish reviewed scholarship and essays about the impact of rapid information and communication technologies on self, society and culture in the 21st century. We do not pretend an absolute objectivity; the work we publish is written from the vantages of viewpoint. Our authors examine how heretofore distinct social institutions, such as work and family, education and entertainment, have blurred to the point of near identity in an accelerated, post-Fordist stage of capitalism. This makes it difficult for people to shield themselves from subordination and surveillance. The working day has expanded; there is little down time anymore. People can 'office' anywhere, using laptops and cells to stay in touch. But these invasive technologies that tether us to capital and control can also help us resist these tendencies. People use the Internet as a public sphere in which they express and enlighten themselves and organize others; women, especially, manage their families and nurture children from the job site and on the road, perhaps even 'familizing' traditionally patriarchal and bureaucratic work relations; information technologies afford connection, mitigate isolation, and even make way for social movements. We are convinced that the best way to study an accelerated media culture and its various political economies and existential meanings is dialectically, with nuance, avoiding sheer condemnation and ebullient celebration. We seek to shape these new technologies and social structures in democratic ways.

Publication Design and Formatting by Brittany Griffiths
Cover Design by Brittany Griffiths

Published and made openly accessible by:
University of Texas at Arlington Libraries
702 Planetarium Pl.
Arlington, TX 76019

*First published on www.fastcapitalism.com in 2009

ISSN 1930-014X

Mavs Open Press

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009
ISSN 1930-014X

Contents

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009
ISSN 1930-014X

About the Authors

Ben Agger

Ben Agger is Professor of Sociology and Humanities at the University of Texas Arlington and Director of the Center for Theory there. Among his recent books are Speeding Up Fast Capitalism and Fast Families, Virtual Children (with Beth Anne Shelton). He is working on The Sixties at 40: Radicals Remember and Look Forward. He can be contacted at mailto:agger@uta.edu.

Robert J. Antonio

Robert J. Antonio teaches classical, critical, and continental social theory at the University of Kansas. He can be reached at anto@ku.edu.

Russell Berman

Russell Berman is the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University, with appointments in the Departments of Comparative Literature and German Studies; he is also a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He has long been associated with Telos, currently serving as its editor. His book publications range The Rise of the Modern German Novel: Crisis and Charisma; Modern Culture and Critical Theory: Art, Politics and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School; Cultural Studies of Modern Germany: History, Representation and Nationhood; Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture; Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem; and Fiction Sets You Free: Literature, Liberty and Western Culture.

Elisabeth Chaves

Elisabeth Chaves is a doctoral candidate in Governance and Globalization at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Virginia. She also holds a J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law. Her work focuses on the changing materiality of discourse and media ecologies, the communication of scholarship, the production of theory, and the political economy of intellectual production. Her dissertation examines the journals, Telos and The Public Interest. She can be reached at echaves@vt.edu.

Robert D'Amico

Robert D'Amico is professor of philosophy at University of Florida. He has published in the areas of philosophy of the social sciences, philosophy of history, history of philosophy, philosophy of medicine, and political philosophy. He is currently researching debates about philosophical naturalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Jamie Faricellia Dangler

Jamie Faricellia Dangler is the author of Hidden in the Home: The Role of Waged Homework in the Modern

World-Economy (SUNY Press, 1994). Her current research interests include labor union efforts to respond to changing workforce demographics and new worker needs. She recently completed a salary inequity analysis for seven SUNY campuses and a study of gender inequity and family leave needs in academia.

Russell Jacoby

Russell Jacoby is the holder of the Moishe Gonzales Folding Chair in Critical Theory at UCLA and author of the memoir, "Life in the Off-Ramp: The LA Years."

Timothy W. Luke

Timothy W. Luke is University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. He also serves as Program Chair, Government and International Affairs in the School of Public and International Affairs, and Director of the Center for Digital Discourse and Culture in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech. Co-Editor of Fast Capitalism, he also is a long-time member of the editorial board for Telos, and serves as the Bookline Editor of Telos Press Publishing. His recent books are There is a Gunman on Campus: Tragedy and Terror at Virginia Tech, co-edited with Ben Agger (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008): Museum Politics: Powerplays at the Exhibition (University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Capitalism, Democracy, and Ecology: Departures from Marx (University of Illinois Press, 1999), The Politics of Cyberspace, co-edited with Chris Toulouse (Routledge, 1998), and Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture (University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Scott G. McNall

Scott G. McNall is professor of sociology, and currently the Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development at California State University, Chico. (http://www.csuchico.edu/sustainablefuture/). He was a member of the editorial board of Telos during the 1970s and was the editor of Current Perspectives on Social Theory for seven editions. His focus for many years has been the study of organizations and what allows for change, success, and failure. He currently teaches and writes about sustainable development: the intersection of culture, the environment, the economy, and the polity. He is the lead editor for a three-volume series with Praeger Press on Sustainable Business Practices: Global Challenges, Practices and Opportunities. He can be reached at smcnall@csuchico.edu.

Alan Sica

Alan Sica is professor of sociology and founder of the Social Thought Program at Penn State; he edited the ASA journal, Sociological Theory, for five years, and is currently editor of the ASA book review journal, Contemporary Sociology. He has been writing about social and cultural theory for 35 years. He wrote for Telos regularly between 1977 and 1988.

Stephen Turner

Stephen Turner teaches philosophy at the University of South Florida, and is Director of the Center for Social and Political Thought. He has written extensively about Weberâ€™s political thought, as well as about issues relating to democracy and science. His Liberal Democracy 3.0: Civil Society in an Age of Experts takes up Schmittian themes about the applicability of the liberal model of political discussion in the face of the extensive role of expert knowledge in contemporary political decision-making. He has also written extensively about Hans J. Morgenthau.

Mark Worrell

Mark Worrell is Assistant Professor of social theory at SUNY Cortland and the editor of The New York Journal of Sociologyav (www.newyorksociology.org). His work blends critical and classical social and sociological theory in the areas of antisemitism and authoritarianism research as well as issues in economic and political sociology. Recent and forthcoming publications include articles in Rethinking Marxism, Telos, Critical Sociology, Fast Capitalism, and Current Perspectives in Social Theory.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.001

The "Americanization" of Critical Theory: A Legacy of Paul Piccone and *Telos*

Timothy W. Luke

Introduction

Much of the "critical theory" being written in Western Marxist, Frankfurt School or new populist registers all across North America today must be tied back in some fashion to the lifework of Paul Piccone and the journal Telos. Since Telos has continued developing and diversifying its discourses of critique after Piccone's death in 2004, whatever multiple identities these new schools of critical theory have acquired since the end of the Cold War during 1991, and the advent of the War on Terror in 2001, also cannot be easily untied from ongoing developments with this unusual publication. Along with its multiple networks of radical writers and global audiences of loyal readers, Telos today still pushes hard to be ahead of the curve in critical theory, while staying attentive to its own eclectic philosophical craft.

Quite unlike many other self-acclaimed radical publications, which spin thick webs of rhetoric about their engaged political resistance, but then never open their pages to an ongoing expression of truly concrete critical differences, Telos has spent over 40 years of publishing many of the most electrifying, diverse, and controversial figures that one could read in one place. From many varied nationalities, classes, theoretical movements, religions, ideological schools, cultures, and political perspectives, a wide array of people have worked with Telos at pivotal points in their intellectual lives (Luke 2005b). From these engagements, the nature of critical theory in the U.S.A. has been continuously transformed for over four decades. In this respect alone, and even though many might have disagreed with him and the journal's writings, Paul Piccone and Telos have had left a discernible influence on North American cultural, political, and social critical theory that will not soon be forgotten (Luke 2005a).

Because it was the core of Paul Piccone's scholarly life, as well as the development of an American critical theory, one should assess the impact and importance of Telos since 1968. In keeping with the ferment of that moment, the journal continuously has touted its origins as an experiment "launched on May 1, 1968" in Buffalo, New York. From within labyrinths of Buffalo's branch of the State University of New York system, this tiny publication was first published under the editorial guidance exerted by a small group of graduate students mostly in the discipline of philosophy. Whether it was its out-of-the-way site of origin or its founders' peculiar personalities, Telos successfully has maintained the essence of its founders' original aspirations, namely, to publish works "committed to philosophical synthesis. . . . We are concerned to offer alternatives to the many forces operating to further the existing fragmentation of knowledge and human existence. It must be emphasized that 'philosophical synthesis' is not intended to exclude any philosophical school; it directed against only those philosophical efforts which are sorely technical, and thereby isolated, achievements" (Telos 1968: cover).

For all the twists and turns taken since publishing its first issue, which featured brief articles on Franz Brentano, Wesley Salmon's reading of Karl Popper, a comparison of Goethe and Hegel, an analysis of Averroism with modern science, and a socio-historical interpretation of the scientific revolution (written by Paul Piccone), Telos continues to espouse the merits of this foundational intellectual design today. It remains wide-open to a range of unconventional thinkers seeking a philosophical synthesis, while fostering deep and systematic doubts about everything that has

come to be associated in the popular imagination with the interactions of New Left 1960s' radicals, the modern liberal democratic state, research universities, the perversities of world markets, post-1945 global geopolitics, and contemporary mass culture.

The Initial Telos Project

During its first decade of publication, Telos brought into wider discussion most of the Western Marxist tradition that had been ignored, forgotten or suppressed in most of the anti-Soviet Western capitalist countries for decades. Ranging from debates within the Second or Third Internationals, more radical resistances against the pre-1914 Social Democratic parties or post-1918 Marxist-Leninist communist parties, criticisms of the new Bolshevik regime in the 1920s or the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, Telos revisited many ignored, if not forgotten, cultural, intellectual, and political battles within all of these organizations and institutions. At the same time, it also initiated translations of rare unobtainable Frankfurt School authors as well as explorations of works by Gramsci, Lukács, Pannekoek and Korsch as these figures faced repression from fascist, liberal democratic or communist authorities. With these reconsiderations of the failings of "actually existing socialism" everywhere in the world, Telos proved invaluable as forum for debate as well as source for texts unavailable anywhere else in English.

Telos authors during these early years recognized that Marxism prior to 1914 had slipped—along with the social democratic parties of Europe since the late 1880s—into the dyspeptic affectations of being "revolutionary" while no longer being "revolution making." This Bernsteinian embrace of an evolutionary socialism made most of Second International Marxism into a relatively conformist credo. Lenin's return to Russia with the assistance of the German High Command in April 1917 soon tumbled over the already tottering February Revolution with the expanding forces of that unorthodox soviet voluntarism celebrated in his State and Revolution. Riding that spirit into the October revolution, Marxism as "a philosophy of praxis" got another chance. Without this extraordinary intervention of revolutionary will by the Bolsheviks, as Piccone (1994:176) notes, "Marxism would have gone the way of other 19th century philosophies of progress, like those of Comte, Spencer, and various Social Darwinists." The U.S.S.R.'s growing deformation, however, by bureaucratic collectivism, industrialization from above, and Stalinist militarism after 1928 all sparked, in turn, the rediscovery of the Hegelianized reading of Marxism from the 1920s through 1960s in the West that Telos widely popularized after 1968.

The engagement of the journal with Western Marxism during the 1960s and 1970s was quite significant, because it took an abidingly serious interest in these largely forgotten, ignored or suppressed traditions of Marxian critique that had been frozen over by the Cold War. Still, Telos also meant to come to terms with the activities and programs of "actually existing socialism," which clearly stumbled from atrocity to atrocity after 1928. Once it began this investigation, however, many Telos authors' critiques quickly returned to the atrocious qualities of the Reds going back to 1918, while growing also more suspicious of the U.S.S.R. in the present as those authoritarian patterns continued in Czechoslovakia, Angola, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Poland. The larger New Left movements during the 1960s also tried to seize a hold on this ambivalent and amorphous critical discourse, which was about "as sophisticated as any available in Europe at the time" in order gain "a political vision and a better self-understanding" of itself in a world so far beyond the origins of classical Marxism (Piccone 1977:180).

For some, it soon was apparent that Marxism's ideological resume really could never serve as the basis for the New Left "in itself" to become a truly transformative force with any then existing class formations. Hence, the first and second decades of Telos were preoccupied with reassessing Western Marxism, Soviet Marxism, and the original Frankfurt School as "part of that long series of failed efforts in the 20th century to relegitimate socialism and mass democracy as radical emancipatory alternatives to capitalism and liberalism, well after the Bernstein debate had indicated the extent to which the former could easily degenerate into a mere extension of the latter" (Piccone 1994:197). Looking back over this period, Piccone and others argued that the historical function of Telos in the ferment of 1968 "has been primarily to provide Marxism with a decent burial" (Piccone 1977:181).

These contradictions also plotted coordinates for Piccone, and other authors in Telos, to see the New Left in the West, and entrenched Communist regimes everywhere they were in power, in a far more critical light. Launched during 1968 with its "the Prague Spring" and "the events of May" in Paris, 1968, Telos proved to be relentlessly critical of political maneuvers and ideological contortions made in the West to defend "actually existing socialism" after 1968. It was neither willing to apologize for the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Treaty

Organization under Moscow's leadership, nor the complete failure of the New Left student movements to realize any real political change through the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Hence, Telos caused chagrin in many ideological camps. It was against the Vietnam War; but, it did not, at the same time, celebrate anticolonial revolutionaries in either North or South Vietnam. Similarly, it never patted Moscow or Beijing on the back for boosting other anti-Western, but allegedly revolutionary, forces in the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, or Africa. All along, it also expressed deep doubts over celebrating Nixon's and Ford's "strategic withdrawal" from Cambodia and Vietnam, and it never ignored the tragic aftermath of the Khmer Rouge's and Vietnamese Communist Party's full accession to power there.

By the 1980s, then, Telos was carving out its own unique theoretical spaces, which proved suitable for articulating far more maverick modes of materialist criticism, as its editorial offices also moved to New York from St. Louis. Along with Marcuse and Habermas, newer unusual figures (like Jean Baudrillard, Murray Bookchin, Michel Foucault, Cornelius Castoriadis, Agnes Heller, Christopher Lasch or Antonio Negri) as well as more dissident voices from Eastern Europe (ranging from Polish labor radicals, Charter 77 figures, Budapest School thinkers, East German dissidents, Praxis 48 writers, or new Soviet émigrés) peppered the ebb-and-flow of Telos debates. Not surprisingly, the gradual crumbling of the U.S.S.R. and the rise of neoliberal regimes in London and Washington started to preoccupy both Paul Piccone and many other Telos authors during these years. The uncritical celebration of "civil society" in Eastern Europe as well as the "open market" in the West ignited many disputes among the Telos networks, and Piccone's unorthodox approach to both of these dismal discourses lead to splits—both personal and philosophical—among its editors, authors, and readers.

In this sense, as Piccone (1988:25) observed, it was increasingly true by the late 1980s and early 1990s that "analyses of specifically American themes from perspectives rooted neither in the old Critical Theory nor in the Theory of Communicative Action nor, for that matter, in standard objectivistic social science are increasingly finding their way in the pages of Telos." As its traditionalism, or eclecticism, or even conservatism, seemed to be rising, Telos was indeed opening its pages in the Reagan years and after to a quite variegated collection of critics who were all concentrating their attention on the rising tides of neoliberal transformation at work all around the world.

The Critique of Global Neoliberalism

The prevailing political order still in force during the formative years of Telos was one, as Harvey (2005:11) identifies it, of an "'embedded liberalism'" organized to ensure that "market processes and entrepreneurial and corporate activities were surrounded by a web of social and political constraints." Whether it was the United States, Japan or Western Europe, and despite various ideological agendas, a very strong institutional apparatus underpinned and enforced a clearly evolving collective social contract. That is, there was a general consensus (Harvey 2005:10-11),

> that the state should focus on full employment, economic growth, and the welfare of its citizens, and that state power should be freely deployed, alongside of or, if necessary intervening in or substituting for market processes to achieve these ends. Fiscal and monetary policies usually dubbed "Keynesian" were widely deployed to dampen business cycles and to ensure reasonably full employment. A 'class compromise' between capital and labor was generally advocated as the key guarantor of domestic peace and tranquility. States actively intervened in industrial policy and moved to set standards for the social wage by constructing a variety of welfare systems (health care, education, and the like).

These policies delivered fairly predictable high rates of economic growth into the early 1970s, especially since the U.S. was willing to rack up major trade imbalances with the rest of the world as it imported their industrial and agricultural products within transnational grids for intra-corporate exchange from all across its protected zones of liberal democratic capitalism. However, after 1979, a new agenda formed around making aggressive alterations to this social contract. And, it was clear that this "neoliberal project is to disembed capital from these constraints" (Harvey 2005: 11).

When pushed, many Telos authors also took the "embedded liberalism" of the postwar era to task for not going far enough and fast enough to fulfill its own collective promise. Tripped up by new class bureaucrats' insufficient ability to use state power in realizing greater social democracy, and an excessive regulatory will pushed beyond the point of diminishing return, liberal democratic capitalism proved to be less democratic, light on liberalism, and loose with capitalism. This increasing incompetent approach to managing Keynesian social welfare practices, in turn, led quickly down a revisionist road to neoliberal structural adjustments.

Again, Harvey's view of neoliberalism is succinct, and it captures many of the shifts in the larger economy and society that Telos began addressing more closely during the last thirty years. Along with the degradation of embedded liberalism, neoliberal practices are a complex system which, in the final analysis,

> "values market exchange as 'an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action, and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs', it emphasizes the significance of contractual relations in the marketplace. It holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market. This requires technologies of information creation and capacities to accumulate, store, transfer, analyze, and use massive databases to guide decisions in the global marketplace. Hence neoliberalism's intense interest in and pursuit of information technologies (leading some to proclaim the emergence of a new kind of 'information society'). These technologies have compressed the rising density of market transactions in both space and time (Harvey 2005:3-4).

As the neoliberal project unfolded in Europe, China, and the United States during the 1980s and 1990s, Telos willingly sought out both alternative contemporary and unusual past sources of unorthodox resistance to challenge these relentless institutional and ideological developments. Unlike Harvey, however, Piccone and Telos pushed past Marx, Habermas, and even Gramsci. As Piccone suggested in 2001, "forget about Marxism; it's all over" (2004:157).

Consequently, from Carl Schmitt's critique of the aimless drift of fully commercialized market societies, or Christopher Lasch's criticism of professional-mechanical elites intent upon building rootless empires of global corporate capital on the backs of embattled local communities to Paul Gottfried's doubts about the conservative agendas of Reagan, Bush (41), and Bush (43) or Alain de Benoist's questioning of the European Union's bureaucratic confederalism as inimical to Europe's ordinary people, Telos stepped away from the ineffectual, and increasingly irrelevant, criticism made by the contemporary Frankfurt School. These critical failures, as personified by Habermas and his followers in "the communicative turn," or other avowedly liberal thinkers, who were struggling to maintain the illusion that the embedded liberalism of 1933 to 1973 might somehow survive in new "third way" politics, have proven very costly since the 1980s.

In the American context, then, Telos increasingly contested the discourses and policies of both neoliberalism and professional-technical classes working on its behalf. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (2008:364) argue, these practices and people appear as agents of modernization who ironically "are seeking to remake the world by making a clean slate of the social struggle, depicted today as so many archaisms and obstacles to the nascent new order, but also by cultural producers (scholars, writers, artists) and even political figures of the left, the majority of whom still see themselves as progressive." It is precisely these contradictory cultural practices and often regressive policies that Telos special issues have targeted as conflicts defining the emergent post-Cold War era since the late 1980s.

At best, the Blair government and Clinton administration sanded off the roughest edges of Thatcher's, Reagan's, Deng's, Pinochet's, Salinas' or Putin's aggressive neoliberal globalism coupled, when needed and/or expedient, occasional coats of conservative nationalism and flat-out consumerism. The nearly complete failure of neoliberal governments to either anticipate or eradicate radical Islamicists' assault on the West after 1983 is not shocking, because of its relentless commercial colonization of traditional local societies in the Middle East, Africa and Asia as well. As they fall-back in panic to police state legislation at home and half-hearted interventions abroad after 2001, the neo-liberals also have come under withering attacks from many critical theorists writing in Telos.

During 1988-1989, the impeding collapse of Gorbachev's campaigns for perestroika across the U.S.S.R. along with the Soviet Union's stalemate in Afghanistan clearly fascinated Telos writers; but, during the swirling celebrations of allegedly more liberating moves toward civil society institutions in the East and market-based solutions in the West after 1989, Telos stood back, choosing to explore the theories and practices of more contrarian left and right thinkers and movements for different insights. Studies tied to the works of Carl Schmitt, Karl Polanyi, Max Weber, Murray Bookchin, Paul Gottfried, Norberto Bobbio, Christopher Lasch, and Zygmunt Bauman carried Telos through the "end of history" years of 1989-1991. Meanwhile, the journal increasingly scrutinized the savage outcomes of neoliberal triumphalism all around the world as it developed special issues and symposia on the crisis of education, federalism, tradition, populism, racism, postmodernism, multiculturalism, fascism, globalization, religion or terrorism. Other special issues on the postsocialist transition in Eastern Europe, crises in Canada, the European Union, and the Northern League in Italy, also were, in part, worried ruminations about the brazen moves and hidden agendas of the neoliberal era.

Hyperreality on a global scale is just one moment of materiality into which the practices of rampant neoliberalism have morphed. The simulation of society, acceleration of economy, and reduction of government since 1980

express the neoliberal fetishization of markets, deregulation, individuals, and globalization around "the generation by models of a real without origin or a reality: a hyperreal. . .it is the map that engenders the territory" (Baudrillard 1983:2). Neoliberalism with its aggressive globalizing networks, worn-down domestic governments, and overtaxed local communities exalts "the individual" interacting with millions of others in "the market." Neoliberalism's most bitter truth, as its own continuous commercial chaos and periodic power outages illustrate, "no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational" (Baudrillard 1983:3).

Indeed, neoliberalism's engines of engagement rapidly link everything to the corporate world's alleged "best practices." Of course actually existing capitalism varies from place to place, but its fixations on the negative liberties of individuals, firms, and goods "to be free" often solidifies into a strange symbolic imperialism tied into a system of signs as well as a power grid for practices. The rollbacks of Keynesian welfare state protections and benefits begins "a liquidation of all referentials," or, even worse, via the magic of microeconomic models, "their artificial resurrection in systems of signs, a more ductile material than meaning in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalence, all binary oppositions, and all combinatory algebra" (Baudrillard 1983:4).

In hedge funds, commodity futures, credit histories, margin accounts, debt obligations, or payment patterns, the ordinary individual and the national market get flipped around as hyperreal (con)fusions. With the advent of mass-mediated hyperrealities, the map does engender territory and territorially-instantiated map simultaneously do initialize and finalize the neoliberal project: "substituting signs of the real for the real itself, that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes" (Baudrillard 1983: 4).

Regardless of their roots in purportedly left-wing movements or allegedly right-wing groups, Telos authors have engaged many of neoliberal developments—from multiculturalism to globalization to post modernism to informationalization—as political confusions, economic diversions or social immobilizations. Many of these policies are, in turn, grounded upon "symbolic violence supported by a relationship of constrained communication depicted to enforce submission, and whose particular feature consists in this case in its universalization of certain particulisms bound up within a singular historical experience, misconstruing them for what they are, and interpreting them as universal" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2008: 364). All too often, gleaming hyperrealities have proven to be gritty realities hyped up to disserve the many to reward the few. Telos has called out these empty universalizing trends for being what they are, namely, schemes for enforcing more elite control and endorsing less democratic involvement. And, the journal makes these strong interventions against such trends no matter what their proponents' varying center, left or right political agendas prove to be.

Telos Today

The practices and policies of the liberal welfare state began to crack, and then finally just crumble in years spanning the U.S.A.'s expanded involvement in Vietnam after the Gulf of Tonkin incident and its diplomatic humiliation in Iran during the Islamic revolutionaries' hostage-taking at the U.S. Embassy. And, as it has been suggested here, Telos came into its own and a unique outlet for a new North American current of critical theory. Being equally suspicious of the egalitarian designs of Great Society bureaucrats in the U.S.A. and the empty promises of "actually existing socialism" in the U.S.S.R., the thinkers working with Paul Piccone and Telos kept up the Frankfurt School's critique of overbearing and overreaching state power, while anticipating the quickening spin of the neoliberal turn all around the world. Although Telos did not always contest neoliberalism programmatically, Piccone and others increasingly took neocommunitarian, anticorporatist or populist stands against neoliberal practices as Thatcher and Reagan followed from the economic, political and social crises of the 1970s.

On the other hand, Telos ironically seconded some of the criticisms made by libertarian economists, like Friedman, von Hayek or von Mises, against corporate statism, because, in part, they paralleled comparable critiques frequently made by Western Marxists, traditional anarchists, ordinary workers or disserved citizens. Believing in the importance of individual life and collective liberty enjoyed with the happiness implied by economic opportunity, cultural personal integrity, and individual freedom, Piccone respected the possibilities implied by trusting in individuals, markets, and less interventionistic governments.

Yet, the Telos approach to neoliberalism deeply distrusted it as the solution to all the crises caused by the

crumbling Keynesian welfare state. Piccone and many Telos contributors saw the state failing, but they did not simply conclude along with the neoliberals that the market would succeed. Good government would not automatically arise from cooperating uncritically with big business, emulating the culture of corporate capitalism or accepting managerialist best practices to a new normalizing regime. Rather, Telos argued over how the same excessively rationalized, arrogantly overweening, and uncritically propounded logics of command-and-control that crippled liberal welfare states also profoundly plagued transnational neoliberal markets.

Therefore, the lines of flight taken in Telos crisscrossed the many processes, practices, and projects of the neoliberal turn with an eclectic mix of resistances that took comfort neither from the orthodoxies of the New Left nor with the conformities of the New Right. These tendencies in Telos were evolving as Thatcher and Reagan came to power, and as the U.S.S.R. began to topple with its ill-considered adventures in Afghanistan. Telos writers saw how Keynesian welfare policies, Great Society corporatism, and Fordist social practices were unraveling, but they also foresaw how these failing projects were being captured, co-opted or crushed by the neoliberal experiments of more collaborative governance, public/private partnerships, and laissez-faire social policies.

From another perspective, Bourdieu regarded this turn toward neoliberalism as the project of resisting "the liberal counter-revolution" arriving in the values and practices of the United States "refashioning the world in its own image: the mental colonization" generated by willing submission to free markets, globalist de/re-industrialization programs, and the moralism of individual materialism that climaxes in "a kind of generalized and even spontaneous 'Washington consensus'" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2008:367). In their critique of the new class, Telos authors trod down the same path as Bourdieu in his equally dogged critique of the cynical producers of neoliberal reason, namely, "the expert" and "the communications advisor."

As this "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner and Theodore 2002:349-379) took hold, Telos let go most of their last ties to orthodox liberal-progressive alliances. And, in doing so, Piccone and Telos began answering the growing neoliberal hegemony from 1985 onward with even more unorthodox inspirations taken from nonconformist sources of critique, ranging from Christopher Lasch to Alain de Benoist, radical orthodoxy in theology to 19th century populism in politics, Carl Schmitt to Murray Bookchin, the Northern League in Italy to municipal communitarianism in the U.S.A. When viewed apart and alone, these inspirations could appear to be backward-looking, right wing or narrowly parochial. Still, as they unfolded, and when taken together, these twists-and-turns through outlaw territories with maverick allies are, in fact, a credible and consistent critical response to the corrupting sweep of neoliberalism. By 2000, the neoliberal consensus heading into the twenty-first century essentially was touting the hegemonic need to believe in TINA—or "there is no alternative" to the pervasive normalizing forces of itself (Marcuse and van Kempen 2000). Nonetheless, Telos continued to dedicate itself to pushing back hard with every alternative to neoliberal practices that conventional thinking could, would, or had dismissed.

In this respect, Telos still is, as Gross (2004:45) observed, following in Piccone's footsteps "searching for ways to create critical, autonomous personalities who would then forge healthy political institutions," and it is pursuing this goal in the same manner than Piccone spent the latter years of his life. Even though Gross disputes the success of their engagement with this task, Piccone and those working with him remain devoted to "the development of a contrarian spirit through the recollection of traditional forms of thought or ways of being that have been defeated or declared out-of-state" (Gross 2004:45). These modes of thinking and acting are essential for mobilizing the political consciousness and moral conscience needed to find the "concrete horizons" promising something better beyond, beneath or beside neoliberalism (Piccone 1996:163).

Conclusions

After four decades, and despite the premature lament about their demise made by Russell Jacoby (one of Telos' earliest and long-lasting critical voices), many of the journal's writers—by seeking the committed philosophical synthesis and critique that North America needs in its intellectual life—have popped up in the mainstream of global cultural and political discourses as "public intellectuals." Of course, Telos first translated and granted greater public currency to many radical intellectuals more read and recognized in Europe, Japan or Australasia, like Gramsci, Husserl, Lukacs, Marcuse, Sartre, Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas. However, as the years went by, Russell Jacoby, Cornelius Castoriadis, Paul Feyerabend, Christopher Lasch, Andre Gorz, Joel Kovel, Alvin Gouldner, John Zerzan, Thomas Fleming, Murray Bookchin, Jean Bethke Elsthain, Paul Gottfried, and Jerry Brown also were given voice

in Telos. Even though the journal was rarely in the spotlight, it always has been at the forefront of every major development in critically-driven social and political theory in North America.

Since 2004, Telos has continued to dissect the even more excessive neoliberal permutations of today's transnational cultural, economic and political networks under Russell Berman's editorship. As a set of practical protocols or the raw rules of a ragged regime for global power, these networks are dangerous. Indeed, their self-seeking corporate capitalist elites, entrenched neoliberal policies, and purposeful ecological degradation do not add up to the essential characteristics of an allegedly new and refined "cosmopolitan age." They are instead the outlines for the increasingly lean and mean matrix of mystification deployed to deny opportunities to the many for the greater social production and individual consumption of that good life to be enjoyed by only a few.

Where other liberal theorists believe increasing democratization, mounting rationalization, and deepening commercialization enhance life, Piccone and Telos saw something much different. From out of the strange neoliberal economy and civil society developing during the post–;Cold War era, the Telos analysis robustly articulates the Americanization of critical theory. In sharp contrast to many others, its authors, much more commonly and far more accurately, see a decreasing deliberative potential, an emptier democratic life, a worsening illiteracy, an irrational order, and a pernicious culture infiltrating the first spaces and last recesses of everyday life. The journal's suspicions about, and tough criticisms of, radical Islamist movements and their authoritarian politics is another part of this continuing intellectual critique. As Berman 2008:5) notes in Telos' 40th anniversary issue, the journal still seeks to explore the post-1968 world "in terms of aspirations and failure: the search for the good life in the polis side by side with the redemptive aspiration to overcome a degraded world through the pursuit of new/post-material values."

From 1968 to 2003, Piccone was a vital force in the articulation of a uniquely North American approach to critical theory, albeit one counterintuitively more poised at reacting quite frequently to historic developments abroad. Over time, a North American ground for this new critical theory was found in the Telos' critique of the research university, multiculturalism, mass culture, fascism, leftist movements, environmentalism or radical Islam. And, these thirty-five years spanned the days from May 1, 1968 and past September 11, 2001. During this time, Telos also fostered an elaborate analysis of many thinkers, movements, ideologies, countries, practices, and institutions that Piccone helped build. So this larger critique continues to build in Telos after his untimely passing in 2004, and the journal increasingly has evolved as its current subtitle suggests, namely, it is "A Quarterly Journal of Politics, Philosophy, Critical Theory, Culture, and the Arts."

The nature of intellectual discourse, the conduct of scholarly communication, the significance of public debate, and the circulation of critical thought, at the same time, have changed as much as the world over the past four decades (Luke 2005a). Remarkably, Telos is still thriving and continues to be regarded as essential reading for those writers hoping to think outside the box, and then maybe act inside the sweep of their readers' greatest hopes. The cataclysmic confusion of the Bush (43) years will rock the American republic on its foundation for years, and the instability created by neoliberalism is coming under increasing criticism and growing doubt as the deeper challenges of radical Islam, global climate change, economic inequality, authoritarian state capitalism, and cultural emptiness go largely unanswered in the U.S.A. and elsewhere. Despite their detractors, and building upon their prescient anticipation of all these failings in neoliberalism, the new critical theorists associated with Telos are still among the best sources to consult first for the answers needed for knowing, and then doing, what is right.

Telos authors generally admire Adorno's worries about the immediate effectiveness of any critique, but they do not stand with him in complete solidarity on the inability of thought to grasp the totality of all that must be thought critically about, and resisted without reservation. Similarly, they always have refused the postmodern reluctance to not come forth as active engaged subjects. The critique of science, technology, and work also runs through Telos, although not as strong as it could be, but clearly it is vital enough to sustain the struggle.

Gauging the impact of Telos on the intellectual life of the English-speaking countries, not to mention English-reading populations in non-English-speaking countries is a formidable task. The mere survival and continued success of a publication like Telos after four decades in many ways is an awesome testimonial in itself. To have thrived from the age of "LBJ" and the nightmarish wars in southeast Asia in 1968 to the era of "W" and his misbegotten wars in Southwest Asia in 2008, Piccone achieved a great deal. Today Telos remains an on-going success in whose pages one can document the times of Nixon and Brezhnev, the Iranian Revolution, Thatcher and Reagan, revolts in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, the collapse of the USSR, Clinton and Gore, the European Union, market Leninism and China's commercialization, environmental crises, Deng Xiaoping and Vladimir Putin, and the new war of terrorism. It is an achievement matched by few other publications in the world. That figures as diverse as

Herbert Marcuse and Juergen Habermas, Vaclav Havel and Jerry Brown, Michel Foucault and Christopher Lasch, or Axel Honneth and Paul Gottfried, Carl Schmitt and Seyla Ben-Habib came together in its pages all suggest that this journal's intellectual impact in the world by Americanizing critical theory is another remarkable attainment. Yet, even more significant here is how consistently unorthodox, aggravating, and exceptional much of the Telos project has been from any political perspective, while these many pathbreaking intellectual achievements were being attained.

References

Baudrillard, Jean. 1983. Simulations. New York: Semiotext.

Berman, Russell A. 2008. "Introduction." Telos 143 (Summer): 3-6.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant. 2008. "The New Planetary Vulgate." Pierre Bourdieu Political Interventions: Social Science and Political Action, selected and introduced by Franck Poupeau and Thierry Discepolo. London: Verso.

Brenner, Neil and Nick Theodore. 2002. "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism'." Antipode 34:349-379.

Gross, David. 2004. "Combating Modernity: Piccone and the Role of Tradition in the Present Age." Telos 131 (Summer):33-45.

Harvey, David. 2005. A Brief History of Neoliberalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Luke, Timothy W. 2005a. "From Pedagogy to Performativity. The Crisis of Research Universities, Intellectuals, and Scholarly Communication." Telos 131 (Summer): 13-32.

----.2005b. "The Trek with Telos: A Remembrance of Paul Piccone (January 19, 1940-July 12, 2004)." Fast Capitalism 1.2 (http://www.fastcapitalism.com).

Marcuse, Peter and Ronald van Kempen. 2000. "Conclusion: A Changed Spatial Order." Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order, edited by Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen. Oxford: Blackwell.

Piccone, Paul. 2008. Confronting the Crisis: Writings of Paul Piccone, edited by Gary Ulmen. New York: Telos Press Publishing.

----.2004. "Telos in Canada: Interview with Paul Piccone." Telos 131 (Summer):152-166.

----.1996. "The Tribulations of Left Criticism: A Reply to Palti." Telos 107 (Spring):155-169.

----.1994. "From the New Left to the New Populism." Telos 101 (Fall):173-208.

----.1988. "20 Years of Telos." Telos 75 (Spring):3-25.

----.1977. "Internal Polemics." Telos 31 (Spring):211-219.

----.1976. "From Tragedy to Farce: The Return of Critical Theory." New German Critique 7 (Winter):36-46.

----.1971. "Phenomenological Marxism." Telos 9 (Fall):3-31.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009
ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.002

Absolutizing the Particular

Robert J. Antonio

From the late-1960s to the mid-1980s, Telos brought the Frankfurt School, Western Marxism, and other critical Continental thought to North America and the English speaking world; it was the critical theory organ of that era and best ever English language journal on the topic. Its left lean did not compromise its critical view of communist regimes and left-wing parties and thinkers. Its contribution with regard to critical theories, with Hegelian-Marxist roots, was so substantial and widely acknowledged that many former readers and, I expect, even some journal editors, who have advertised in Telos, during the last 25 years, did not grasp its mid-1980s change of course. Although often portrayed narrowly, Telos' content, contributors, and editors have always been diverse.[2] Yet even in its early years, the Telos circle generally agreed that the welfare state and liberal-left political culture were exhausted. Elaborated in decisive moves by editor-in-chief, Paul Piccone, Telos' later thrust inhered in his early exhaustion thesis. He held that critical theory already was obsolete in the mid-1970s, when it dominated Telos' pages.[3] An outspoken critic of the New Left, Piccone still carried on its radical antiliberal current in his own unique, highly intellectual, philosophical way, which led eventually to his and Telos' right-turn.

Paul Piccone's Telos

Paul Piccone's smiling image on the cover of the "In Memoriam" issue of Telos' (nu. 131) brought back vivid memories of him from the1970s and 1980s. I met Paul when we both served as critics in a theory session at a St. Louis, sociological meeting in spring 1976. I had been a casual reader of Telos for several years, and I had assigned his translation of Enzo Paci's (1972) fusion of Husserl and Marx in the first graduate seminar that I taught. Several of my colleagues and many of our graduate students were engaging Marxism and other critical theories.[4] Although not a "Marxist," I was exploring Marxism and the cultural left. However, I found Althusser and friends dogmatic and impenetrable, and felt similarly about Lukács. I had an NEH Fellowship in 1974-75 to study Husserl, Hegel, and Kant and entertain alternative foundations for sociology. I was far less developed theoretically than Paul, but I thought our views converged and I looked forward to meeting him in St Louis. I spoke before Paul. When his turn came, he put aside his assigned target, and attacked me—"Open the door, close the door," he screamed, "you don't call bullshit, bullshit!" He blasted me for stooping to engage examples from an analytical philosopher and providing a "pusillanimous" critique. Then he delivered a blistering, deafening diatribe against the other theorist (his friend!). The audience was bemused, but entertained. Vintage Piccone it was. After the session, he invited me to stop by his Washington University office; that conversation was the first step toward forming the Kansas Telos Group.[5] Our paths diverged sharply later, but Paul and Telos had a formative impact on my thought, and its imprint remains. Importantly, Paul's candid style, dynamism, imagination, combativeness, and human qualities commanded the loyalty of his circle and shaped his journal's tone, direction, and contents. As Alain de Benoist (2005:49) declared: "Since its creation, Telos owed everything to him."[6]

Telos' operated within boundaries set by Piccone; he "owned" the journal, and led by intellectual combat.[7] Critics charged that Telos was devoted to rehash, but, with inevitable compromises, it published pieces that Piccone hoped would move the discourse in directions that he thought necessary. Embracing a much revised version of critical theory's historicism, with a phenomenological twist, he engaged critical theories old and new to transcend them.

Paul pushed indefatigably for fresh engagements, asserted new directions vociferously, battled resolutely his circle's dissenters, urged them to come along, and, at key junctures, initiated confrontations, which led to bitter departures of editors and contributors. In these battles, he reasserted, often brilliantly, what was left behind and what needed to be engaged. He continually pressed his circle to reassess Telos' location and rethink and change it. Telos' 1980s, rightward drift, especially its turn to Carl Schmitt, severed its Hegelian-Marxist roots. The Telos circle redefined "critical theory" to mean "sustained critical reflection on the presuppositions of theoretical work" (Telos Staff 1990: 130). Never mincing words, Paul declared: "...Critical Theory was but another philosophically souped-up Marxism beset by all the traditional problems associated with the latter. The Hegelian formaldehyde shot into its stiffening veins only succeeded in neutralizing the putrid odor exhumed by surrounding decaying Stalinist carcasses" (Piccone 1990: 4). Yet he insisted that Telos stayed true to the telos of his scuttled Husserlianized, critical theory (i.e., "to re-ground the Western tradition—not as univocal or necessary, but as a contingent historical project...) (Piccone1988: 8). Even after embracing tradition and religion, he asserted that: "the original teleology thrives" in Telos. However, tensions inhered between his search for a "ground" and his post-Hegelian move. His phenomenologically informed "historicism" provided a methodological rationale for changes of political direction, but his long-held belief about the liberal-left's exhaustion was decisive in his reading of history and setting of Telos' course.

Piccone's Cultural Exhaustion Thesis: Artificial Negativity and its New Class Agents

My first piece in Telos was a report on the May 1977, Antioch Telos Conference, where Piccone unveiled his "artificial negativity" thesis, presenting a paper, "Beyond Critical Theory," which foreshadowed the journal's future. [8] He contended that Marcuse's and Habermas' efforts to transcend Dialectic of Enlightenment critical theory were dead-ends, which could not possibly help escape the "one-dimensionality crisis."[9] Piccone held that critical theory addressed the transition from entrepreneurial capitalism to monopoly capitalism, but that the "full domination of capital" and consequent extreme homogenization, depersonalization, and routinization made bureaucratization "counterproductive" and ushered in the age of "artificial negativity." He argued that pseudo-reformist and pseudo-radical organizations, policies, ideas, and movements (e.g., the welfare state, liberal-left egalitarianism, and civil rights, feminist, environmental, and consumer activism) are system generated simulations of reform and resistance, which intensify and even maximize the liquidation of particularity. Paul claimed that "organic negativity,"or spontaneously generated (from outside the system) opposition to homogenization, is a functional necessity of monopoly capitalist regulation required to avert dire legitimation and rationality crises. His functionalist move provided a quasi-foundationalist deus ex machina that made "organicity" providential.[10] Piccone's idea of organic negativity was vague and abstract, lacking historical specificity, but his reference to "organic community" hinted where he and Telos were headed."[11] Piccone ([2001] 2005:163) explained later that he and his allies did not know how to elaborate organic negativity, when he framed his artificial negativity thesis, and that it "took us 20 years to be able to figure out what this was about." Roundly criticized by the Antioch conferees, his provocative thesis remained a contested terrain in the Telos circle for years.[12]

Piccone later specified that the cultural driver of artificial negativity and chief evaporator of cultural particularity is expansionary, universal human rights and egalitarian rights claims and consequent statist impositions that undermine local cultures and communities. His thesis made the progressive social and welfare arms of liberal democracies and their supportive civil society organizations, movements, and spokespersons, rather than capitalism, the main problems and enemies. As Paul refined these ideas, introduced fresh facets, and added allies to Telos, his exhaustion thesis became a boundary line between members of the circle, who shared emphatic antiliberal views, and others, especially the Habermasians, who were not ready to dump liberal democracy and were uncomfortable with Telos' rightward drift.[13] Piccone tirelessly reasserted his position against critics and eventually prevailed, radicalizing Telos' antiliberalism and relocating liberal democracy, the welfare state, the New Deal, human rights, and egalitarian, statist policies on the same continuum with fascism, Nazism, and communism. Editors, contributors, and readers, who openly rejected his view, left the fold, but others, remaining loyal to Piccone, did not necessarily embrace his exhaustion thesis in toto or its political directions.[14]

Paul presented his artificial negativity thesis to a much larger, more diverse audience at the student sponsored "Totally Administered Society" conference at Telos' Washington University home in February 1978. The numbers, intensity, and excitement of attendees made this meeting an early Telos' highpoint.[15] Piccone's thesis and the Telos

circle's ideas about the exhausted left animated the sharpest debates. At the start, however, Piccone's colleague and ally, Alvin Gouldner defended liberal-democratic bureaucracy's progressive facets, stressing its qualitative difference from totalitarian regimes and the superiority of its rational-legal authority over tradition. He rejected the Telos' circle's idea of total administration, and undercut the bases and directions of the artificial negativity thesis.[16] Presenting in the same session, Telos editorial associate, Jean Cohen attacked Gouldner's yet unpublished "New Class" thesis (which he had not addressed in his talk). Piccone and key members of the Telos circle had been discussing the idea. [17] Like Habermas, Gouldner employed a linguistic turn to reconstruct critical theory. By contrast to Habermas, however, he specified a primary carrier stratum of the discursive resources; a New Class of technical intelligentsia and intellectuals who share a "culture of critical discourse," which along with their technical skills, make them ascendent over the old ruling bureaucratic and monied strata. Although the New Class is "badly flawed," he held, its cultural resources make it the "most progressive force"or "the best card that history has presently given us to play."[18] Gouldner had high hopes for liberal-left, academic intellectuals, whose critical capacities, he claimed, are more highly refined and who are neither as well paid nor are as well integrated into the system as technical professionals. His theory contradicted already well established neoconservative, New Class arguments, which portrayed liberal-left policymakers, officials, academics, and activists as a hegemonic, narrowly self-interested, predatory cultural and bureaucratic elite. They saw liberal-left intellectuals to be master ideologues and planners of the moribund New Deal policy regime and welfare state (e.g., Steinfels 1980: 188-213, passim). In the 1980s, Piccone inverted Gouldner's idea and converged with the neoconservative view, identifying liberal-left bureaucrats, activists, and intelligentsia, as hegemonic New Class architects and managers of cultural homogenization and liquidation of particularity. Piccone and the neoconservatives knew that Milovan Djilas' had earlier used the term New Class to portray communist bureaucrats and that it was politically opportune to deploy the concept against New Deal liberals and the left. Naming the New Class as the collective agent of artificial negativity moderated the functionalist, systems theory logic of Piccone's exhaustion thesis.[19] He likely would have taken up the New Class idea earlier, when he first formulated his thesis, but he did not want to align or be identified with the neoconservatives. During Telos' 1980s right-turn, this fear faded.[20] Piccone (1985:2) identified liberal-left "intellectuals as par excellence articulators of universalized particular interests [and] as new power brokers within a fraudulent new pseudo-egalitarian network." Yet he also charged that neoconservatives' and neoliberals' efforts to patch up crisis ridden, New Deal bureaucracy and blunt populist facets of the conservative movement indicated that they too belonged to the New Class (Piccone 1987-88). Neither theorizing the New Class sociologically nor providing historical analysis of its genesis, Piccone applied the term loosely to signify carriers, regardless of their social locations, of what he considered to be homogenizing, egalitarian ideology. He used the term politically, à la Schmitt, to mark boundaries between friends and enemies, but, given his southern Italian penchant for personal loyalty, he sometimes mixed the personal and political. After many defections, Paul employed New Class frequently, vehemently, and personally, especially, to attack Telos apostates or potential ones.[21] In derisive, name-calling, he charged that liberal-left academics were conformist "apparatchiks" and "cretinized," rent-sucking "nomenklatura."[22] By contrast to Paul, however, many Telos editors and contributors fed at the same academic trough, advancing to senior and sometimes to chaired positions at good and even elite institutions. Using New Class politically, the Telos circle did not reflect much on their own social locations.[23]

In the 1990s, Paul occasionally scribbled friendly notes asking what I was working on and encouraging my return to the fold. He hoped that I would explore John Dewey's relevance for Telos populism, but I could not imagine how Deweyan pragmatism could contribute to a project holding that liberal democracy and liberal-left individuality were exhausted and must be scuttled. Paul's last hand written note (September 22, 1998) said that I was "writing some pretty stupid things lately," that I was due for a "beating," and that I needed to defend myself or apologize for my bogus efforts.[24] I did not take up his offer. Our final engagement came about two years later. Following discussions of the New Right and post-liberal politics in Telos and on its listserv, I thought that Paul's vehement antiliberalism and antiegalitarianism and exceptionally hostile view of human rights and rights movements, whatever his intentions or personal inclinations, had affinity for reactionary populist, hard-right currents, which some Telos contributors and editors treated as benign forces and gave them tacit or open support. In year 2000, I posted comments on the Telos Forum about related matters, which drew heated responses from Paul. During a second round of exchanges, I was told that he was not well, and I withdrew from the forum.[25] Forwarded to me by a friend, a later posting by Piccone (2003) complained that Telos on-line participants' dissensus and poor grasp of issues precluded serious "collective dialogue" and that the Forum was near defunct. He also said that he hoped that: "Telos, or what remains of it, has not yet fallen into this funereal mood." He added, however, that the "original teleology thrives" in Telos (i.e., saving

traditional Western values from capitalism and nihilism). He reaffirmed belief in this wellspring and world-historical mission until his passing (e.g., D'Amico and Piccone 2004:8).

Modern Culture in Ruins: Telos' Radical Antiliberalism

Rooted in the artificial negativity thesis, Piccone's idea that liberal-left democratic culture, institutions, and carrier strata are exhausted animated Telos's right turn.[26] Obliterating the qualitative differences between liberalism and fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism and pitting liberal democracy against organic community, he neutralized the liberal-left's antidemocratic ban and made way for friendly exploration of Schmitt, the Northern League, paleoconservatism, the French New Right, tradition, religious orthodoxy, and other topics, which, in early Telos, would have been attacked or dismissed. The shift finalized the break with critical theory, but brought to Telos new issues, ideas, and contributors, manifesting important political and intellectual trends. Piccone held that modernity's failed socialization processes and insipid commercial culture produce "abstract consumers," "narcissistic nihilism," and a surplus of drug-dependents and criminals. He saw the liberal-left's "paradigmatically 'bourgeois,'"vacuous, hypocritical, passive, abstract individual, "endowed with an ever growing list of human and civil rights," to be modern culture's nadir. He now considered modernity to be "a particular pathology of western culture" (emphasis in the original) (Delfini and Piccone 1998: 35, passim; Piccone 1998a:12-13, passim).

Paul Gottfried's (1994:172) succinct "After Liberalism," summed up pointedly Telos' trajectory at 100 issues; its "towering contribution" has been its attempt to expose "'liberal democracy' as flagrantly undemocratic."[27] Concluding this appropriately titled special issue ("Is There a Telos Left in Telos?), Piccone (1994: 206-08) scolded less stalwart editors for being "reluctant to stray beyond a reality limited exclusively to a present which, so impoverished, seems doomed to irreversible decline, betrays conceptual fatigue and helps explain some of their unintended conformism." In closing, however, his own faith in the arrival of his populist subject ("citizens qua autonomous individuals") wavered, and he conceded that the only public audience likely to find Telos' arguments at all interesting are the New Class! He seemed to be at the edge, gazing into the abyss. Was there any place to go but back into the open arms of the Church? He now saw its Latin liturgy as a strategic site to resist modernity's pervasive "cultural alienation" and "decadence."[28] Berman's (2008:4) point that particularity "is tradition, which in turn is inextricably tied to religion" signified the terminus of Piccone's long trek. Berman's comment appeared in Telos' 40th Anniversary Issue, in which retrospection and reflection about Telos's path was limited to a few paragraphs in his introduction. After Piccone's Telos this was.[29]

From Telos' early days, Piccone and his circle, treated extreme one-dimensionality and cultural homogenization as givens. Rather than a topic of inquiry, their vision of the liberal-left wasteland has been a presupposition or departure point. Their ideas about profound cultural and political exhaustion became more expansive and forceful as liberal-left editors and contributors exited and more emphatically antiliberal thinkers joined the fold. Their attack on the liberal-left became a fundamental critique of Enlightenment and modernity. Piccone's related idea of the New Class as an all-powerful, decadent bureaucratic and cultural leadership also operated as a "first principle." Contributors and associates, who challenged these beliefs, were attacked as New Class operatives or mindless exponents of its retrograde ideology. Liberal-left challenges were not excluded, especially when Paul thought that criticism of their perspectives was needed to advance his and Telos' views. However, Telos' Schmittean right-turn discouraged left-leaning contributors from writing for the journal.[30] Gouldner's point, in his1978 frontal attack on the early version of the artificial negativity thesis, was that extremely impoverished visions of liberal democracy open the way for ideas and politics that might lead to much worse states of affairs. Piccone's view of welfare state bureaucracy as quasi-totalitarian, dismissal of the threat and even the concept of authoritarianism, and treatment of doubts about these views as prima facie evidence of New Class sympathies evaporated the discursive space to entertain and debate Gouldner's type of critique. However, could the hesitators in Piccone's circle, berated by him in the Telos at 100 issue, have had lingering doubts about dumping a liberal democratic regime that served most of them well in their academic careers and everyday lives? Could any of them have shared Rick Johnston's bemusement with Piccone's and Gottfried's equation of liberal rights with absolutism and totalitarianism and dismissal of the historicity of rights claims? I am still bewildered by Piccone's assertion, in his original artificial negativity essay, that the civil rights movement was the US "counterpart" to the Holocaust. Right on Rick: "What planet is this?"[31]

Absolutizing Particularity: Piccone's Schmittean Populism vs Deweyan Democracy

Egalitarian rights claims can be abused.[32] However, Piccone's reduction of human rights discourses, initiatives, and protections to New Class drivers of domination and homogenization ignores the fact that the they also manifest aspirations for justice from below, anchor forms of legality that give vulnerable people some protection, and provide an ethical vocabulary to protest domination, terror, and war. His equation of egalitarian movements and critiques with political correctness manifests the same myopic one-sidedness.[33] Piccone attributed universal normative claims an animistic homogenizing force, and absolutized his imagined organic communities' particularity and autonomy. He rejected universalism, but implied that populist local autonomy should be the rule everywhere. When pushed, he held that his view was based on his fallible decision, informed by concrete history.[34] His Schmittean move ignored, or tacitly accepted as necessary, the historical ways individuals, in the absence of the countervailing power of voluntary association and liberal rights and legality, have been harnessed to familial elites, clientelist hierarchs, churches, and other compulsory associations.[35] Granting total privilege to local culture, he argued that Lincoln "had no business" attempting to force the South to stay in the Union. In Piccone's view, the North still could have declared war to free the slaves, but he doubted that the American public would have supported such an action. Moreover, he reduced lynching of black people in the Jim Crow South to a "resentful over-reaction within defeated Southern communities, whose laws were imposed from the outside and were considered illegitimate."[36] Was slavery's unspeakable violence and cruelty a better state of affairs? Piccone seemed untroubled about the fate of subordinate status groups in organic communities. He held that populist community has "nothing to do with race and ethnicity" and that it can accommodate substantial difference within its shared culture (e.g., Normans speaking Arabic dialects as well as French and attending Mosques) (Piccone 1999b: 156). Regardless of sweeping New Class homogenization, he held, organic communities survive in "the American heartland"(e.g., in Kansas), where belief in tradition and personal freedom are still the rule. Yet he warned that these islands of cultural particularity will soon be leveled "unless the modernist logic is reversed."[37] Eliminating this threat, however, requires dismantling the liberal-democratic cultural, institutional, and legal regime, in which these communities are now embedded. Piccone left vague the alternative form of local rule and possible consequences for minorities, and did not entertain and, in fact, dismissed the idea that populism, in the absence of liberal legality and countervailing power, might harden the racial, ethnic, and religious divisions and animosities that suffuse many actually-existing communities and populist movements (e.g. Zeskind 2009).

Piccone's (1982) memoriam to his father's passing provides context for his absolutizing of the particular. Paul explained that his parents moved from their native, small-town of Celano, Italy to the provincial seat of L'Aquila to make a living. Although just "on the other side of the mountain," the Aquilani spoke a different dialect and their city drew other regional migrants, who were also pushed there by economic necessity and shared other dialects and local cultures. Paul was born in L'Aquila, but he implied that his Celanese cultural traits made success at school and development of close friendships difficult and turned him inward to his family. He held that his nuclear family never acclimated fully to L'Aquila and that, from his: "earliest recollections, we never really felt at home anywhere, which meant we had to be at home everywhere—but only as outsiders" (Piccone 1982: 2,10).[38] The family's immigration to the US posed fresh challenges. However, Paul vented about his brother adjusting too well to American ways and lacking proper Celanese respect for their father (i.e., failing to offer Papà a drink and eating dinner before he arrived for a visit). Piccone (1982:15-16) said that his brother forgot all that he was taught at home and that he personified upwardly-mobile, middle-America's "worst features"; "fashionable nihilism," "genteel superficiality,"and "easy-going plastic mellowness of the Pepsi generation." He attributed his brother's pathologies to the: "cretinizing effects of exchange relations to which consumer culture reduces everything, including the primacy of blood relations."Years later, Paul held that populist community, governed by shared values and norms, was the cure for this toxic deracination and nihilism. He believed that "postmodern populism's" traditionalist normative consensus would immunize people against today's rootless ennui and the xenophobic prejudices of earlier populist currents. Paul claimed that his populism was in tune with John Dewey's view of community and radical democracy. However, Dewey rejected Piccone's conventionalist type of social psychology, seeing it as a manifestation of Western philosophy's dualism and "quest for certainty," which precludes reflective selves and opens the way for prejudicial judgments.[39]

Following Jefferson, Dewey and Mead held that the "moral sense" is forged initially and is sustained in face-to-face relationships. Piccone shared this view. However, Dewey and Mead did not argue that community is constituted by conformity to internalized norms or that value judgment and normatively-guided action can be equated with application of a norm per se.[40] They held that people reach understandings and cooperate by imagining themselves

in the place of the other emotionally and instrumentally, meshing their action accordingly, and modifying it through reciprocal communicative acts. They did not anchor their idea of social integration in shared norms or collective identities alone, but in the capacity to compassionately take the attitude of the other. Norms can be applied rigidly, they argued, but they also serve as "principles," which orient and facilitate attitude sharing. In their view, primary emphasis on normative consensus and obedience easily justifies "good conscience" about divisive or repressive institutions, such as slavery, and undercut the wider attitude sharing needed to communicate and deliberate about problems, adapt to changes, and preserve or build community. Even when slavery is "normative," attitude sharing makes possible local opposition and resistence.[41] Dewey and Mead held that cultures can mix, coexist, and thrive, and nurture healthy selves; one does not have to embrace the life-style or values of the other to share attitudes and reach understandings. They argued that extensive, fluid networks of voluntary association, much of it indirect and distant, now contribute to creation of multiple, dynamic layers of selves and that this social matrix of modern individuality precludes the autonomous localism championed by Piccone. Dewey and Mead theorized that complex association individuates, and saw no path back to simpler orders, only poor or abject simulations thereof. They held that the type of autonomous, reflexive individuality is the only genuine or healthy alternative to the atomized, lost, or "bewildered" individuality of Middletown, Americana, still clinging to a mythologized past (Dewey [1929] 1988, pp. 46-49).

Dewey and Mead held that social modernity generates myriad conflicts and problems, but also makes possible wider capacities for sharing attitudes, and, thus, reaching understandings and cooperating with others different from oneself, powers which were less developed in simpler, self-enclosed, cellular orders of mostly compulsory association. Moreover, Dewey and Mead did not attribute transcendental status to universals, but treated them as social constructs, which help facilitate wider patterns of communication and association. They acknowledged that universals, treated as rules or enacted as laws, are sometimes reified or imposed arbitrarily, and, thus, lack substantive legitimacy. However, Dewey and Mead saw community and democracy to be flawed works in progress. They held that fragmentation derives not from social diversity or normative differences per se, but from gross failures to achieve substantive justice, substantive freedom, and other conditions that favor effective attitude sharing. Piccone considered Dewey's New Deal era, left-egalitarianism to be an aberration of his later thought, but, from the start, he argued that just provision of the means of cultivation and participation are essential for creation of well-formed individuals, communities, and democracies. Piccone's Schmittean-accented beliefs in cultural incommensurability, anti-egalitarianism, and friend-enemy dynamics, colored strongly by his own experience of deracination, animated his anti-Deweyan, populist conservatism.

Deweyan civic republicanism and Schmittean political theory are profoundly opposed theoretical visions. Piccone and his allies in the Telos circle put a halo around tradition and reduced modern individuality and its correspondent rights and legal protections to pathology. They implied that the individual, being prone to destructive excesses, benefits from the strong hand of the community's normative and political authority and that exercise of this authority is essential to community survival and preservation of global cultural pluralism. This view could easily morph into authoritarian statism, ostensibly grounded in local particularity, but actually corrosive to it. The neopopulist core of the Telos circle either has been uncritical or less candid than Schmitt about the primacy of power and political obedience within their hoped for regime. They left vague how organic communities, in a post-liberal world, would be governed and how power would be distributed, exercised, and limited.[42] How would real, corporal individuals fare in a regime that unburdens them of liberal rights and legality and grants such total privilege to the "community" and its leadership? What groups would likely embrace these views today, and for what purposes? What consequences would these antiliberal ideas have if they were taken up widely in existing polities and communities? Being troubled by such issues, Dewey valued liberal individuality and rights as much as community, and saw them to be entwined, necessary facets of democracy, which he hoped would be broadened in scope and better secured, rather than scuttled. By contrast to the Telos circle, Dewey saw modern individuality, however problematic and rife with contradictions, to be one of the US' most treasured cultural resources, and he called its egalitarian facets American culture's prophetic, "spiritual factor."[43] Deweyan theory and Schmittean theory offer divergent views and critiques of liberal democratic regimes. Departing from contradictory teloi, however, they are "enemy" positions, which call for contrary types of authority, power relations, and reconstructive paths. And they could constitute polar political options, in a future moment of decision, if the current crises deepen and the bullet hits the bone.

Paul Piccone's Telos: A Contested Legacy

Paul Piccone's Telos will be remembered for bringing Frankfurt School critical theory and certain other threads of Western Marxism to the English speaking world. The Telos circle's continued references to the "original teleology" and "Critical Theory" imply primacy of its early identity.[44] However, Telos' lasting contribution is an inherently contested terrain; others will surely give primacy to its Schmittean turn and the engagements that followed. Paul's vehement antiliberal trajectory brought diverse, new approaches to Telos, which had received scant attention in mainstream and liberal-left journals. His inexhaustible effort to elaborate and rethink his theoretical vision, in a changing historical landscape, animated Telos' battles, shifts, and richness. His acute sense for important, emergent trends in thought, ability to integrate key facets of them into his theoretical vision, and express new twists incisively and with much polemical flare made Piccone's Telos a very lively venue. He posed basic challenges to liberal democracy, liberal-left culture, and the modern self. One can disagree with his direction, but concur about the need to address the current regime's mounting crises (i.e., cultural, economic, environmental) and rethink it. Others have portrayed, better than I ever could, Paul's unforgettable qualities as a person, editor, and intellectual. I value especially his unwavering sense of vocation. He never rested. Paul said that Papà taught the kids to "work hard, persevere, have confidence in ourselves, and to follow the Celanese version of a Kantian categorical imperative." He also said: "Papà died the same way he lived: he did what he could, the best way he know how"(Piccone 1982: 16). So did Paul. And as Paul said of his "friend" and kindred spirit, Gouldner, with whom he disagreed fundamentally over theory, "tutto d'un pezzo" was he.[45]

Endnotes

1. My colleague David Smith provided incisive criticism and very helpful suggestions.

2. Editor-in-chief, Paul Piccone often lamented the Telos circle's lack of consensus. Summing up more than twenty-five years of Telos, Piccone (1994:173) declared: "After all these years, nothing seems to be settled and the editorial board remains a hopelessly heterogeneous group still trying to come to agreement concerning many crucial and not-so-crucial issues, such as precisely what constitutes this conservative involution, who has fallen victim to it, what the journal originally sought to accomplish, what it in fact accomplished, and what it should be doing now and in the future." However, he claimed that the internal theoretical warfare derived from the Telos circle's tendency to question everything and reject conformism. Even after the right-turn and Piccone's passing, the Telos' editorial associates had diverse views.

3. Piccone (1976: 179, passim; 1977) held that abandoning "critical theory's fundamental tenets," or its Hegelian-Marxist facets, was necessary to escape its "objectivist," or reified idea of collective subjectivity, which he argued subverts its emancipatory aims and has affinity for totalitarianism. Piccone continued to use the term critical theory, but broke with the established tradition. Many of his co-editors did not agree with him, and even he thought that Telos had to debate critical theory to supercede it. Thus, Telos published many critical theory pieces through the early 1980s and, thereafter, occasional pieces, on topics that fit the journal's agenda.

4. As a graduate student I had participated in anti-war activities and in a group supportive of the United Farm Workers. However, I never embraced New Left revolutionary rhetoric.

5. The Kansas Telos Group was always too loose an operation, in Piccone's view. It lasted formally for about four years (late 1976 to1981). After its dissolution, I occasionally reviewed manuscripts and wrote a few reviews and an article for the journal. My role was modest.

6. Benoist (2005:48-9) stated: "As a person, Piccone was loud. He would express himself in an English particular to only to him, with endless phrases evoking his native Italy. When he explained, argued, polemicized, it was always in an explosive manner. The words would cascade hurriedly out of his mouth. Not everything was understandable, but one could see his face light up with a large smile. He was volcanic, passionate. He also had a big heart." Piccone's long-time associate and former student, Tim Luke (2005:1) said that Paul was often "brusque" in initial meetings and that his voice defined him—"its sound engaged, enraged, or entranced, but his voice is what most will remember—first, and maybe last—about him." Piccone's writing was just as memorable. Spiked with sarcasm and whit, his rants were hilarious, especially when they were directed at someone else. His humorous repartee skewered, incited, dunned, scolded, and urged. His polemics in Telos' Editors' Newsletters and under his nom de plume, in the journal, were funny, lively, and usually incisive. I felt christened into the Telos family

when Paul closed a letter (May 30, 1977) to me with: "You of course, remain as full of shit as always, but that's OK." A memorable late afternoon visit with Paul to the household of one of his family members living near Montreal, during an early 1980s, American Sociological Association Meeting, made demonstrably clear to me the cultural roots of his demeanor. His loud talk, animated gestures, intensity, work habits, and valuation of personal loyalty reminded me of my own larger than life, older relatives, all originating from small, hill towns east and southeast of Naples

7. Paul was a creative, energetic, forceful editor. He set directions emphatically in Editors' Newsletters, letters to contributors, rejection letters, face-to-face interactions (especially at Telos events), and Telos introductions, reviews, and essays. See e.g., Jay (1977) and Arato and Piccone (1977) for debate over Telos' friend-enemy boundaries with New Left Review.

8. Traces of the thesis appear in Piccone's earlier work. Piccone (1978a) published his Antioch essay, under a different title in Telos, followed by Tim Luke's (1978) companion piece. For my report on the Antioch conference, see Kansas Telos Group 1977. See John DeBrizzi's (1978) charge that the artificial negativity thesis drifted "beyond" any type of Marxism or critical theory, and Luke's and Piccone's (1978) response that they had historicized Marxism. Piccone (1994:185, passim) later claimed that the artificial negativity thesis was consistent with his earlier phenomenological Marxism, but that his new view opposed almost everything in the left-leaning tradition and jettisoned all the Marxist philosophical and economic baggage.

9. These theorists framed alternatives to critical theory's historicist method of immanent critique, which supposedly had been subverted by the culture industry and mass consumption. On Marcuse and Habermas, see e.g., Piccone 1980; for a critique of Adorno, see Piccone 1983.

10. Piccone's functionalist move was an attempt to rescue immanent critique by providing a pseudo-sociological guarantee for social conditions that open the way for a yet to be named emancipatory subject. Piccone (1994: 193) later implied that this maneuver distinguished his artificial negativity thesis from Frankfurt School, culture industry pessimism. The substantive strategies diverged, but Piccone converged with Habermas's quasi-foundationalist and Marcuse's aesthetic moves, which warrant that genuine negativity, or, at least, the potential resources for it, lurk below monopoly capitalism's surface, even when their cultural and political bases appear to be neutralized. Such moves manifest, what John Dewey called "the quest for certainty."

11. Mentioning 19th century American "populism" as antecedent organic negativity, Tim Luke's (1978: 65-66) companion piece, appearing with Piccone's artificial negativity essay, provided a more direct expression of Telos' future direction. The Telos circle's early and mid-1980s engagement of Christopher Lash's populist views helped them find their way home.

12. Paul nudged as well as fulminated to urge agreement with his views. In a letter (July 29, 1978) about a paper that I submitted to Telos (on Weber's theory of rationalization), Paul said that our ideas on bureaucratic planning converged, but that my analysis stopped fifty years early; the problem could be remedied, he said, if I employed what he "tried to articulate under the unfortunate label of 'artificial negativity.'"He added: "That's OK -- some of my best friends are also out of touch." See Kansas Telos Group 1977:190-91; See Fekete 1981-82:165-67.

13. The mid- and late-1980s Telos' Editors' Newsletters, which included exchanges between Piccone and departing editors, are informative about the break with critical theory and the editor-in-chief's lead role in the process. His departure exchanges with Mark Poster, Seyla Benhabib, Joel Kovel, and Jürgen Habermas are classics, but appended to the end (p.8) of the October 1987 newsletter, announcing the Schmitt special issue, Andrew Arato's, Jean Cohen's, Jose Casanova's, and Joel Whitebook's succinct resignation letter punctuated Telos' ongoing sea change, which started about six years before. In the later 1980s, Piccone entertained doing a special issue on "Critical Theory Today," but the discussion and slim results evidence the severed roots. A telling point, Piccone (1989b:19, passim) said that many of his editors did not have background in the tradition. See Piccone 1985; 1986; 1987; 1990; Telos Staff 1989-90.

14. In the December 1985, Editor's Newsletter, Piccone (pp.1-3) held that, after jettisoning the Hegelian-Marxist baggage, the Telos circle lacked a "fundamental internal consensus." However, he was sure about the needed direction to complete the paradigm shift. He reasserted his disregard for Habermasian theory ("biggest joke since the Playboy Philosophy..."), warned that a step back toward liberalism was a "step towards totalitarianism," and declared democratic ideology to be "exclusionary." These themes inhered in his decade old artificial negativity thesis.

15. Examine Spring 1978, Telos (nu. 35). Read the meeting report (St. Louis Telos Group 1978). Also, note the contributors, long lists of editors and group members, and persons who were already or later became leading social theorists and top third-generation, critical theorists.

16. Barry Commoner, Oskar Negt, and others also criticized the Telos' circle's claims about the moribund left and the Picconean exhaustion thesis. After Paul's talk and the conclusion of formal presentations, during a summary panel discussion that included audience questions and responses, Gouldner (from the audience) attacked the Telos' circle's overall view of exhaustion and the artificial negativity thesis. Responding to a comment by Arato and provoked by an unfriendly audience, Gouldner's eruptive display, in a packed lecture hall, manifested, in part, tensions

between the liberal-left and Telos' nascent political vision. The warm reception given to the avuncular elder, Murray Bookchin, libertarian-anarchist ecologist and sharp, antistatist critic of Marxism, suggest that the tensions were not merely generational.

17. Gouldner had led a summer 1977, NEH seminar on his New Class thesis at Washington University; Telos contributors Andrew Arato and Cornelis Disco attended (Gouldner 1982: "acknowledgments"[next to p. 1]). Piccone (1994:181) said that, when he was formulating his artificial negativity thesis, Telos was next door to the office of Gouldner, who was developing his New Class theory. Although disagreeing sharply on the New Class and the extent of political and cultural exhaustion, Piccone and Gouldner were kindred spirits. Gouldner was an acerbic critic, vehement enemy of the New Left, and self-acclaimed "outlaw Marxist." He had been banished from Washington University's, Sociology Department and physically moved to another building, for being a polarizing figure. Piccone (1981) wrote a Gouldner obituary in Theory and Society (which Gouldner founded and tirelessly led). See also Charles Lemert and Paul Piccone 1982.

18. Inhering in the New Class' post-traditional roles and practices, Gouldner argued, the culture of critical discourse can be deployed to question, challenge, or change the system, but it also serves careerist interests and domination (e.g., power, money, status hierarchies). He held that its impact is historically contingent, depending on agency and circumstance. See Gouldner 1982: 7, 83-92; passim; see Antonio 2005 for an overview of Gouldner's critical theory.

19. The idea of New Class was already implied in the artificial negativity thesis. Naming the agent moderated, but did not eliminate the thesis' functionalist thrust, because Piccone still held that organic negativity is necessary to balance the system and avert legitimation crises. In 1981, Paul asked me to integrate the New Class idea into my Telos review of G. L. Ulmen's Wittfogel book. I do not recall if he suggested a concrete way to approach the New Class issue, but he definitely had the topic in mind at the time. He did not object to or alter my discussion of the neoconservative version of the idea in my review (Antonio 1981-82: 207)

20. Piccone's later populist "conservative"stance still rejected neoconservatism for its liberal globalist positions on capitalism, democracy, and human rights. He embraced the French New Right, but did not want to be identified with the right per se. Although declaring the right-left continuum moribund, he employed the terms right and left opportunistically in his polemics.

21. For example, Piccone (1994; 201-06) charged Telos, editorial associate and contributor David Ost with New Class sympathies for being too critical of capitalism, the market, populism, and the American right. In assessing Telos' direction at 100 issues, Ost had (1994) advised exercising more balance and collective self-criticism about its rightward populist drift. On the New Class, see e.g., Piccone 1989a:8; 1990-91; Piccone and Ulmen 1991; Telos Staff 1991.

22. The spleen Paul vented toward academics bore the imprint of his own bitter, arbitrary, unjust tenure decision. He thought that rational legality would prevail and that the Washington University Administration's move to deny him tenure would fail. Closing a letter to me on other matters, Piccone (July 29, 1978) said that he was optimistic about his tenure fight, because "political mistakes,"which led one dean to resign, would sink another if the negative decision was upheld. However, the new dean and administration turned him down. His liberal-left, Sociology Department, senior colleagues voted unanimously in his favor. Daniel Bell, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, Norman Birnbaum, Franco Ferrarotti, and other postwar era, social theory luminaries wrote external letters, recommending Paul's promotion and tenure. Piccone's (1978b; 1979) comments on the case and related documents appear in Telos Editors' Newsletters.

23. Regardless of the Telos circle's vitriolic attacks on "New Class" academics and claims about their journal's non- or anti-academic thrust (e.g., Piccone [2001] 2005: 158), it has been respected in key, albeit changing, academic circles and association with it has served as cultural capital for editors and contributors. The academic affiliations and lustrous named professorships of allies, contributors, and editors are displayed, with their bearers names, on the Telos web-site. Current editor-in-chief and long-time editorial associate and contributor, Russell A. Berman, holds a chair at Stanford and is Senior Fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution. Hardly on the margins is he. See the lengthy list of Telos scholars and academics that Tim Luke (2005), long-time Telos associate and chaired professor, appended to his remembrance of Paul. Telos' scholarly format has always been academic, although non-mainstream, even in political essays. Telos long-time bête noir, New Left Review shifted to a non-academic format and journalistic political style in its "second series,"starting with its January/February 2000 issue.

24. Paul wrote a similar note to Doug Kellner (copied to me) on the same date, hoping to recruit us for a Telos "late critical theory" issue and, of course, to correct us publically.

25. In early June 2000, a posting on the Telos Forum expressed shock that supporters of far-right Austrian politician, Joerg Haider, who occasionally spoke well of Nazism, had solicited on the Telos listserv. On June 5, another posting defended the solicitation, saying that Telos' opening to Haider and his fellow travelers was a sign of the journal's maturity. In response, I suggested that readers open a dialogue about affinities between the harder right and the paleoconservative and New Right essays that Telos published and scrutinize views that the contributors advocated on their websites and in their other writings. These postings stirred intense exchanges. Erupting, Paul charged me, in

several postings, with a "spineless exercise in guilt by association," "covert dogmatism," "ontological economism," "crude Marxism," "'politically correct' conformism," "pusillanimity," and the type "academic crime" that Telos prosecuted. He defended Telos' right-turn, but not Haider. However, Piccone (2000a) said that Haider was no worse than "any other mediocre European politician, from Blair to Chirac..." Piccone (2000b) posted his "éléments Interview" to correct readers, like myself, who, he said, had "no clue" of what Telos was about and held "opportunistic, conformist, and otherwise silly politically correct positions." The comprehensive interview sheds considerable light on Paul's later thought and Telos' path and location (Piccone 1999b). In late October 2000, Paul and I had another exchange, on the Telos Forum, over a posting questioning the fate of a Jewish minority group in a gentile populist regime. I posted critical remarks about Paul's comments and about the interview that he had posted in June. Paul's response was scathingly dismissive.

26. See Piccone 1989b:22-23; 1999b: 140-44, for his claims about how his artificial negativity thesis deconstructed the left-right dichotomy and about its foresight and continued veracity. For later retrospection on artificial negativity and the New Class, see Piccone 2002.

27. See Piccone 1994: 206-08. Piccone stressed the importance of his artificial negativity thesis and New Class idea in setting the course. This retrospective issue (nu. 101) followed watershed special issues on The French New Right (nu. 98-99) and Federalism (nu. 100), which consolidated the sharper right-turn, started in the Schmitt issues (nu.71 & 72) seven years before.

28. Piccone (1998a:14-16) held that liturgy's mediation of the immanent and transcendent is the ultimate basis of community, infusing people with hope and meaning and cultivating autonomous selves. He left the meaning of this autonomy vague. Anglican Catherine Pickstock's writings on radical orthodoxy helped provide a vocabulary for Piccone's religious turn.

29. Piccone shared Berman's (1999:48, passim) view that "religion becomes the Critical Theory of the fully enlightened world of dogmatic secularization."

30. Additionally, liberal-left authors knew that they would not have the last word and that they would be grist for Paul's mill. Paul's mention of a "beating" for me meant his last word. However, long after the Telos right-turn, its editorial associates still do not march in a theoretical lockstep. For example, Tim Luke, who continues to fashion his own distinctive, environmentally conscious version of critical theory, still serves on the editorial board with neoconservative Russell L. Berman, paleoconservative Paul Gottfried, and others who have rejected or have little or no connection to the journal's original, critical theory thrust.

31. "Both aimed at eliminating specificity and otherness-one through extermination camps and the other through social integration...." said Piccone (1978a: 48-49). See the exchange between Gottfried 1999; Piccone 1999a; and Rick Johnston 1999: 139, passim, over Johnston's earlier mild-mannered reference about the need to protect liberal rights in populist regimes.

32. I concur with some points made by Piccone and friends on this topic; e.g., critiques of the employment of the US military to "spread democracy" and of academic identity politics.

33. My colleague, David Smith sees: "Piccone as symptomatic of the devolution of the New Left, of which he was very much a representative figure, however violently he may have resisted the idea. What started as active advocacy of civil rights, human rights, and participatory democracy devolved into the abstract negation of liberalism and humanism. The many different representatives of this devolution varied idiosyncratically in the flavor and focus of their illiberalism -- e.g., Maoism, Althusserianism, Marcusean apocalypticism -- but all scoffed at humanitarian ethics, egalitarianism, and reform."

34. Responding to my Telos Forum posting, Piccone (2000c) said: "... you accuse me of 'absolutizing the particular.' What does that mean? Unlike Enlightenment ideologues, Leftist dogmatists and religious fanatics... I still believe in the primacy of subjectivity, the necessity of making personal choices independently of whatever the higher forces in the universe supposedly warrant, etc. This means that action cannot be predicated on the contingent and relative, but must take whatever is deemed to constitute the historically concrete as absolutely given. There is always a chance of making mistakes and misjudging, but as they say in Kansas: it is better to have loved and lost than not have loved at all (or something to that effect)." Touché my friend!

35. As Michael Walzer (1997: 18, passim) explained: "members had no rights of conscience or of association against their own community." The Ottoman "millet system" was the classic example of how premodern empires kept the peace and preserved cultural particularity by harnessing individuals to self-governing religious and ethnic communities and their elites. There are many varieties of this local absolutism, and subjection of the individual.

36. Piccone (1991-92:3) held that the Civil War undermined original US federalism: "by hypostatizing axiological considerations above and beyond the law, leading to what Schmitt called 'the tyranny of value'"(by contrast, critical theory's emancipatory hopes rested on pitting value claims against "unjust" laws and structures). See Fleming 1995, for more on this line of argument. Gonzales 1998: 154; Berman, Piccone, and Ulmen1996:19-20, passim. See long-term, associate editor, Robert D'Amico's (1998) sharp critique of Berman, Piccone, and Ulmen(1996) and Piccone's (a.k.a. Gonzales 1998) unusually measured, but telling response.

37. Delfini and Piccone 1998: 41, passim. Piccone did not know the American heartland. Variably across this region, fragments of traditional culture remain, but heartland people watch cable TV, navigate Internet, shop Wal-Mart, and depend on medicare, social security, and other welfare state benefits. Immigrants and other outsiders also reside in rural, small-town Kansas, but even among natives, who share some characteristic ways, local cultures have hybrid features and are seldom as resistant to the broader culture as Piccone claimed. Piccone charged that Arthur J. Vidich's and Joseph Bensman's ([1958] 1971) classic 1950s study of small town America exaggerated the homogenizing processes of modernization and suburbanization. A sometime resident of the town that they studied, Paul held that the community still retained its organic features nearly five decades after the postwar leveling forces were unleashed (Piccone 1995: 54-55). He argued that "New Class sociologists," like the coauthors, overlook the resistant cultural attributes of genuine communities. A long-time acquaintance of Paul, Vidich (2009 [in-press]) expressed bemusement about the charges that he posed in Telos. Vidich argued that Paul mistook the town's external appearance for organicity. Scathingly dismissive of sociology, Piccone seldom stooped to defend his sociological claims with "sociological" evidence. His claims about the heartland's organic cultural islands manifested his own apodictic judgements.

38. Ulmen (2005: 8-9) suggested a different view of L'Aquila's meaning to Paul, but also implied that his Abruzzese youth had formative impact of on his later view of community.

39. Piccone does not provide a detailed discussion of normatively oriented action and social pyschology, but he implies a conventionalist normative consensus; i.e., his "autonomous citizenry" would simply obey communal norms. He held that "the organicity of the communities constituting the most fundamental political units is a function of adherence to and internalization of collectively shared rules and regulations concerning social behavior, conflict resolution, general expectations etc." (Piccone 1995:53; see 56-74 on Dewey; 1994:198; 1992-93). Piccone's (1998b) lengthy review of Eh Paesan! provides insight into his later ideas about homogenized, southern Italian roots, multiculturalism, and the Catholic Church.

40. I refer to George H. Mead along with Dewey, because they collaborated on the issues discussed here. Dewey and Mead held that much of our behavior is habitual. However, they saw cooperative life to be fraught with problematic, ill-defined situations where habit fails. In these situations, actors have to decide which values and norms apply and provide the right guidelines and ethical vocabulary for the conditions at hand. Effective normative decisions, in these cases, require reflexive judgment geared to the specific conditions of particular situations.

41. Dewey and Mead held that people can employ multiple normative frames and types of attitude sharing in each situation; slaves may be engaged through varying lenses and emotional orientations. Even in slave societies, ethically reflexive people can recognize a slave's humanity and judge slavery unjust. Dewey and Mead saw attitude sharing to be a basic human capacity, enhanced or truncated, by varying social, psychological, and biological conditions. In their view, shared needs and common all-too-human, life situations, originating in early child-parent relations, generate capacities for cross-cultural communication and understanding. They also held that universals provide a vocabulary for wider attitude sharing, which arises via association and exposure to other cultures. Accordingly, they would have held that human rights are rooted in these capacities. Piccone (1982: 15) said that his brother's treatment of his father would have been unacceptable in other parts of the world. That one does not have to be Celanese to know how parents should be hosted is consistent with Mead's and Dewey's point of view.

42. Piccone sometimes held that his populist communities would be "direct democracies," but he said little about how they would operate or how they would arrange their power and authority relations. See Schmitt [1932] 1996: 40-48, 58-61, 68-73; Piccone 1996.

43. Dewey [1929] 1988: 48-49, passim; see e.g., Dewey [1939] 1988: 173-88, on justice and community in the US tradition. Piccone and Dewey converge in their critiques of capitalist or "pecuniary" individuality. However, Dewey embraced critically, modern American, secularized, Protestant-rooted individuality, stressing freedom of conscience and cultural pluralism within as well as between communities (compare Schmitt [1932] 1996: 40-45). Also, Dewey stressed the need to refine methods to better secure traditions, deemed worthy in everyday practices and democratic deliberations, but rejected emphatically adoration of tradition per se.

44. However, these terms have become floating signifiers long after Telos' sharp change of course. For example, Berman's (2008: 4; 1999) views about recognizing the emancipatory telos' demand for "a muscular response to danger" and framing a religiously-anchored critical theory have little to do with early Telos' telos and might be better portrayed in a different vocabulary.

45. "All of one piece" this means. Piccone (1981: 167) praised Gouldner's "personal loyalty," willingness to fight, whatever the odds, and his "uncompromising," "tough," sureness of self, "unique contributions," and "extremely fertile lifetime." All characterized Paul.

References

Antonio, Robert J. 1981-82. Review of "G.L. Ulmen.The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel."Telos 50:197-210.

_____. 2005. "For Social Theory: Alvin Gouldner's Last Project and Beyond." Pp. 71-129 in Jennifer Lehmann (ed.), Current Perspectives in Social Theory: Questioning Social Change (Vol. 23). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Arato, Andrew and Paul Piccone. 1977. "Rethinking Western Marxism: Reply to Martin Jay." Telos 32: 167-74.

Benoist, de Alain. 2005. "Our American Friend Paul Piccone was a Free Spirit and a Loud Talker." Telos 131: 46-49.

Berman, Russell A. 1999. "From Brecht to Schleiermacher: Religion and Critical Theory" Telos 115: 36-48.

_____. 2008. "Introduction" Telos 143: 3-6.

Berman, Russell A., Paul Piccone, and Gary Ulmen. 1996. "Introduction: Racism, Multiculturalism, and Globalization" Telos 108: 3-24.

D'Amico, Robert. 1998. "Reply to the Introduction to Telos 108." Telos 110: 141-47.

D'Amico, Robert and Paul Piccone. 2004. "The Long March out of the 20th Century." Telos 127: 2-10.

DeBrizzi, John.1978. " Piccone's Fourth Dimension." Telos 37: 144-47.

Delfini, Alex and Paul Piccone. 1998. "Modernity, Libertarianism and Critical Theory: Reply to Pellicani." Telos 112: 23-46.

Dewey John. [1929] 1988. Individualism, Old and New. Pp.41-123 in Vol. 5, 1929-1930 of John Dewey: The Later Works 1925-1953, edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL.: Southern Illinois University Press.

_____. [1939] 1988. Freedom and Culture. Pp.63-188 in Vol. 13, 1938-1939 of John Dewey: The Later Works 1925-1953, edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Fekete, John.1981-82. " Telos at 50." Telos 50: 161-71.

Fleming, Thomas. 1995. "Three Faces of Democracy: Cleisthenes, Jefferson, and Robespierre." Telos 104: 51-67.

Gonzales, Moishe. 1998. "Liberalism vs. Populism." Telos 110: 148-54.

Gottfried, Paul. 1994. "After Liberalism." Telos 101: 169-72.

_____. 1999. "Enforcing 'Human Rights': Rejoinder to Rick Johnston." Telos 116: 135-37.

Gouldner, Alvin W. 1982. The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class: NewYork: Oxford University Press.

Jay, Martin. 1977. "Further Considerations on Anderson's Considerations on Western Marxism." Telos 32: 162-67.

Johnston, Rick. 1999. "Liberalism, Absolutism, and Human Rights: Reply to Paul Gottfried." Telos 116: 139-42.

Kansas Telos Group. 1977. "The Antioch Telos Conference." Telos 32: 188-92.

Lemert, Charles and Paul Piccone. 1982. "Gouldner's Theoretical Method and Reflexive Sociology." Theory and Society. 11(6): 733-57.

Luke, Tim.1978. "Culture and Politics in the Age of Artificial Negativity." Telos 35: 55-72.

_____. 2005. "The Trek with Telos: A Remembrance of Paul Piccone." (January 19, 1940-July 12, 2004) Fast Capitalism 1(2) (http://www.fastcapitalism.com).

Luke, Tim and Paul Piccone.1978. "DeBrizzi's Undimensionality." Telos 37: 148-52.

Ost, David. 1994. "Search for Balance." Telos 101: 137-54.

Paci, Enzo. 1972. The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man, trans. Paul Piccone and James E. Hanson. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Piccone, Paul. 1976. "Paradoxes of Reflexive Sociology" New German Critique 8: 171-79.

_____. 1977. "The Changing Function of Critical Theory." New German Critique 12: 29-37.

_____. 1978a. "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality." Telos 35: 43-54.

_____. 1978b. "Telos Newsletter" Nu. 4 (May 11).19 pp.

_____. 1979. "Telos Newsletter" Nu. 8 (February 23). 31pp.

_____. 1980. "The Future of Critical Theory." Current Perspectives in Social Theory. 1: 21-30.

_____. 1981. "Alvin W. Gouldner. 1920-1980." Theory and Society. 10(2): 165-67.

_____. 1982. "Omero Piccone" (1914-1982) (April 20).16 pp.

_____. 1983. Review of "Theodore W. Adorno, Against Epistemology: A Metacritique." Telos 56: 229-35.

_____. 1985. "Editors' Newsletter" (December 10) 21 pp.

_____. 1986. "Editors' Newsletter" (May 9) 28 pp.

_____. 1987-88. "The Crisis of American Conservatism." Telos 74: 3-29.

_____. 1987. "The Telos Public Sphere: Editors' Newsletter" (October 19) 8 pp.

_____. 1988. "20 Years of Telos." Telos 75: 3-25.

_____. 1989a. "The Telos Public Sphere: Editors' Newsletter" (January 26) 12 pp.

_____. 1989b. "The Telos Public Sphere: Editors' Newsletter" (July) 26 pp.

_____. 1990. "The Telos Public Sphere: Editors' Newsletter" (October) 10 pp.

_____. 1990-91. "Artificial Negativity as a Bureaucratic Tool." Telos 86: 127-40.

_____. 1991-92. "Federal Populism in Italy." Telos 90: 3-18.

_____. 1992-93. "The Actuality of Traditions." Telos 94: 89-102.

_____. 1994. "From the New Left to the New Populism." Telos 101: 173-208.

_____. 1995. "Postmodern Populism." Telos 103: 45-86.

_____. 1996. "Ostracizing Carl Schmitt: Letter to The New York Review of Books." Telos 109: 87-91.

_____. 1998a. "Modernity, Liturgy and Reification: Remarks on the Liturgical Critique of Modernity." Telos 113: 11-18.

_____. 1998b. "Multicultural Homogenization." Telos 113: 173-200.

_____. 1999a. "'Human Rights" as 'Historical Universals.'" Telos 116: 143-46.

_____. 1999b. "éléments Interview." Telos 117:133-66.

_____. 2000a. "From_ telos-forum: My two cents worth." Telos Forum (June 5 [18:48:54 - EDT). (telos-forum@icsun.ithaca.edu).

_____. 2000b. "From_ telos-forum: Dear Forumers." Telos Forum (June 7 [11:45 AM - EDT]). (telos-forum@icsun.ithaca.edu).

_____. 2000c. "From Telospress.com: Dear Bob (Antonio, not D'Amico)." Telos Forum (June 7 [13:02:07 EDT]). (telos-forum@icsun.ithaca.edu).

_____. 2002. "From the New Left to Postmodern Populism: An Interview with Paul Piccone" [by Jorge Raventos]. Telos 122:133-52.

_____. 2003. "Approaching 60: Shock, Awe and Realignment" Telos Forum (July 17 [15:28:56 - 0400 EDT). (telos-forum@icsun.ithaca.edu).

_____. [2001] 2005. "Telos in Canada: Interview with Paul Piccone"[by Gary Genosko]. Telos 131:152-66.

Piccone, Paul and Gary Ulmen.1991. "Democracy and Federalism: Reply to Fraser." Telos 88: 111-19.

St. Louis Telos Group. 1978. "The Totally Administered Society." Telos 35:169-84.

Schmitt, Carl. [1932] 1996. The Concept of the Political, trans. by George Schwab. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Steinfels, Peter. 1980. The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics. New York: Touchstone.

Telos Staff. 1989-90. "Does Critical Theory Have a Future? The Elizabethtown Telos Conference." Telos (February 23-25, 1990) 82: 111-130.

_____. 1991. "Populism vs. the New Class: The Second Elizabethtown Telos Conference (April 5-7, 1991) ." Telos 88: 2-36.

Vidich Arthur J. and Joseph Bensman. (1958) 1968. Small in Town Mass Society: Class, Power, and Religion in a Rural Community (Revised Edition). Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ulmen, Gary. 2005. "Paul Piccone and Telos." Telos 131:4-12.

Vidich, Arthur J. 2009 (in-press). With a Critical Eye. Knoxville, TN: Newfound Press.

Walzer, Michael. 1997. On Toleration. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Zeskind, Leonard.2009. Blood and Politics; The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.003

Knowing the Unknowable Paul Piccone

Alan Sica

Piccone means pickaxe in Italian, which makes sense. (Sica means assassin's dagger, which does not.) We first met on a hot Kansas day in early September, 1977, and within 15 minutes he began to bury me in a storm of ritualized insults, as was his wont. Soon thereafter he told me I should work for his journal rather than wasting time on scholarship that would advance my sociological "career," a word he spoke with a punishing leer. He had driven the 290 miles from St. Louis to Lawrence in a stylish white 450SL roadster, which gave instant, shocking meaning to the cliché "Mercedes Marxist." I had just arrived there from Amherst, Massachusetts to begin my first tenurable job. The new "Kansas Telos Group," as we jocularly referred to ourselves, though with some pride, accompanied Piccone and other visiting Telos friends—could they have been Andrew Arato and Paul Breines?—to a declassé steakhouse on the east side of town. He offered me a ride in the shotgun seat of his convertible with the top down, even though the heat worked against a pleasurable trip. He asked me where and with whom I had studied, then explained with a scowl that no sociologist in Amherst knew anything worthwhile. He did grant, though, that the URPE group around Bowles and Gintis in the UMass Economics Department was pretty good, and that Norman Birnbaum had written one useful book, The Crisis of Industrial Society (1969). I had worked closely with the latter and had exploited the former, to the extent they would give me their attention, as I tried to disentangle the workings of global capitalism.

Each time he insulted me—he was 37 and I was 28, so he played the big brother, his birthright in his natal family—he would splutter, smile, and laugh, as if it were a joke, testing me to see if I would wither under his scorn. He spoke like a character from Farrell's Studs Lonigan or Pietro Di Donato's Christ in Concrete, only better educated and older than his years. The choice to me was clear: tolerate his abuse until he left town, or hit him forcefully in the nose. Yet after the first stream of unpleasantness, including attacks on my lineage, marital state, education, choice of theoretical interest, clothing, and hairstyle, after noticing that I was not laughing, he changed his tone of voice. Like a hustler, he began to solicit my help with Telos, explaining that any effort I expended doing sociology and trying to become tenured was prostitution, while any time I donated to his vision of what his journal should be would cause me to be smiled upon by Marx, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Benjamin. Not to mention Gramsci.

What Paul could not know, though much later I did mention it, was that I had been reading Telos at Logos Bookshop in downtown Amherst for several years, and buying issues as our pitiful domestic budget allowed. It had become the only irreplaceable journal in my autodidactic quest for theoretical clarity and political insight. This remarkable bookstore featured the complete Lenin in the Moscow edition with multiple copies of Volume 38 on Hegel's Logic; most of the Marx/Engels works in the East German edition; lots of Frankfurt School materials in various languages; and a slew of leftwing journals. It was relaxedly run by Zachary Cohn, who was a blessed figure among the bookish of that time and place. One December evening I trudged the two miles home in thick snow from Logos carrying a box Cohn gave me in which I nestled Theories of Surplus Value in the Moscow edition—which at $10 for the clothbound edition seemed a luxurious bargain. The store catered to notables, like the very young Anson Rabinbach (of New German Critique, my second favorite journal) who one day very helpfully suggested I buy a 19th century copy of W. E. H. Lecky's precocious masterpiece on rationalism (I did not have the $7.50 it cost.). He did not know me at all, but overheard the précis of my dissertation topic on irrationality and Weber, and wanted to help, which he surely did—even though as I recall he had little regard for Weber. Ever since Marcuse and Habermas had attacked Weber in 1964 at the Heidelberg centennial meeting, right-thinking people regarded him as a high bourgeois apologist, much inferior to the heroes of the Left.

So by the time I met Paul, I had been feasting at his journal's table for several years, owned a complete set except for the chubby Vol. 6, and thought it a priori a great privilege and rare opportunity to meet him, even in the dusty byroads of Kansas (And dusty they were at that time.). When I peruse my shelves these 32 years later, and note my large collection of Marxology and other Telos-related materials, I cannot help feeling sorry for my own graduate students. Their enthusiasms are not any less worthy or promising than were ours then, but the intellectual atmosphere between about 1968 and 1976 grew out of a robust tradition, from Hegel to Habermas, that promised human liberation and enlightenment on a new scale, and with surplus profundity. Even in the midst of a dark economic era—48% unemployed minority youth in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1975, and general unemployment at nearly 20%—highbrow Leftist social thought yielded warmth and welcome mental relief, especially to Boomers. And this feeling of plausible liberation from darkness resided securely in successive issues of Telos (and New German Critique). It was, of course, a closet pleasure, since one's official education in sociology did not recognize these journals as existing, a situation that probably enhanced their appeal, their genuinely counter-cultural weightiness. If one's senior professors had no clue what was going on in these outlets of deep thinking, this was surely to the good.

In short, Paul Piccone, through his journal, was a primary agent working on behalf of heightened theoretical acuity, political savviness, and a liberating historical sense that was not available through any other means (at least in English). By his own estimate, he probably felt he and his few, dedicated confederates held a "lock on truth" which distinguished them from mainstream social science, feathering its nest while ignoring the cultural and societal tragedies that had inspired the Frankurt School and its American variant: the Telosers. That he habitually behaved "irrationally" along so many professorial axes, and that over time he became a tragic, noble figure of myth—the uncompromising Quixote of leftwing cultural and social theory—turned into an article of faith among the "critical theory" crowd, small but attentive. When he was denied tenure at Washington University, despite strong support from Daniel Bell, Habermas, and other luminaries, no-one who knew him well was surprised since he had failed the first test of the professoriate: to behave properly and show respect along rigid lines established by upper middle-class social norms. Like a Neapolitan tailor with a pressing deadline, he cursed, he fumed, he sprayed his impatience with mediocrity all around, and he did it naturally and regularly, as if everybody else were blinded by their small ambitions and could not perceive the truths that were so obvious to him.

Over a steak that Kansas afternoon, Paul asked if I had anything suitable for Telos, so I mentioned my nascent interest in global capitalism. He was skeptical about the value of this line of scholarship, but allowed that perhaps I could write a treatment of a major new book, Samir Amin's Unequal Development (Monthly Review Press, 1976). The prospect of publishing in Telos seemed too good to be true, and I set to work with passionate devotion—youthfully oblivious that hidebound university administrators would not be impressed with a byline in this little, leftwing journal, no matter how important it had become to me and a few others at Kansas. Somehow over the next few months, between teaching my first classes, finishing a 700-page dissertation, and writing other things, I made time to study Amin's book carefully—I even corresponded with Amin, who was in Dakar, Senegal—and produced a 30-page review-essay that I called "Dependency in the World Economy." My goal was to introduce Telos readers who might subscribe to "modernization theory" and "import substitution practices" to a somewhat new way of viewing the global economy, "dependency theory." I had been led to this by Stephen Resnick, one of the URPE economists at UMass, who regarded modernization theory as incorrect, and suggested I leave that camp entirely when I asked him for guidance.

Imagine my shock when in early 1978, Piccone rejected the piece as not being "critical" enough for Telos, betraying his peculiarly Gramscian lack of interest in serious political-economy. I had thought that by inviting me to write the essay, he had assured publication. Unperturbed, and convinced the piece had some small value, I sent it to the American Journal of Sociology at the University of Chicago, standard-bearer of the field. Supremely ignorant of disciplinary norms, I had no idea that AJS never accepts unsolicited review-essays, that in fact one must be a well-known scholar to be asked to write an essay for the journal, and that such works are often widely read and discussed even more than the standard articles. Shortly thereafter I heard from the book review editor at AJS. I was asked if I was in any way related to Amin or in his pay, and when I explained that I had never met him, they agreed to publish the essay without changing a word! It appeared in November 1978, and was for a good while my most widely discussed piece, even assigned as required reading for graduate students at the University of Michigan, so I was told by faculty there. Thus Piccone had won for me my first major publication in the top sociology journal simply by asking that I write a piece, then rejecting it out of hand.

One learned to forgive Piccone his catalogue of personal and professional defects for one simple reason: he was

the real thing, the genuine article. If ever a man whom I have met lived exclusively for ideas, free of professional, familial, and personal vanities, it was he. He dressed and combed his hair like an Italian storekeeper—neat, fashionless, oblivious to hipsterism, yet without interest in money or personal advancement. Later I saw him as the modern incarnation of Vico, whose father ran a large bookstore in Naples, which is how and where the genius educated himself in all things—yet, like Piccone, was never able to gain a decent academic post. In the early 80s my wife spotted a fat book on my shelf, Enzo Paci's The Functions of Sciences and the Meaning of Man (1972), and thereby chose Paci's first name for our second son. I had bought this expensive title because "phenomenological Marxism" and its mixture with psychiatry interested me, but would never have had access to Paci had not Piccone (and James Hansen) selflessly translated this 475-page tome for the Northwestern University Press series that educated so many of us. He told me that he did not ask for nor was offered any money for his work on this difficult project, which must have taken hundreds of hours over many months, including a 30-page introduction that was indispensable. Pushed to discuss the work, he would only say that Paci was important, and that "nobody else wanted to do the translation."

Working with Piccone was an exercise in contradictions. He seldom wrote letters, but loved to call, at home or office, and yell into the telephone about the next issue of the journal, how everything unrelated to the journal had to be dropped, including domestic duties, so that a mountain of work could be sent to him immediately, or surely within several days. Nothing one had written was ever good enough, no paper one edited had been done thoroughly enough—the Kansas Telos Group was sent manuscripts to review as part of our responsibilities to the journal—and no amount of trouble taken on behalf of him and his various obsessions was ever acknowledged except in a backhanded way. Being the eldest of six sons left its mark on Paul, for good or ill.

And yet he did surreptitiously recognize one's work, and he did value it. I learned from third parties that for some years he would throw copies of my review-essays at prospective writers, and demand that they live up to the standard I had (unwittingly) set. From him personally I never heard a positive word. He sometimes made insane requests. He sent me Maurice Finocchiaro's Galileo and the Art of Reasoning (1980), a long, difficult, innovative work for which I had no preparation. Being young and "dutiful," I found Galileo's own texts and read them, then read other books which bore on the topic of Galileo's life and rhetorical style, spending several months in all, and then composed my essay. It was this one, so I heard, that Piccone would use as a hectoring device when prompting other reviewers to produce work up to the vaunted Telos standards. In all I wrote seven essays for Piccone between 1977 and 1988 (on Gadamer, Therborn, Jacoby, Austrian socialism, Mead, and Thomas Mann), each calling for a lengthy process of specialized knowledge-acquisition which had nothing to do with my other work. Piccone eventually became my hated drill sergeant from a parallel scholarly universe: every time he would send me an assignment, I would groan at the prospect of the mighty work it would require and the small reward it would bring. Yet, of course, by the time I had finished each essay, I had learned a great deal about matters that would otherwise have escaped me. The straw, though, that broke the camel's back was a request that I review several of Hans Blumenberg's books. Each weighed about ten pounds and totaled thousands of pages, so half-way through the project, I sadly threw in the towel, mostly because I was by then editing the ASA journal, Sociological Theory. Piccone kept asking me for the piece, of course.

When I needed support for early tenure at Kansas, he wrote a detailed account of my essays in Telos on sociology department letterhead from Memorial University of Newfoundland, where he had a temporary job. I will not quote much from the letter of October 22, 1981 (which I was not supposed to see, but somehow secured many years later), but had I read it then, I would have thought he was lying—despite the fact that he never lied about anything intellectual, so far as I could tell. He explained to the needling Kansas administrators that all Telos review-essays were screened by himself, Paul Breines (book review editor), and also by one or two other "experts in the particular field" before they are accepted. "Sica's work has always been of the highest quality and has immediately attracted international attention....I have received nothing but praise from as far as Iran and India for the work of his which we have published. What makes Prof. Sica's work extremely valuable..." and so on. He concluded his unconstrained praise with "Sica is presently one of the most promising young sociologists in the discipline." It's very good that I did not read the letter when it was written, as I would have thought too well of myself, and would also have suspected Piccone of duplicity. He told me I was wrong most of the time, wasting my talent on sociology. The man who yelled at me regularly by phone was not the same one, so it seemed, who composed this helpful encomium to a very young scholar.

Three years later I returned the favor, more or less, by agreeing to review Paul's superb monograph, Italian Marxism, in the leading review journal for sociologists, Contemporary Sociology (which, very strangely indeed, I now edit). I do not know why the editor asked me to review the book, but I could hardly refuse, and it was my good luck that the book was excellent on every count, as I indicated:

> Should you read only two books this year on Marxism as a vital intellectual, political presence, let this be one of them. (The other could be Russell Jacoby's Dialectic of Defeat [which I had reviewed for Telos]...virtually a companion volume to Piccone's though not designed as such.) With the decentered subject suffocating reflection and renewal, the culture industry anesthetizing everybody, and Left liberation a poor joke, Piccone's analysis of Hegelian-Marxian thought in Italy since the 1840s legitimately renews hope that humanity might achieve its own salvation.

What made the book remarkably un-Picconean was its smooth, balanced, dense, Crocean flavor. All his posturing, fulminating, refusal to acquiesce to the ordinary or conventional disappeared, and in its place a fluid and solid work of Italianate scholarship was revealed. Either Paul restrained himself through uncharacteristic self-discipline, or a very fine copy-editor at the University of California Press removed his usual fire and brimstone. The results, however achieved, were excellent, and the book remains his lasting scholarly contribution.

A characteristic Piccone letter in my thin Telos files (he seldom wrote them) is from his office in St Louis, on Feb. 12, 1985. It reads as follows:

> Dear Alan:
>
> What the hell! You moved on me. I called your number—or better, the number that you gave me, and someone told me that you were gone elsewhere without a forwarding number. [I had taken a visiting job at the University of Chicago for '84-85, and the people renting our home did not want to reveal our number there; one can only imagine their perplexity when Paul began yelling at them on the phone in his Italianate accent; they were extremely meek and pleasant people from western Ohio.]
>
> At any rate, I am back in St. Louis and trying to put togegher [sic] the next issue. You will hear a lot from me during the next couple of weeks if you let me know your new number! [I was truly buried in work, serving on the staff of the American Journal of Sociology, teaching full-time, writing, "doing Chicago" with my family, and going to lots of invigorating talks, so Telos was distant from my frame of reference at that point—none of which would have impressed or interested Paul in the least.]
>
> What I need right away, before anything else, is that damn Offe piece that I sent you a couple of months ago. Did you shape it up? What has happened? [Perhaps because I was away, I never got the Offe article. Paul expected members of the editorial board to "clean up" pieces in translation by famous Europeans on a regular basis, which often required very substantial time, not to say temerity, in that most of the writers we were asked to "clean up" were much older, more famous, and more learned than were we. And often the lightly photocopied manuscripts were scarcely legible to boot.]
>
> I'll ship out a newsletter within a week or so, along with my comments on your Elias paper... [Piccone regularly sent out harangues to the troops which he called "newsletters," but were in fact screeds telling us what we needed to do regarding Telos, and also chastising every example of stupidity he had read of late. He never responded to my Elias essay, which he chose not to publish, so I gave it to a small journal, which was again lucky for me. It was precisely that essay, "Sociogenesis versus Psychogenesis: The Unique Sociology of Norbert Elias," which began an elaborate epistolary friendship with Robert K. Merton. Had I published it in Telos, Merton would likely never have seen it, and I would have missed a lively, longterm intellectual friendship over the succeeding 20 years until Merton's death.]
>
> Call me as soon as you can (#314-776-6844)
>
> Regards to the family,
>
> Paul

Piccone's closing mention of my family meant something genuine and moving, even then, but surely more so now. During spring break, 1984, my wife and our two young sons braved the ice and snow to visit Piccone in St. Louis, responding to a long-standing invitation. His 1890s robber-baron, gated-community mansion in what had long before been the nattiest part of St. Louis was as fascinating to us as his Old World domestic charm and solicitude. Around my family he became a different man, asking what we needed by way of food or sleeping quarters, and humoring our sons' inquisitiveness. Never before or since had we as a family spent the night at a professional colleague's home, so it was entirely experimental on our part, and given Piccone's irascible persona, we did not know what to expect. As I recall, the home was equipped with an elevator, original to the house, which added to its anachronistic charm. In truth, it was a dark, drafty, spooky barn, but Paul's sincere interest in our comfort and welfare brought it to life. So far as I could tell from available evidence he was there alone most of the time, in a domestic space which in its heyday probably housed a dozen people comfortably.

Yet aside from all that, my fondest memory came quite late that night. For some reason, despite having made

the 6-hour drive under exhausting conditions, I was not sleepy, and neither was he, so around midnight we sat in his Telos office on the second or third floor of the mansion, chatting easily about scholarly matters when he paused and looked at me from his swivel chair, smiled a little and said, "So, Sica, where are the ideas? Who's got the new ideas?" Perhaps this sort of pregnant moment occurs regularly among other intellectuals, but it was so rare for me that I have recalled it often as the hallmark of Piccone's personality, and a summing up of his life's meaning. That I had no ready answer for him illustrated in Platonic form what he wanted me to understand: if I could not easily identify the thinkers who would provide "us" with the next round of important notions, then perhaps I would have to dream some up myself. He would have made a great sports coach had he not been so interested in thinking, writing, the printed word, and what Elias called "the civilizing process." In my experience, he was unique.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009
ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.004

Paul Piccone: Outside Academe

Russell Jacoby

"Do you think that, year after year, you will be able to stand seeing one mediocrity after another promoted over you and still not become embittered and dejected?"

The great German sociologist Max Weber put this question to those contemplating an academic career. He also answered it. In his experience, "very few" can witness these blows without suffering "inner damage."

That was 1919. Much has changed. Weber noted, for instance, that the university kept out Jews, and he said nothing of women. Today the academic world — open to Jews, women, and other previously excluded groups — has been completely revamped. Or has it? Despite the changes, is it possible the institution still promotes the mediocre and demotes the extraordinary?

The life and work of Paul Piccone bear on this question — and others. Piccone, who died of cancer in 2004 at 64, was a top-notch scholar, writer, and editor. A collection of his essays, Confronting the Crisis (Telos Press), has just been published.

Piccone and the university had parted ways long before his death. In 1987, Washington University in St. Louis turned him down for tenure. He had published a book with the University of California Press (Italian Marxism, 1983) that garnered a prize from the American Historical Association (the Howard R. Marraro Prize in Italian History); translated another book for a different university press, Enzo Paci's The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man; and written several scholarly articles. He had enthusiastic letters of reference from luminaries like Daniel Bell and Jürgen Habermas. He edited a serious journal. No matter. He was too far outside the mainstream. He appealed the tenure decision and lost. Afterward, Piccone found occasional teaching positions but nothing secure or continuous.

Finally he gave up and moved to New York City with the journal he had founded, Telos. Piccone's path may be unique in American life and letters. Without family wealth, popular publications, or institutional backing, he remained a productive scholar who published a high-octane theoretical journal with no academic or foundation support for more than 30 years. Who has ever managed that? To say that he edited and published Telos barely captures Piccone's activities. He physically produced the magazine from his basement, preparing camera-ready pages and delivering them to the printer. To volunteer in the Telos office, or to be dragooned into volunteering, included hauling copies of each issue in a rented van from the printing press, sometimes hundreds of miles away, to the post-office loading dock.

Graduate students in philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo founded Telos. It emerged at a flashpoint of the 60s, in May 1968, and sought to break the stranglehold of a provincial Anglo-American philosophy. Translations and introductions to European thinkers and radicals filled the early issues. The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukacs, the French critic Lucien Gold-mann, and Frankfurt School theorists such as Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse jostled in its pages. For students like myself who had stumbled upon Telos, it was a full-time job keeping up. Each issue offered new faces. Who was this Italian phenomenologist, Enzo Paci? Who was the Vietnamese student of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Tran Duc Thao? The Czech philosopher Karel Kosik?

Yet Telos — the magazine and Piccone became virtually interchangeable — never passively transcribed European thinkers. On the contrary. For better or worse, Piccone took seriously one obligation from Marxist thought, the charge to apprehend the current phase of history. He did this with a vengeance. He studded his writings with

pronouncements of the failures of this or that writer to grasp the contemporary period. In the early issues, he took on Husserl and phenomenology. Then the Frankfurt School thinkers, followed by Habermas.

But with the "implosion" or self-destruction of the left by the 1980s, Piccone gobbled up new thinkers. He turned to ideas about community and populism as an alternative to what he saw as the intellectual bankruptcy of leftists — he thought too many leftists sought simply to expand the state. The idiosyncratic American historian Christopher Lasch captured Piccone's attention, as did conservative and libertarian thinkers who protested state bureaucracies. The right-wing — and for a time Nazi sympathizer — Carl Schmitt loomed larger and larger in the pages of Telos, which offered both translations and introductions to his work. In Schmitt, Piccone believed he had found an indispensable critic of liberalism and its failures.

Yet the demise of Piccone's academic career owed less to his intellectual peregrinations than to his social class — or lack of class. Piccone came from solid Italian working people, butchers and tailors. He moved to Rochester, N.Y., with his family at the age of 14. His father became a garment worker, making suits out of his house. Piccone noted that the first generation of Telos contributors consisted mainly of working- and lower-middle-class students able to attend graduate school because of higher education's vast expansion in the post-Sputnik years. Previously only "the eccentric offspring" of the rich had studied philosophy.

Piccone's background inoculated him against leftist clichés about the working class. "We knew the 'proletariat' all too well to harbor any illusions about its alleged emancipatory potential," Piccone wrote to explain Telos's uncompromising rejection of conventional Marxism. It may have also rendered him deaf to siren calls of the counterculture. Piccone, born in 1940, may have come of age in the 60s but seemed untouched by it, at least sartorially. I was a graduate student at the University of Rochester in the late 60s when Piccone knocked on my door. We had talked on the telephone but never met. My jaw dropped when I saw him. I had never seen such a contemporary, at least not close up. He was clean shaven, with slicked-back hair, and wore a fine suit and polished, leather shoes. That was his everyday look.

Another leftist Italian-American of working-class origins coincidentally chaired my department at Rochester. Eugene Genovese, the historian of American slavery, also dressed to the nines. He once addressed us motley graduate students, mainly from New York City and its suburbs, as we clomped about in work boots, blue jeans, and work shirts: "You think the workers like what you are wearing?" he sneered. "They despise it and you." He fingered his own fine threads. "This is what they like. This is what they would wear if they could." Piccone would have agreed. They were right, of course.

Yet the issue went beyond suits. Piccone was an outsider who refused to knuckle under. If he dressed fine, he played rough. He ignored academic niceties. He did not know the meaning of deference. He would tell a friend as easily as a professional superior that a piece he or she had just written stank. Nor did he say it softly. Yet Piccone was not malicious. He was democratic to the core, slamming equally the high and the low. He once called the first issue of Telos not only "superfluous" but "inferior to the average" philosophical journal. He made no distinction between a new graduate student, a colleague, or a department chair. This is not the recommended path to tenure.

The writings collected in Confronting the Crisis offer a pale reflection of the man in full, and they omit some of his harder-hitting pieces (sometimes published under a pseudonym). Yet they display Piccone's tough-mindedness and his mix of footnotes and street talk. He called one book, for instance, George Katsiaficas's The Imagination of the New Left, a "disorganized collection of notes" that "recycled" ideas from "the Marxist conceptual junkyard." He was always summing up, settling accounts, and moving on. His mind worked like a band saw, slicing through material and throwing out what he called the "dead ends."

The pieces in this collection run from a scholarly overview of 19th-century Italian Hegelians to Piccone's later efforts to work out a "new" populism. Half the book deals with the failures of the left. For Piccone, leftists turned out to be bureaucrats, members of what he termed a "new class" that planned to expand the state. The new class constituted an educated elite devoted to employing itself and legislative solutions to everything. It stood for nothing more than a technocratic New Deal. Instead, Piccone looked for an new opposition among conservative thinkers linked to the so-called French New Right, such as Alain de Benoist, who sought to revitalize communitarian life.

To read Piccone is to gain an education; it is to follow an original, fearless thinker as he assesses the intellectual issues of the day. But he not only wrote bold essays, orchestrated translations, gave a platform to beginning scholars, and for three decades published a redoubtable journal. He also could set tile and pour concrete with the best of them. He once remarked that Telos probably stood alone among magazines in that its editor built its offices.

No one smacked less of mediocrity than Paul Piccone. A small man, he reached everywhere. That the university,

which finds a place for so many, could find no place for him confirms Weber's warning. Yet in one respect Weber's admonition missed the target. Piccone never expressed bitterness. He knew life was unfair. Despite this, he led his with courage, verve, and often laughter.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.005

Café Narcissism

Jamie Dangler, Mark P. Worrell

The 1979 Cortland Conference marked a decisive shift in the adventures of Telos by opening up a debate on narcissism that would pave the way for later contests that, in turn, symbolize in the eyes of many, the errant swerve of Marxism and post-Marxist critical theory. In what follows we examine the vibrant theoretical community at Cortland during the late-70s and early 80s, revisit the conference itself, and reflect on the narcissism concept and its relationship to anti-capitalist struggle in a way that is both attuned to debates surrounding the 1979 conference as well as its ongoing relevance for critical theory today.

SUNY Cortland's Theoretical Community

A faculty-student project to create a "theoretical community" focused on critical theory developed at SUNY Cortland in 1978 and continued through the early 1980s. Spearheaded by sociologists Frank Hearn and John Alt, the project included an undergraduate critical theory seminar, a campus presentation by Christopher Lasch, and a conference on narcissism that featured Russell Jacoby, Stanley Aronowitz, Stuart Ewen, Joel Kovel, Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Paul Piccone. The heyday of this project is documented in a review essay in Teaching Sociology and conference proceedings in Telos, as well as in articles written by students for the campus newspaper, The Press, during the 1978-79 and 1979-80 academic years (Alt et al. 1979; Alt and Hearn 1980; Cleary 1979; Faricellia 1978; Hilker 1980; Kattau 1979; Kattau and Faricellia 1980).

The first manifestation of Cortland's theoretical community project was a 3-credit seminar in the fall of 1978 that involved four faculty and seven undergraduate students. The faculty members were Frank Hearn and John Alt (sociology), Gerald Surette (economics) and John Marciano (education). While the faculty originally sought to create a Cortland theoretical community that consisted of their peers, the idea for a seminar that included undergraduates developed in the context of their interaction with students who revealed an unspecified discontent with the society they lived in and sought a more participatory educational experience than was typical of their courses. From the perspective of the faculty involved, the goal of the seminar was to engage students and faculty in a collaborative project to develop an objective theory of subjectivity – "a theory which specifies the dialectic of object and subject, of historical society and the self" – in contrast to a "narcissistic, subjective search for subjectivity." From the start, Hearn and Alt posited the spread of narcissism in contemporary capitalist society as the focal point of their endeavor to transcend rational forms of domination. In their view, the narcissistic, subjective search for subjectivity blocked a true understanding of the forms of domination embedded in capitalist institutions for it prevented human beings from realizing the dialectical relationship between themselves and society. Understanding the "dialectic of object and subject, of historical society and the self" was crucial for developing a critical theory that could emancipate and allow us to transcend the reality of domination that inhibited the creation of a good society. (Alt et al. 1978: 90). Other faculty involved in the seminar and subsequent activities associated with the Cortland theoretical community were less convinced of the centrality of narcissism, as were many of the students involved. In a 2009 interview, Gerald Surette commented that the development of the Cortland theoretical community in general and the Conference on Narcissism in particular, "brought together an amalgam of different intellectual forces to discuss the culture clashes of the time." In his view, narcissism was one of many expressions of those culture clashes in the 1970s and

served as a point of departure in efforts to understand subjective responses to capitalist crises and possibilities for transformative action.

For most of the students, the critical theory seminar had a simpler and less specific aim. As one student wrote in a reflective essay a few months after the seminar ended "…the idea of a community of rational speakers rather than another course to spoon feed students was stressed. The only prerequisites for the course were dissatisfaction with previous education and a feeling that life is worth living; odd requirements for a course, but necessary to reach an understanding of the reasons for the dissatisfaction that sometimes pervades our lives" (Kattau 1979). Accordingly, the faculty goal of "transmitting the tradition and problematic of critical theory as formulated in such classics as Escape from Freedom and One Dimensional Man and in such contemporary works as Haven in a Heartless World and Social Amnesia was combined with the joint student-faculty effort to create an "open space where theory is grounded in a community of people committed to the pursuit of knowledge and where community is guided and given meaning by theory" (Alt et al. 1979: 90-91). A review essay written by seminar participants emphasized the dual importance of "appropriation of theoretical meaning" from the four texts discussed as well as "the organizational mode of this appropriation." Following Alvin Gouldner's conceptualization of a theoretical community, the Cortland project sought to develop "a community of rational speakers committed to the impersonal code of dialectical discourse … to allow distancing from each participant's own subjectivity in a manner comparable to the meta-theoretical idea of an objective theory of subjectivity." Acknowledging that that process was "agonizing and painful for many and the results [were] uneven and difficult to determine…" the review ended on an optimistic note.

> ...[M]any went through some profound changes in their understanding of their own relationship to society; in fact, it is better said that the knowledge and collective effort changed that relationship and made it more problematic. If anything, a sense of tension and conflict between self and society, once obliterated by the onset of one-dimensionality and narcissism, has been restored for a small group of people. In this sense, then, the organized system of domination is that much weaker (Alt et al. 1979: 97).

A reflective essay written for the campus newspaper by a student participant offered a similarly positive assessment of the seminar, but affirmed students' greater focus on its implications for their educational experience rather than on the substantive meaning of one-dimensionality and narcissism. Moreover, despite the excitement engendered by "a shared sense of something different happening…," this student recognized the difficulties that resulted from inequality inherent in the faculty-student relationship.

> To leave behind one's personal baggage and create these conditions that allowed for free flowing conversation to uncover and excavate the basis of underlying discontent, and to find meaning in a world where myriads of meaning confuse and obfuscate issues, proved difficult.
>
> Equally hindering [were] the academic differences between faculty and students. The former, overflowing with insight into exciting yet frightening ideas, tended to dominate the discussions, while the latter listened intently, but unable to articulate, remained silent. This situation was potentially dangerous. While leadership is necessary, so too is critical consciousness to question and clarify proposed interpretations and ideas (Kattau 1979: 9).

Student and faculty interest in maintaining the critical theory project beyond the seminar was evidenced by their efforts to expand its reach. The faculty involved in the seminar engaged more of their colleagues to join in on book discussions that formed the core activity of the community and in planning a Cortland conference on narcissism for the following academic year. Additional students joined as well. Some were encouraged to participate by faculty they took courses with and others were prompted by a series of Op-Ed pieces on socialism and capitalism that began in the fall, 1978 issues of the student newspaper and continued the following semester. The catalyst for the latter was an article titled "Is Capitalism an American Ideal?" (Fratarcangelo 1978). Three students replied with extensive articles, creating a debate among conservative and liberal students, including two from the critical theory seminar. The student authors met to discuss their different perspectives, often bringing interested friends. While most of the students involved in the critical theory seminar were sociology majors, the gatherings prompted by the newspaper exchanges brought a more diverse group of students, including majors in psychology, philosophy, biology, history, and English. The student newspaper ran a feature story on the development of these informal student gatherings, emphasizing that those involved "were not coming together to 'bicker' over theories and ideas they firmly believe in, but were meeting to share information and learn from rational discussion." The article, written by a student in the critical theory seminar, went on to explain the students' goals.

> Involved in the quest for establishing 'theoretical communities' dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, these undergraduates share an unhappiness they feel other students are also experiencing. A fundamental conviction they share is that American capitalism is at a crisis stage and in need of serious assessment and change. Accordingly, they are unhappy with their fragmented education and frustrated by their college social lives, both of which ignore the development of critical thought (Faricellia 1978).

Some of the students brought into the dialogue initiated by the newspaper debate began to participate in the theoretical community headed by Hearn, Alt, and the other faculty who organized the critical theory seminar. Thus, the faculty objective, which was to create a theoretical community engaged in critical theory, dovetailed with the students' more general desire to understand the basis of their discontent with life in modern society and what they perceived to be a limited and unchallenging educational system.

The Cortland theoretical community was sustained over time by its book discussions and social gatherings, as well as its work to organize a major conference on the Cortland campus. There was a concerted effort to create opportunities for members to interact on a regular basis, including through the summer months when most regular campus activity was suspended. Participants tried to address the unequal intellectual/academic position of faculty relative to students through pot luck suppers (at faculty homes and student apartments) and other social activities (a Bob Dylan concert in Syracuse) that had the potential to level their statuses through meetings outside of the physical spaces of the campus and appealed to interests that transcended their age and status differences. Interactions thus involved a combination of the group's intellectual pursuits and other activities that provided a basis for real camaraderie and friendship. Despite the challenges faced, the group maintained a solid focus on the project and an ambitious agenda to sustain and expand it. The Cortland Conference on Narcissism in 1980 was the climax of their efforts.

The Cortland Conference

Narcissism was a central theme of the discourse that evolved within the two-year heyday of Cortland's critical theory project. As indicated earlier, Frank Hearn and John Alt, the driving forces behind the Cortland theoretical community, were firmly focused on this, with other faculty and students less solidly so and in some cases, openly rejecting it. The varied perspectives on narcissism among faculty and student participants surfaced during discussions of Christopher Lasch's Haven in a Heartless World in the critical theory seminar and during and after his Feburary, 1979 lecture on campus titled "The Nuclear Family and Its Critics." In the review essay written about the seminar experience, participants acknowledged diverging views about Lasch's analysis as follows:

> Because he critiqued feminism as part of those social forces which robbed the family of its socialization functions, some members in the project interpreted Lasch as advocating a return to the patriarchal family and the suffocating confinement of women associated with this family form. Others disagreed and felt he was concerned with a much different issue: the emergence of narcissism as the dominant personality type of late capitalism and the inability of this person to act autonomously in conformance with any set of normative standards. Narcissism is thus theorized as a new form of domination: the ideals of freedom and justice are now displaced from the one-dimensional society and equated with the amorphousness and anomie of the impulsive and sensory self. Society, with its logic of capitalism exchange and technical rationality, remains undisturbed and unchallenged. The parent, like the worker, has lost those skills necessary for control over, and relatedness to, the products of human activity. This problematic suggests not the restoration of patriarchal authority and the subjection of women, but the restoration of parental authority over the social reproduction process. And this is possible only to the extent that capitalism and its logic of technical rationality (embodied in the bureaucratic administration of the helping professions and the state) is dissolved. It must be remembered, therefore, that the modern formless family and its narcissistic children are itself the products of a broader and destructive social process. (Alt et al. 1979: 95).

Divergence of perspectives about the perceived tension between an analysis of contemporary society centered on narcissism and feminist goals for social change sharpened in the context of Lasch's campus lecture. The student newspaper's article about the lecture, written by Cathy Kattau, one of the students involved in the critical theory seminar, was titled "Lasch Defends Nuclear Family." Kattau reported that 500 people attended the lecture and highlighted what Lasch termed as his "qualified defense of the nuclear family." According to Kattau, a key question Lasch addressed was '"whether history is moving inexorably in a progressive direction,' and if the individual produced by the permissive, companionate family of today is in fact more psychically fit than the individual produced by the

'sexually repressive' bourgeois family of the nineteenth century." Lasch was quoted as saying that "'the decline of paternal authority has not created a democratic society of autonomous self-reliant individuals, as critics of … paternal authority had all hoped'" and that narcissism, as a new personality type, reflected "the qualities wrought by a 'decadent capitalism…oriented toward consumption, leisure, and psychic survival.'"(Kattau, 1979). Lasch's defense of the nuclear family was interpreted by some members of the theoretical community as a rejection of feminist ideals for women's emancipation from domination in the context of patriarchal capitalism. In the aftermath of Lasch's visit to Cortland, a few new female students joined the theoretical community in order to express their concerns about its perceived anti-feminism. Female students who were among the original group that participated in the Fall, 1978 seminar felt similarly uneasy about what they perceived to be Lasch's tendency to equate feminism with narcissism, a tendency revealed by some of the Cortland faculty participants as well. At a memorial service for Frank Hearn, which took place a few months after his death in 2000, former student and seminar participant Casey Cleary-Hammarstedt, gave an account of the impact of the experience (and Hearn in particular) on her life. Describing the critical theory seminar as "a kind of Boot Camp for the Mind," she acknowledged the profound impact it had on students. (Of the six students in the seminar, four wrote tributes to Hearn for the memorial service that highlighted the significance of the theoretical community experience in their lives, acknowledging him as the driving force for its development). While emphasizing her admiration for and gratitude to Hearn, who was clearly a profound mentor and teacher, Cleary-Hammarstadt recalled the "divide" within the Cortland group, which crystallized during discussions of Lasch's Haven in a Heartless World. "Frank appreciated the book a great deal and agreed with its analysis. To some of the rest of us it read as an ahistorical and idealistic analysis of families headed by men that denied the harms experienced by women and children." She further explained the tensions she saw in the broader theoretical community project.

> **Our theoretical community evolved over time too. From my perspective there were two great tensions that led to it gradually dissipating. Those tensions were feminism and whether any praxis would complement our theoretical endeavors. My women friends, three of whom I also lived with, naturally began wondering about the place of women in this analysis and contributions a feminist perspective could bring to our evolving worldview (Cleary-Hammarstedt 2001).**

Discussions of Lasch's campus presentation and book, Haven in a Heartless World, were among the most animated and thought-provoking interactions for those who participated in the theoretical community. While the intellectual excitement that surrounded the critical theory project remained strong, differing perspectives on the significance of narcissism (and whether it was alienating or potentially liberating as a form of resistance to capitalist domination) became a salient feature of the group's discourse leading up to and after the April, 1980 Cortland Conference on Narcissism.

The conference was conceived as an effort to explore cultural trends in the U.S. that arose in response to capitalist crises, with a focus on narcissism and its political implications. Themes that ran through the presentations included "narcissism as a psychological disorder, the relation between mass culture and narcissism, the positive and negative political implications of narcissism, and the importance of narcissism as a phenomenon with regard to possibilities for political change" (Kattau and Faricellia 1980:7). Russell Jacoby, who gave the opening lecture, emphasized the permanent and "normal" nature of capitalist crises and posited narcissism as "both continuous and discontinuous with traditional bourgeois individualism" (Alt and Hearn 1980: 49). He argued that narcissism was not a new phenomenon of the 1970s, but that what seemed new was "the widespread lack of love and interest in intimate others, reflected in extended singlehood, dissolving marriages, childless marriages, and casual relationships in general" (Alt and Hearn 1980: 50).

Stanley Aronowitz criticized Lasch's analysis and provided a defense of the cultural version of narcissism, particularly with regard to its subversive elements within the working class. He argued that "the clinical approach to narcissism only reveals a bourgeois preoccupation with the threat to work discipline and state authority. In contrast, cultural narcissism is best understood as the 'great refusal': a call for sensory enjoyment in a technological universe, and the desire for an empowered self in a one-dimensional environment." Thus Aronowitz presented narcissism as a liberating force, as seen, for example, in the spectacle and hegemony of sports such as boxing, through which "working class people are able to escape the internalized alienation of bourgeois culture" (Hearn and Alt 1980:51).

In contrast to Aronowitz's "stress on the self-actualizing, resistance, or rebellious interpretation of mass culture, Ewen argued that mass culture is a powerful instrument of ideological hegemony." For Ewen, narcissism and mass culture were "two sides of a project of capitalist hegemony" with a shift from "the narcissistic sensibilities of the privatized self to a 'moral economy of war.'" While Ewen's talk provoked discussion that revealed differing views about the effects of mass culture on possibilities for resistance, his presentation drew out possible connections

between narcissism and the nationalism fostered by mass culture, particularly advertising (Alt and Hearn 1980: 52-53; Kattau and Faricellia: 1980:7, 20).

Joel Kovel's presentation focused on the shift from "normal to pathological narcissism." Kovel supported Lasch's notion that the bourgeois family had been undermined by late capitalism, violating "the integrity of the parental object" and producing "de-sociated characters which assist in the reproduction of capitalist relations." He called for political and collective solutions that would lead to the development of an adequate intermediary between the individual and society. Discussion following Kovel's talk called for a distinction between pathological and adaptive narcissism, the latter being less a sign of "disordered individual development" than "an adaptive response to the erosion of durable relationships, meaningful standards, and consensual values."

Jean Eshtain offered a more optimistic analysis of contemporary cultural trends. She "found reconstructive forces in a variety of locations: traditional churches, the social gospel, traditional family structures, traditional definitions of femininity, the individualized but heroic search for form, the power of play and fantasy." Elshtain's presentation provoked discussion centered on the difference between identifying possibilities for transformation that are purely abstract rather than actualizable.

In the final conference presentation, Paul Piccone argued that "an analysis of contemporary capitalism must go beyond the cultural and psychological levels outline by Lasch in The Culture of Narcissism (Kattau and Faricellia 1980: 7). Piccone tried to "go beyond critical theory's traditional perspective and its theories of the 'totally administered society'…." He argued, presciently, that dwelling on narcissism may "prove fatal for the Left" and that an "uncritical recycling of traditional categories becomes appropriated by the very system it attempts to criticize." Hearn and Alt explain the thrust of Piccone's talk as follows:

> The narcissism thesis becomes part of that which it criticizes when its traditional categories and ideals are instrumentalized by others (e.g., Carter) to justify the restoration of the old morality in the face of the crumbling of existing social authority. Piccone sought a different theoretical articulation of the concept of the narcissistic individual. While such individuals are created by and useful for the reproduction of capitalist consumerism, they are increasingly dysfunctional for the formal efficiency of the bureaucratic apparatus. In contast to Lasch's theory of the therapeutic and self-aggrandizing logic of bureaucracy, Piccone emphasized the bureaucracy's core principle of formal rationality. The social problem is that the hedonistic individual is incapable of reproducing the formal rationality necessary to control and regulate corporate and governmental bureaucracies. In order to function effectively, the bureaucratic apparatus needs internal as well as external "checks and balances" provided by non-narcissistic individuals. Without this, bureaucracies become clumsy, unwieldy, inefficient, and perhaps dangerous forms of social organization. And to the extent that bureaucratic authority responds to the "irresponsibility" of the narcissist (as employee or client) with more bureaucratic regulations and safeguards, it increases, rather than reduces, the contradiction between the cultural narcissist and the organizational principles of formal rationality. The cultural narcissist has no interest in bureaucratic requirements for formal rationality and human involvement and resents efforts to formally regulate every dimension of activity. This contradiction can only lead to the increase of bureaucratic management and worsening of the contradiction (Alt and Hearn 1980: 56).

Piccone emphasized the Left's need to formulate new categories to engage in meaningful critique and warned that the future cannot be built on "frank reconstruction of the recent past" (Kattau and Faricellia 1980:20).

Narcissism

Five years after the Cortland Conference Hearn continued to ruminate on the problem of narcissism:

> In a world where it is difficult to care for others, each looks to care for oneself, and the result is flight from public life and search for psychic survival. Narcissists experience life as impoverished, empty, and purposeless; they find interpersonal relations cold and manipulative. The narcissistic preoccupation with the self – relating to objects as extensions of the self, defining others as objects existing to serve its self – rests on and fosters a devaluation of others. The inability to care that is characteristic of narcissism, the sense that there is no one to turn to for support in time of need, furthers the effort to create a self-absorption that will enable the person to need no one at all. Finding no meaning in relationships with others, the narcissist turns inward (1985: 118-19).

While sympathetic to Lasch's perspective that "narcissism, far from contradicting advanced capitalism, stands as one of its characteristic features" Hearn nonetheless cautioned that "the critique of modernism [of the kind put forth by both Bell and Lasch] expands to become a critique of modernity and modernization, one which often implies a rejection of the important and truly progressive achievements of each. The ambiguity which should characterize our

understanding of the dialectical character of modernity … is lost in what frequently becomes an attempt to vilify the accomplishments of modern society in the name of some romanticized image of the past" (1985: 118, 125). The impact of Lasch's critique of narcissism on the Cortland theoretical community and the subsequent conference and Telos issue continues to percolate in the work of contemporary critical theorists.

For Zizek, the question is not simply one of how narcissism relates to capitalism as a synchronic abstraction but in the historically shifting forms of capital accumulation. In his analysis of the development of the Hitchcockian cinematic universe, for example, he makes the case that each stage of capitalist development supports its own preeminent form of subjectivity: liberal capitalism and the autonomous bourgeois individualist we associate with the Protestant work ethic; imperialist state capitalism (i.e., Fordism) and "the resigned paternal figure" and "organization man"; and finally postindustrial or late capitalism (i.e., post-Fordism) and the "'pathological narcissist', the form of subjectivity that characterizes the so-called 'society of consumption'" where the more we consume the less we 'enjoy' and the more we are punished for failure by insane maternal superego injunctions (1992: 5; 1991: 102-03).[i]

The pathological narcissist, says Zizek, "knows only the 'rules of the (social) game' enabling him to manipulate others; social relations constitute for him a playing field in which he assumes 'roles,' not proper symbolic mandates; he stays clear of any kind of binding commitment that would imply a proper symbolic identification. He is a radical conformist who paradoxically experiences himself as an outlaw" (1991: 102-03). Quoting Lasch, Zizek lays bare the ultimate tragedy of narcissism: harsh superego punishment and "'submission to the rules of social intercourse" without "ground[ing] those rules in a code of moral conduct'" (1991: 103). Even though critical theory has done a good job in situating narcissism within the horizon of capitalist structures and processes it has done so at the expense of situating narcissism along its social (sociological) continuum, namely, as one coordinate within the larger problem of egoism and, on top of that, the dialectical relationship between selfism and othering.

To back up to psychology: Freud posited a dynamic theory of narcissism where libido allocation, in the normal person, is withdrawn from external objects relative to changes in ego states – the sick person, for example, withdraws libido investments in objects and, in so doing, ceases to love them (Freud [1914] 1959). In the pathological form outlined by Zizek we find not simply mundane libido disinvestments but psychosis. However, with this, we go no further than recognizing that capitalism has damaged the presumptive subject-object of history. Capitalism has made us all pathologically ill. Giving the keynote address at the Cortland conference, Jacoby conceded the permanent nature of capitalist crises and stressed that beating the crisis drum "only fosters indifference and retreat into the self …" (Alt and Hearn 1980: 49).

> If capitalism is in a 'permanent crisis,' then this state is normal and rational for the system. Yet, in these contexts, the individual becomes abnormal and irrational, or narcissistic. As he put it, it is possible to speak of an inverse relation wherein a 'healthy' capitalism fosters and is sustained by the personal crises manifested by narcissism. Jacoby sought to elaborate the historical versus the contemporary dimensions of narcissism, perhaps a reaction to the tendency to view narcissism as something emerging from the American 1970s. Narcissism, he argued, is both continuous and discontinuous with traditional bourgeois individualism" (ibid).

What most critics of capital bemoan is not diseased subjectivity per se (in fact, for orthodox Marxists, the more diseased the better – the rot of humanity was its very strength) but apathy vis-à-vis ostensibly radical, collective causes. However, if late capitalism has created armies of narcissists it is also true that narcissism (one pathological form of egoism) is never present, oddly enough, without an altruistic (othering) buried at its very core. Shifting to sociology, it was Durkheim who ingeniously worked out the paradox of egoism and altruism in Suicide where we find an underground tunnel running between these countervailing forces.[ii]

One 'positive' combination of egoism and altruism was located, according to Durkheim, among Jewish communities that exhibited both 'primitive' solidarity and cosmopolitan individuality ([1897] 1951: 167-68) whereas the pathological or 'negative' form was similar to what later would be called the 'authoritarian personality' – decades before the Frankfurt School's work on social sadism Durkheim had already identified the bizarre fusion of egoism and altruism as it was manifested in the German adoration of the charismatic hero and worship of the state; he called it "will mania" or the "morbid hypertrophy of the will."

> Now what we find at the base of the mentality we have been studying is precisely a sort of attempt to rise 'above all human forces', to master them and exercise full and absolute sovereignty over them.... The individual is not strong enough to realize this ideal, the essential principle of which is domination; the State can and must attain to it by gathering firmly into its hand the sum of individual energies and directing them all to this supreme end. The State is the sole concrete and historic form possible to the Superman of whom Nietzsche[iii] was the prophet and harbinger, and the German State must put

> forth all its strength to become this Superman. The German State must be 'über Alles' (above all). Superior to all private wills, individual or collective, superior to the moral laws themselves, without any law save that imposed by itself, it will be able to triumph over all resistance and rule by constraint, when it cannot secure voluntary acceptance. To affirm its power more impressively, we shall even find it exciting the whole world against itself, and lightheartedly braving universal anger (Durkheim 1915: 44-45).

Nation, Superman, Folk, People, God, etc., are all paranoid constructs, binding, non-specular entities that fill empty intersubjective space, the hinge upon which turns the successful subject-object relation (Dolar 1992: 33-34; Zizek 2006). But progressive politics (however you care to define that) are founded on paranoid constructs as well, an 'Other of the Other' – "a hidden subject who pulls the strings of the great Other (the symbolic order) … the one who speaks through us … who controls our thoughts…. The paranoid construction enables us to escape the fact that 'the Other does not exist' … that it does not exist as a consistent, closed order…" (Zizek 1991: 18). When the Frankfurt school undertook its study of the wartime American worker the least startling conclusion was that more or less half of the sample was hobbled to one extent or another by antisemitism. More troubling, in retrospect, is not only that fundamental Left ideological cornerstones turned out to be wishful thinking but that the reliable bulwarks against fascism turned out to be not "The Workers" in the classical sense but the "organization man" (white collar workers) and young, liberal, educated women with the least exposure to Left or Labor ideology also possessing a strong commitment to the fantasy of the 'American Dream' of possessive individualism (Worrell 2008). Here it is important to double back to the most remarkable conclusion we can draw from Durkheim's analysis of egoism and altruism: the vigorous and aggressive struggle against narcissism contains its own quantum of self-destructiveness, a desire to be relieved of the burden of being an individual, the desire to be engulfed by some object and to draw others under this moral canopy, to be absorbed and reduced to a zero point and be converted into a divine tool (cf. Fromm 1973). Aronowitz was keyed into just this paradox of narcissism at the Cortland conference: "The paranoid assertion that narcissism has become rampant in Western, particularly American, culture is not entirely false." But the critique of narcissism, especially among those where the boundary between Left and Right had become blurred, tended toward the reproduction of capitalist tensions rather than their resolution: "The attack on narcissism is the protest of those intellectuals who have been integrated into late capitalism as producers of its ideology and guardians of its moral norms…. Here are the guilty professors [Bell, Wilson, Lasch, etc.] the new moral guardians of a Victorian morality that once more receives a breath, enunciating their rage against narcissism and producing a new cannon of counterrevolution…. What is … alarming about the recent outburst of anti-narcissism is its implication for the development of movements of workers, women, and racial and national minorities. A chief characteristic of the subaltern classes of capitalist society consists precisely in their deep respect for authority [and] their otherness…" (Aronowitz 1980: 70, 71, 72).

When the Soviet Union fell apart in the 80s the paleo-conservative dream turned out to be a catastrophe: the Evil Empire, the Enemy vanished taking with it the fantasy support for isolationist nationalism and the populist revolt against International Bankers that had, since the days of Long and Coughlin, been portrayed as entwined with the global communist movement. In short, their fantasy projection went up in smoke. In the name of individual freedom paleo-conservative/restorationist politics rests on the foundations of altruistic self-destruction and sacrifice of the self for the greater cause (America, God's Country). Marxism rested on a parallel foundation of social emancipation at the price of altruistic self-destruction. Undoubtedly, the Marxist critique of capital hits the nail on the head: egoism and narcissism render the individual and the entire working class susceptible to higher rates of exploitability in the form of longer working hours and lower wages, etc. However, to return to the Frankfurt School's labor study, it was also the unaligned individual who was most resistant to mass authoritarianism.

Society modeled on Bates Motel (Psycho) would be bad but the "pathological narcissist" is merely an ideal type, a theoretical purity and not a form of libidinal economy approximated by normal members of bourgeois or 'postmodern' society. With a tinge of resentment perhaps, Hearn notes that his critique of narcissism started with the pure form of "clinical or pathological narcissism" and that it was distinct from the "emerging narcissistic character structure which is increasingly, though certainly not exclusively, found among well-to-do, educated young adults" (1985: 119).[iv] The upshot of this criticism, if we frame it properly, is simply this: without me/us/it/etc., you are nothing, incomplete: "Arising in the absence of durable relationships, meaningful standards and consensual values, adaptive [normal] narcissism testifies to individual impotence and inner emptiness, to the damaged self, not the ascendent self" (Hearn 1985: 120). The romantic opposition to capital posits no less a charismatic claim than that made by capital itself, they are both cases of subsumption by a third that enjoys (Simmel 1950: 154-56) at the

expense of the individual; redemption of the self makes its presence felt in the demand for abnegation of the self. In order to truly live, in other words, one must 'die' for It (whatever the It is) and be reborn under the sign of power and stalked by an alien shadow (Worrell 2009). Ultimately, the universal (Left, Right, Post) railing against narcissism, as well as their attendant truth claims, conceals a will to power: "It shall become smooth and serve the spirit as its mirror and reflection. That is your whole will, you who are wisest: a will to power – when you speak of good and evil too, and of valuations. You still want to create the world before which you can kneel: that is your ultimate hope and intoxication" (Nietzsche 1954: 225). This world constructed by the will to power is one built on top of a graveyard.

> On a thousand bridges and paths they shall throng to the future, and ever more war and inequality shall divide them: thus does my great love make me speak. In their hostilities they shall become inventors of images and ghosts, and with their images and ghosts they shall yet fight the highest fight against one another. Good and evil, and rich and poor, and high and low, and all the names of values – arms shall they be and clattering signs that life must overcome itself again and again. Life wants to build itself up into the heights with pillars and steps; it wants to look into vast distances and out toward stirring beauties: therefore it requires height. And because it requires height, it requires steps and contradiction among the steps and the climbers (Nietzsche 1954: 213).

Asceticism, self-negation, othering, the conquering of the self, and the collective production of guilt: "For it is guilt that makes the world go round, that reminds us from within of our obligation to reproduce the social order even as we reject these inscriptions that are handed down from above and without" (Aronowitz 1980: 71).

The critique of narcissism veils, not very subtly, the terror of a great resignation, a world where people no longer resonate with or respond to the romantic call for subsumption under some collective illusion. Care for the self is, here, rejected as "irresponsibility" and countered by "enormous" quantities of "hard work and discipline" as well as "traditional sublimation" necessary for "counter-hegemonic struggle" (Piccone 1980: 116). Falling under the wheels of the tremendous We can make no greater claim to authenticity over any other mode of action and the demand for subsumption of the person (qua member) barely hides its own selfish and cynical intentions: "it remains to be shown how the narcissistic personality can be conned into investing the immense amount of social energy required by the construction of a 'socialist' society. Even more recalcitrant than Russian peasants, modern narcissists may be coerced into action only by a repressive bureaucratic apparatus much more efficient and ruthless than the present one – an option morally and politically inconceivable. Stalin's troubles with recalcitrant peasants will appear trivial compared to those confronted by any 'socialist' regime trying to cope with the narcissistic personality" (Piccone 1980: 117-18). Piccone was correct to question the relationship between sexual liberation, hedonism, and social emancipation and he was undoubtedly on target when he said that "For radicals to trot out the narcissistic personality as the new potential agency of social change is an embarrassing act of utmost political desperation" (1980: 118) but, as we have argued, 'narcissism' veils a will to power and is a red herring that dumps guilt on those that would shirk their responsibility toward a revitalized public sphere. Of course, few would deride the notion and necessity of a vibrant and rational public sphere but as many a perplexed reader observed, Telos was incapable of constructing a rational or plausible model of social organization or participation free of charisma and fantastic assumptions about the nature of the populace.

Endnotes

1. Direct all correspondence to Mark Worrell: worrellm@cortland.edu. Thanks to Ben Agger, Robert J. Antonio, Tim Luke, and Gerald Surette. Jamie Dangler (formerly Jamie Faricellia) was one of the students who participated in the Cortland Critical Theory Seminar and Theoretical Community.

[i] The notion of "hedonistic asceticism" neatly summarizes the paradox of narcissistic enjoyment: "today, in our allegedly permissive society ... asceticism assumes precisely the form of its opposite, of the generalized injunction 'Enjoy!' We are all under the spell of this injunction, with the result that our enjoyment is more hampered than ever" (Zizek 2006: 37, 38). Zizek attributes three object forms corresponding to these types of subjectivity: the objet petit a – "a pure semblance" or "gap in the center of the symbolic order"; the signifier of the barred other, an "index of the father's impotence"; and finally the Phi that "gives body to" the "enjoyment of the maternal superego" (1992: 8).

[ii] The dynamic relationship between egoism and

altruism is not unrelated, in its 'negative' form, to the relationship between sadism and masochism: "Sadism and masochism, which are invariably linked together, are opposites in behavioristic terms, but they are actually two different facets of one fundamental situation: the sense of vital impotence.... Because of the close connection between sadism and masochism it is more correct to speak of a sadomasochistic character, even though the one or the other aspect will be more dominant in a particular person" (Fromm 1973: 292).

[iii] We have to separate the actual philosophy of Nietzsche (of which Durkheim gets wrong) from the political exploitation of Nietzsche (which Durkheim gets correct).

[iv] Though we would have to place the comment on a sliding scale of affluence to account for the difference between the bourgeoisie and the typical academic, Horkheimer astutely observes: "open advocacy of egoism is unwelcome precisely to those who embody it most strongly" ([1936] 1993: 56).

References

Alt, John, Kathleen Cleary, Jamie Faricellia, Frank Hearn, Cathleen Kattau, Colleen Kattau, Jeffrey Lashbrook, John Marciano, Annette Sassi, Gerald Surette and Robert Weaver. 1979. "Special Review Essay: Doing Critical Theory." Teaching Sociology 7(1): 89-98.

Alt, John and Frank Hearn. 1980. "Symposium on Narcissism: The Cortland Conference on Narcissism." Telos 44: 49-125.

Amidon, Kevin and Mark P. Worrell. 2008. "A. R. L. Gurland, the Frankfurt School, and the Critical Theory of Antisemitism." Telos 144 (Fall): 129-47.

Aronowitz, Stanley. 1980. "On Narcissism." Telos 44: 65-74.

Cleary, Casey (Kathleen). 1979. "Narcissism: The Mark of the '70's?" The Press, November 9: 12.

Cleary-Hammarstedt, Casey (Kathleen). 2001. Written reflection on Frank Hearn for memorial service, April 28, 2001.

Dolar, Mladen. 1992. "Hitchcock's Objects." Pp. 31-46 in Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock), edited by Slavoj Zizek. London and New York: Verso.

Durkheim, Emile. [1897] 1951. Suicide, translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. New York: The Free Press.

Durkheim, Emile. 1915. Germany Above All. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin.

Faricellia, Jamie. "Concerned Students Pursue analysis of Theoretical Issues: Supplement to Classroom Education." 1978. The Press XXXVI(XII), December 1: 10.

Fratarcanglo, John. 1978. "Is Capitalism and American Ideal?" The Press XXXVI(III), September 22: 9.

Freud, Sigmund. [1914] 1959. "On Narcissism: An Introduction." Pp. 30-59 in Collected Papers, Vol. 4. New York: Basic Books.

Fromm, Erich. 1973. The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Gouldner, Alvin. 1973. "The Politics of the Mind" in For Sociology. New York: Basic Books.

Hearn, Frank. 1985. Reason and Freedom in Sociological Thought. Boston: Allen and Unwin.

Hilker, Jeanne. 1980. "Narcissism: The Crisis of Capitalism." ThePress, March 14.

Horkheimer, Max. [1936] 1993. "Egoism and Freedom Movements: On the Anthropology of the Bourgeois Era." Pp. 49-110 in Between Philosophy and Social Science. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Kattau, Cathy. 1979. "Lasch Defends Nuclear Family." The Press. February 23: 3.

Kattau, Cathy and Jamie Faricellia. 1980. "The Political Implications of Narcissism Explored: Weekend conference Provides Arena for Scholarly Discourse." The Press. May 2: 7.

Kattau, Colleen. 1979. "Knowledge as a Shared Pursuit." The Press XXXVI(XX), March 16: 9.

Piccone, Paul. 1980. "Narcissim after the Fall: What's on the Bottom of the Pool." Telos 44: 112-21.

Simmel, Georg. 1950. The Sociology of Georg Simmel, edited and translated by Kurt Wolff. New York: The Free Press.

Surette, Gerald. 2009. Interview with J. Dangler. July 1.

Worrell, Mark P. 2008. Dialectic of Solidarity: Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Worrell, Mark P. 2009. "The Ghost World of Alienated Desire." Critical Sociology 35(3): 119-22.

Zizek, Slavoj. 1991. Looking Awry. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

------. (ed). 1992. Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock). London and New York: Verso.

------. 2006. How to Read Lacan. New York: W. W. Norton.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009
ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.006

The Editor, the Journal, the Project

Russell A. Berman

To write about the history of Telos today remains a challenge because the memory of its founder and, for decades, its moving spirit, Paul Piccone, is still so strong. Is it the gravitational pull of the recollection? In that case, we are confronted with the simple problem of proximity: it may still be too soon to write a history of the origins of the project; we need a greater historical distance to gain perspective and objectivity. Yet perhaps it is not the force of memory but the magnetic pull of the personality: Piccone defined the journal and its evolving project, and he left his mark in ways more effective and more durable than did the editors of many of the competing or comparable journals that took shape in the wake of 1968. Surely both hypotheses hold, and, with time, an intellectual historical account of Telos might become possible that would pay attention solely to the ideas and not the personalities. Whether that will be a gain remains to be seen, a history of ideas without subjects. The doubt about such an undertaking points to the weakness of intellectual history as such, when the people who have the ideas fade into the background, no matter how unavoidably. For now however, Piccone's centrality remains unmistakeable; he still casts a long shadow. Indeed for this writer, even referring to him in by his last name conveys a sense of pseudo-objectivity and unwanted distance, although the first name would redefine this text as simple reminiscence or eulogy. As the journal outlives its founder, it is jarring to encounter new associates and to realize that they never met Paul.

The problem is worthy of some theorization. If thoughts matter, what about the thinkers? And do the lives of the thinkers define and limit the significance of the ideas? The bad version of this connection instrumentalizes the life, or more typically, particular snippets, in order to denounce the ideas: the thinker lived in such and such a way, did this or that, and made certain decisions, and the epigonic historian wields these factoids as denunciations of the ideas. This hermeneutics of suspicion, the programmatic debunking of thought, depends on an epistemology that asserts the priority of context and material conditions over any act of the mind: reductionism (as critics of Marxism used to say) or mechanical materialism (in the terminology of the dissident philosophical Marxists). It is in any case the real anti-intellectualism because it systematically evades ideas by invoking conditions: context is the pretext to suppress the text. The life of the man becomes exhibit A against ideas: but what would the ideas be without the life?

After all, the individual is surely not only a product of the context; the individual who, through acts of the mind as well as physical perseverance, establishes objective culture, does not only reflect the givenness of the world, even if that work of culture –here: the accomplishment of founding and fostering the journal—bears the mark of its founding author. How much of his life informed and continues to pervade the legacy? The interpretive challenge, which cannot be met here, will be for a future historian to tease out the difference between the imprint of the founder, an editorial version of authorial intent, and the relative autonomy or indeterminacy of the journal itself. Telos was unthinkable without Piccone, but Telos was not only Piccone; he set in motion a rich and dynamic cultural community, in which he played a vocal part, in a larger-than-life way, but it was always only a part, never the whole, as the intellectual contents cascaded through decades, surpassing control. The point is not only that the journal continues after Piccone's death, but that during his lifetime as well, for all of his magnetism and zeal, the journal also had a life of its own.

Recognizing the challenge to think through the relationship between Telos and Piccone is in part about a process of institutional maturation beyond the will of the charismatic founder. However this ambition was inscribed from the start, within the legacy of Piccone, the phenomenologist. To be sure, the critic of orthodox Marxist reflection theory, the philosopher and social theoretician, for whom quantitative social science was anathema, was certainly

no idealist, no formal logician. Yet his program involved the repeated and repeatedly refined positing of a dynamic relationship between the mobile and unstable world of ideas, on the one hand, and the preconceptual experience of the life-world, on the other. Modern sciences (Marxism-Leninism included) reduce ideas to the world; an abstract idealism ignores lived experience. A radical phenomenology as the basis for a critique of modernity maintains the tension: hence the project of Telos as well as the challenge for a historian of the enterprise.

Piccone lived the life of an intellectual editor in what seems like a distant age. The context for intellectual life changed radically during the last third of the twentieth century, and this transition too will become an indispensable part of a history of the journal as part of a to-be-written account of the structural transformation of the public sphere since 1968. Even then, however, it was clear that the culture of public intellectuals was migrating out of the public square and into the universities, and this shift took place long before the term "public intellectual" took on the connotation of media celebrity that it acquired around 1990. Russell Jacoby has chronicled part of this transformation. That Telos moved to New York pretty much after the end of the age of New York intellectuals has its own irony, but one has to pay attention to the specific location. Piccone's New York relocation was not into a world of the intellectual elite—the nostalgic image of bohemian Greenwich village for earlier generations of American thinkers—but to the then very scruffy lower East Side in a brick building behind a convent and across the street from a public school, very much in a neighborhood devastated by the decline of urban life. Of course, in Manhattan, the Telos office could be a meeting place for many, including a constant stream of visitors from abroad: but in New York, Piccone was not an old school New York intellectual, because that very type of intellectual had in effect disappeared. Indeed reflection on that disappearance of an older intellectual world as part of the transformation of post-Great Society, post-1968 American culture represented an underlying concern for the journal during the seventies and eighties, if never so explicity as for the mainstream neo-conservatives.

In fact, many aspects of Piccone's intellectual life-world could be described in terms of anachronism, especially from today's vantage point. Most of his work took place before the full impact of internet and the opportunities for intellectual networks that the new technologies have brought: Telos still assumed a capitalism that was not very fast. Similarly, he worked in a world in which many more independent bookstores carried hard copy journals for a readership more attuned to ideas than is currently the case. Since then, the conditions of possibility of the life of the mind have changed, radically, no doubt. Times change. That said, it is important to recognize a few aspects of Piccone's intellectual practice that, far from anachronistic, were remarkably foresighted and provided the journal with some key advantages, without imposing any inflexible agenda: the network of participants, the positioning vis-à-vis the universities, and a programmatic intellectual risk-taking.

From the start, Piccone successfully built communities of Telos supporters: readers, authors, students, often in multiple locations. This was network construction before the internet. Especially during the 1970s, "Telos groups" thrived on several university campuses in the US and Canada, and Piccone himself maintained connections to academics and intellectuals in North America and Europe. This ability to mobilize participants is all the more remarkable since there was no remuneration, unlike with commercial publications or those journals that became baubles of university presses. If there was reward, it was in the sense of participation and the generosity of Piccone's fabled hospitality. To be sure, many of the editorial board members and others in the circles around the journal were affiliated with North American universities but—and this is a second element of the Telos strategy—Piccone kept established academic life at arm's length. Unlike the other so-called radical journals that found perches within the stale neo-Marxism of the universities and their presses, Telos never aspired to become a ward of a university, surviving instead on subscription income, the dedication of the participants and the self-exploitation of the editor. It could participate in debates unfolding within academia, without being fully of the established academic world; in this sense, it resembled public journals, rather than narrowly professional ones, a legacy of a broader vision of intellectual life. Another historiography will be able to ask how professional academic life, especially in the humanities, probably always benefits from extra-academic discourse, a life-world for ideas that exists outside the ivory tower. This is the gray zone that Telos could inhabit. (It is similar to the ambiguous terrain that lies between professional political science and the political public sphere, or between literary scholarship and creative writing in the publishing world.) The point is not simply that this liminal status can be particularly productive, which it certainly has been. There is something much larger at stake: against the thesis that an older intellectual life of public intellectuals had given way to a migration of intellectuals into the ominous embrace of the university, we can now—especially amidst the economic crisis—recognize a counter-tendency, the reduction of intellectual life within the universities, the problem that currently takes the shape in pessimistic accounts of the future of the humanities. Perhaps universities will not

turn out to be as hospitable to the life of the mind as was once imagined. If, during the 1980s and the heyday of deconstruction and the culture wars, it could seem that the humanities could live a vibrant life within academic structures, in retrospect, and thinking about that era, we may have just been witnessing the gradual subversion and self-destruction of the humanities, whose place in the universities is by no means secure. Back then "theory" announced it as the post-humanist agenda, which the economic crisis may yet carry out. Telos has good reason to establish itself as an independent entity and to explore the life of the mind outside of the professionalized disciplines: if not with greater security, then at least a clearer insecurity.

On the outside, the journal could take risks, not constrained by the pieties and caution that, beneath a veneer of liberalism, all too often characterize the sanctioned intellectuality of the universities. Over the course of its career, Telos has played a contrarian role in intellectual life, taking non-standard and indeed unpopular positions, but therefore wielding considerable influence on the larger discussion, like a third party in American politics. In general, these risks have proven to have been more than worthwhile. If today it is difficult to imagine a topic of intellectual history less controversial than Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School, it is crucial to remember how much the anti-Communism and critical Marxism of Adorno, above all, represented an affront to New Left sensibilities throughout the 1970s. While the journal's engagement with the Frankfurt School was rarely hagiographical and quickly involved a critique of vestigial Hegelianism and Marxism even in the most Adornian of texts, interlocutors on the left characteristically denounced the journal, either for engaging with Critical Theory at all or for drawing anti-Communist conclusions. Any credible intellectual history of the era should not omit how much polite sensibility in the era was built around accepting détente and the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe: solidarity with dissidents was rare indeed, and the journal faced denunciations from the left that preferred to suppress any knowledge of the Soviet occupation. The historical answer to that collaboration was 1989, a transformation that the left has yet to internalize—except one fears that that moment may itself have already passed, with the reassertion of Russian hegemonic interests in Eastern Europe, the decline of free markets and the push back on rights. These are the multiple layers around the engagement with Adorno in the 1970s: left common sense was adamantly hostile to accounts that could have anti-Communist character or challenge Soviet rule. Telos solidarity with Eastern European dissidents was right then; and the time may soon come when that solidarity will be necessary again, given Russian aspirations, a weak-willed old Europe, and Yaltan proclivities among American Democrats.

Another intellectual risk involved the engagement with the writings of Carl Schmitt. As different as he is from Adorno, their reception histories in the academic world are uncannily similar. Like Adorno, Schmitt appeared on the horizon, initially, as a hopeless pariah, and Telos' interest in him was nothing less than a scandal. Our interests had similarly scandalized the left, as discussed above (and it still does, in some circles), just as it seems incomprehensible to professional philosophy. Yet by now Adorno is mainstream, published by major university presses, and correspondingly anodyne, and Schmitt too has moved to the center of many scholarly discussions. If Agamben and Zizek represent the center of some current academic debates, surely reading Schmitt has become indispensable. Telos has published the key volumes.

A third risk: the turn toward a discussion of religion and the strategic alliance with the "Radical Orthodoxy" group in England. When we first began to raise the question of religion, as part of a prior discussion of tradition, we faced similar astonishment and disbelief. Was this not more evidence of a turn to the right? How could one pay attention to religion, except as pathology? Breaking another left-liberal taboo, Telos began a discussion of religion, and since the 1990s it has become absolutely clear how much religious movements have entered the public sphere, and how pointless it is to try to discuss political developments without reference to religion. Religion, moreover, was recast as heir to Critical Theory's capacity to articulate critiques of modernity through objectification of transcendence, especially in the problem of liturgy.

This is not the place to elaborate on the "liturgical critique of modernity" at length: there are plenty of extended treatments in the journal itself. The point here however is that all three moves that have defined Telos and scandalized the guardians of old myths-the approach to Adorno, the engagement of Schmitt, and the attention to religion—were, in retrospect, undeniably bold shifts into registers of thought inimical to currently held belief structures and which elicited resistance as passionated as anything in academic life. Intellectual risk-taking outside the protected sphere of universities—perhaps precisely because we were outside of that sometimes stifling protection—contributed to the profiling of the journal as an agile guerilla, a partisan in the world of thought, staking out territory from which we could nimbly attack the edifices of established opinion.

A similar complexity, in which adamant intellectuality pushes against academic convention, pertains to Piccone

in another important dimension, which some of the current editors were lucky enough to encounter: his role as a teacher. The hypothesis that the journal stood just outside the established academic world rests on the claim that that academic world faced its own self-imposed limitations and relied on an outside force, like Telos to discover new ideas. Its negativity toward the academy contributed to the ability of the academy to thrive, despite itself. As teacher, Piccone demonstrated a classroom enthusiasm and an engagement with students, which, enormously productive for students, largely ran counter to the expected behavior, the proper professorial habitus, in the research university of the 1970s and 1980s. Scholarship as vocation demanded the extirpation of charisma and the priority of objective and distanced method. Piccone's personality and its conceptual apparatus displayed diametrically opposed orientations: community, values, participation. Eulogistic accounts sometimes attribute all this to his own idiosyncratic character, and this is certainly not untrue. But there is much more at stake than idiosyncracy, or rather, the objectivity of idiosyncracy involves its antagonism to dysfunctional convetions. Piccone's manner as teacher inherited an older intellectuality, the genealogy of which points back to educational agenda that predate the reified research university, but which also anticipates the current deep-seated transformation in the understanding of pedagogy in higher education. His classroom demeanor was not about systematic coverage of material; it focused instead on his distinct success at animating the students' learning process through his own contagious enthusiasm, the challenge of Socratic method, and the perpetual involvement of students in project-based learning: this was the tried-and-true recruitment mechanism for the journal. These projects should be understood however less as a strategy to recruit support for Telos (which they also were) but as an outstandingly successful pedagogical strategy to enhance student learning. Piccone, one can say with understatement, decentered the existing paradigm of the university professor, and if the university therefore turned its back on him, the more important point involves his far-sighted and anticipatory teaching methods. At stake then in the lessons of the teacher Piccone is the very contemporary question of the role of the humanities faculty in the research university, now at a moment in time at which the value-added for students has to be rethought radically. Piccone was, if anything, three decades ahead of his time in the reinvention of the role of the professor. Far from a vestige of a distant past, before the internet, from from an outdated anachronism, he stands as a harbinger of things to come. Much of the historical labor of Telos in the early years involved working through a still very hegemonic Marxism and dismantling its categories one by one: the scientism, the laws of development, the narrative of history, the determinism. If there is one element of that tradition that survived, transformed, Piccone embodied it as the pending revolution in teaching, on which any prospects for the survival of the humanities depend.

So while one can certainly tell the story of Telos in terms of legacy, an inheritance from a past, and in terms of the distance of that past, another era before the new technologies, this alternative account recasts the journal as the canary in the coal mine of the university. The crucial point in the narrative of Telos was not the founding editor's distinctiveness or the maverick positions or the small scale of the operation: the point, rather, was the development of new strategies of intellectual life and new critical potentials, somewhat ironically through European intellectual traditions, in order—this is clear in retrospect—to trace new paths in the changing American context of late modernity. New forms of intellectual networks, new terrains of idea-formation, new modalities of teacher-student relations: Telos has contributed to an elaboration of the road-map for radical changes in the university that the establishment, still committed to the orthodoxies of the research university and Weberian dogma, tries to maintain at the risk of losing it all. The humanities could burgeon in the mid-twentieth-century university due to an anomalous constellation of factors—the demography of the university, the shift to an information economy, and some inherited cultural traditionalism. All of this came under pressure in the last decades of the twentieth-century: there is no longer a generally credible argument to make for any single set of cultural material, which means that no canon any longer has persuasive force. At the same time, the rise of technocratic and preprofessional cultural demands only places greater pressure on the humanities, while minimizing the importance of the very core of humanistic learning, the possibility of transcendence, and the capacity of the human mind to escape contextual limitations. While this transcendent dimension represents a crucial necessity for any culture to thrive, we should not assume sanguinely that we cannot lose it. Critical Theory, in its various permutations, always feared this loss of creativity, the naturalistic reduction of humanity to mere fact. Resisting that diminishment has always been the goal, the telos, for the journal. There is a time for nostalgia, and a time to put it aside. The cultural criticism developed over decades through Telos provides deep resources with which to face the crisis of the humanities today.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.007

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: A Retrospective on *Telos*

Scott G. McNall

An Internet search for Telos, turns up the defense contractor, Telos. There is some irony in this. Paul Piccone, in response to an interviewer's question in 1999 about the impact of Telos, noted that the magazine "thrives outside a mainstream which mostly does not understand it, does not appreciate it, and. . .does not take it seriously" (fall, 1999:140). He added that "Telos remains the project of a few intellectuals and of limited readership still interested in the Truth, and optimistic, that, despite the general cultural decline, there are still a lot of possibilities for a society," however mesmerized it is by material success, and unable to recognize its spiritual impoverishment. There is the possibility that Paul was wrong about his bleak assessment of the reach and influence of the journal.

It is impossible to write about Telos without writing about Paul Piccone, because he was the founder, leader, and energy behind the magazine, outlasting editorial board changes, theoretical infighting, and changing world historical circumstances. He brought together in symposia, conferences, and other settings a group of scholars deeply committed to their own positions, who were not shy about entering into loud, long and sometimes tendentious arguments in support of their interpretation of some obscure theorist or theory. The first Telos event I attended was at Washington University, where Paul was still employed. The conference focused on the irrationality of a rational society. At one point, Alvin Goulder, a dominant force in the sociology department and sociology, began to shout from his seat, "Scandal! Scandal!" drowning out the speaker. I don't believe anybody ever understood what the scandal was, but I learned that being around the Telos group was not going to be boring. Paul seemed to view his job as provoking discussion and not infrequently "setting people right." He was exceptionally well read and knew the work of the founding fathers of the discipline well. His range of interests was broad, and the topics he tackled on behalf of the journal were vast. He and the editorial board grappled with such topics and issues as Stalin, Marx, Lenin, Luxemborg,, Bernstein, popular culture, music, Weber, Carl Schmitt, democracy, law, Russia, Perestroika, Adorno, Heidegger, Castoriades, Habermas, theology, populism, federalism, paleoconservatism, ecology, South Africa, organic intellectuals, communitarism, the New French Right, and Horkheimer. It might seem these topics aren't connected but there are strong unifying threads, as we will see. So what Telos was all about?

Telos was founded in 1968 with the purpose of consistently attacking the "forces of instrumentalization, homogenization, commodification, one-dimensionality, and identity logic" (Gross 1992-1993:7). This consistency of purpose led to what some would regard as unusual or unique political and theoretical positions, which I'll explain below. The journal was seen, to use Paul's language, as an antidote to a provincial student culture "cretinized by decades of the intellectual cold war" (Piccone 1999:133). To accomplish this task it introduced American students and professors to Continental scholars who had been struggling with the political and economic wreckage of World War II, and who were searching for theoretical explanations of what had gone so wrong. Nothing in Marx or Engels prepared intellectuals for Stalin or the Nazis, nor the broad social reaction against them. When Telos was founded very little of the theoretical work of the Frankfurt School was available in English and most Westerners only knew about Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, because they had read Marcuse's One Dimensional Man. Telos was a place to turn to try to understand the Vietnam War, the rise of crass commercialism, the inability of a left-leaning intellectual class to have any seeming impact on the larger political and economic landscape, the growing power of transnational corporations, and laws that gave tax breaks to the wealthy and eroded the freedom of

working men and women.

If one were to pick up any single issue of Telos there would be several possible reactions. You might feel that you had just joined a conversation of old but grumpy friends who had been chewing over one issue for decades. Or you might feel outrage, given a particular position or argument offered. Others might feel as though they were overcome by ether, as some of the prose was simply awful—long Baroque sentences embedded in long paragraphs that never seemed to have any point or any connection to the empirical world. The more time and energy one commits to trying to understand such work, the more likely one is to believe they are part of an important in-group with an important message that can only be deciphered by the elect. Whether or not the Telos enterprise was valuable can only be decided by trying to understand the evolution of the journal and the reasons it blazed a particular path.[2]

The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory

Some have seen Telos as a direct descendant, or offshoot, of what is know as the Frankfurt School. However, the problems that the founders of that school were addressing, and the historical circumstances, differed greatly from those of Telos. You could not have been alive in the 1960s and early 1970s without thinking that there was something wrong with Western culture but what, and how to develop a position from which to develop alternatives were not exactly clear. Adorno and Horkheimer, having fled to the United States from Nazi Germany, established The Institute for Social Research in New York. The first work of Adorno's that was widely available was The Authoritarian Personality, which "explained" the Holocaust as a psychological aberration. The United States and other Western liberal democracies were the standard against which Nazi Germany and fascist Italy should be compared. Of course, this tended to legitimate liberal ideology as "normal." The problem with this reasoning is that much earlier Horkheimer and Adorno had published the Dialectic of the Enlightenment in which it was argued that liberalism was simply another expression of modernization or the Enlightenment, which also lead to Stalinism, the New Deal, and Nazism. This makes sense if you see the triumph of Weberian rationalism in the American state, as well as all other modern states. As such, it leaves no place, literally, for self expression, no space in which to craft new political or economic systems. Marcuse, who drew heavily from the Dialectic of the Enlightenment, understood two very important things. First, he understood that the old, tired Marxism of the Soviet establishment had no room in its theoretical toolkit for the concept of alienation. Alienation was supposed to disappear when the economy was transformed. Marcuse did a brilliant job of rescuing that part of the Marxist project that understood alienation as a product of modernization and not any particular economic system. Like Adorno and Horkheimer, he saw alienation as product of the Enlightenment. Second, he understood that mass culture was degraded in capitalist societies to a marketing device. These insights, which form part of the basis of Critical Theory, brought the Telos project close to Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School. Critical Theory, as understood and explicated by the Telos editors and writers, celebrated social difference, particularity, and inclusiveness. There was an abiding concern with finding and/or developing sources and counterweights to the development of a rational society that dominated all aspects of social and economic life. Early issues of the journal read almost like a plea to understand the real nature of liberalism, its Enlightenment roots, and what would happen if liberalism was left unchallenged.

However, Telos, and Piccone in particular, inveighed against the uncritical acceptance of Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School by the American Left and the New Marxists. Most obviously, they opposed all of the old Marxist economic dogmas and they cautioned against appropriating whole cloth theories and ideas that had been developed in Europe in the 1930s. They rejected the psychoanalytic turn taken by some Marxists. They eventually challenged Marcuse because they saw his later work being used to legitimate the view of the New Marxists and the New Left that all social problems were basically due to "pre-modern residues whose systematic elimination" was seen as the key to development of a progressive agenda (Piccone 1999:135). They offered, instead, the early Marcuse whose work in the 1920s pointed to the "recovery of a Being lost and forgotten because of the generalization of commodity fetishism" (Piccone 199:137). There were others, of course, who also took up the challenge of locating the real Human Being crushed by the grinding wheels of modern societies. Note, the distinction: the reference is to modernism itself, not captalism. The journal introduced the work of Continental theorists and scrutinized them closely. Heidegger was examined and found wanting because of the hollowness of his concept of Being. Other phenomenologists were tossed in the rubbish bin of history, where they properly belong.

All theorists are ultimately challenged to explain why their perspective is more plausible than somebody else's.

In the case of social theory, we sometimes rely on comparisons. For example, if it is believed that Nazi Germany grounded their concepts of Aryan supremacy in pre-modern notions of the tribe, then it follows that tribal behavior must be anathema to the develop of a just and modern society. If we believe that human beings can reach their full potential only when free to express their rational economic interests (assuming they know what they are), then it follows that any society that limits economic choices must be "unfree" and that people can't realize their full potential. Sometimes people flat out admit that they are Kantians and claim there are certain a prioris that define any just society. It's just wrong to kill your neighbor, steal her cow, and appropriate his property.

New Critical Theory sought to overcome this problem of grounding through the combination of science and Social Pragmatism, primarily the work of Dewey. A pragmatist is faced with the problem of how to skin a cat and studies the various means and methods of doing so, chooses the most efficient ones, and does it. (Or does not do it, because whether or not we even skin cats is culturally determined and culture must have its due.) Science is a powerful tool. It does away with tradition, superstition, and transcends culture. It also leads, as Marcuse and others have noted, to technological overdetermination. That is why Telos challenged this variant of Critical Theory, because it feeds the notion that tradition is a barrier to social progress and fails to understand that social progress itself, a product of Enlightenment thinking, is ultimately soul destroying.

Another variation of Critical Theory held up for scorn was the work of Habermas, a product of the Frankfurt School. As a product of post-war Germany, Habermas set out to determine how human beings could create vibrant, democratic societies. Picking and choosing his theories carefully he grounded his work in a variant of linguistic theory that suggests we are all "competent communicators." We are hard wired to reason rationally. If we sit around and talk about it long enough, we can agree on the basic principles of a just society and manage ourselves as though we are a New England Town Hall, or a graduate seminar. Though I personally find these ideas silly, I admire the single-minded effort to theorize some way that a society could work better than others.

As Piccone (1990:138) saw it, and several others, Critical Theory, whether the version inspired by Dewey or Habermas, had taken a wrong turn. They had rejected everything of value in the work of the founding fathers of Marxism and Critical Theory, viz., the theory of alienation, the great refusal, negativity, etc. In its place was a vacuous acceptance of American social science and English analytic philosophy. This shift away from Critical Theory and the work of Habermas caused several members of the editorial board to depart. The reasons are important to understand.

Populism and Federalism

Telos took up the banner of populism and federalism as one of their versions of the Great Refusal. This was perfectly compatible with the goal of finding alternatives to the iron cage of modern governments. It is not stretching things to suggest that the Telos writers saw the modern state as a protection racket, managed by a New Class that carried out its functions and legitimated its existence. They argued that people failed to realize how they had given up individuality and freedom. The solutions offered were populism and federalism. This was confusing to some who read the journal, because many understand populist movements to be retrograde, giving rise to right-wing demagogues and other folk of the fringe.

To understand what Telos writers and Piccone meant by federalism it is useful to consider our own Constitution. As many scholars have noted, it is replete with contradictions and built-in tensions between the federal government and the rights of the states. The classic debates and struggles between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson illustrate this. To use the language of Telos, Jefferson was arguing for particularity, individuality, autonomy and freedom from a central government. He wanted to preserve what was unique about Virginia and allow other states to do follow their own paths to development. Deeply influenced by the French Revolution, he saw the need to hold conventions and modify the Constitution based on the needs of the citizens. He was, in short, a populist. Adams, on the other hand as a federalist, saw the necessity for a national army, sided with Hamilton in terms of creating a federal banking system, and saw the need for interstate commerce to be regulated by the federal government. Our current Federal Government holds these powers and, unfortunately, many more.

The Telos form of federalism would have us go back to the founding of this country, when there was a minimalist federal government based on a lose coalition of willing states, each with its own distinct cultures and interests. They made no assumptions that there was a universal Truth to guide all action, or one form of civil

government superior to all others. They embraced democracy without adding the baggage of religion. They sought real communities of autonomous individuals as models to celebrate and understand.

This lead to the embrace of some strange causes as well as bedfellows, and to some arguments within the Telos camp. As Paul's urging, California State University, Chico decided to host one of the Telos mini-conferences. Our keynote speaker, who was from the South, seemed to have come to us from another historical period—the Reconstruction. He was an unalloyed apologist for all things Southern and exemplified what Cash called, "The Mind of the South." He was a great hit with the few monarchists in the history department and some of the all-purpose conservatives on the faculty. When I pressed Paul on his reasons for inviting this gentleman and entertaining his ideas, he explained we needed to celebrate alternative ideas and modes of consciousness. It was also explained that he was a communitarian, which brings me to another set of issues.

The Left Versus the Right

Telos saw it as its job to educate an ill-informed Left. I've noted at the beginning of this essay that Telos wanted to set the record straight about what the members of the Frankfurt School had really said and thought, and to rescue that part of the Marxian project that understood social alienation to be as important as the divisive economy, if not more so. Neo-liberals (to distinguish them historically) were seen as enemies of clear thinking. According to Piccone (1999:141), neoliberals celebrated bourgeois values as universal truths. They were "committed to ever growing state intervention, bureaucratic rationality, . . .formal equality, social justice, representative liberal-democracy, and unrestricted inclusiveness." This represented the ideology of a New Class that reduced politics to procedure and marginalized its opponents as criminals or as people in need of therapy. Neoconservatives, centralizers like the neoliberals, were painted with the same brush. The point was that old labels of Left and Right were no longer meaningful and actually obscured important facts about both modern liberals and conservatives.

Telos operated in an international context and with a broader historical perspective than other organs of the left. Telos writers understood that often governments will strengthen their ability to curb all dissidence by acting in the name of the people, absorbing all forms of opposition. The Jacobins claimed to be acting for the repressed, the Third Estate, and they shaped an undifferentiated mass called "citizens." Lenin and Stalin acting in the name of the people strengthened a central government and stamped out all loci of freedom and opposition. The bureaucratic New Deal and Welfare state, some suggested, managed to do the same. Sources of opposition celebrated by the left, e.g., the civil rights movement, the student movement, were described by some as forms of "artificial negativity." They were artificial because they were, in fact, part of the state apparatus. As noted by the Telos writers, the civil rights movement was subsidized in part by a liberal state and embraced by the state in order to give the bureaucracy time to accommodate and make the changes necessary to continue to function. (I don't agree with this analysis in part because I don't believe the New Classes, or the modern bureaucratic state, operates as rationally as described.) States, unable to be this nimble, end up collapsing under their own weight; that is, the bureaucratic apparatus does not create the conditions necessary for its own reproduction. A state, then, must absorb "otherness" to survive. Telos predicted the devolution of the Soviet Union based on its understanding of a bureaucratic apparatus that brutally stamped out all opposition. The velvet glove of modern democracies was seen as particularly insidious.

What might be effective was to strengthen autonomous groups. The terms used to described such self-actuating and self-governing bodies was communitarianism. The concept is more useful than it might seem at first glance, especially when coupled with a celebration of populism and federalism. There have been several mass demonstrations against the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). If you characterize the groups that show up to demonstrate in terms of left, right, conservative, or liberal, you have a hard time understanding people's motivations, because you will find members of conservative religious groups protesting right beside members of labor groups, farmers' cooperatives, environmental activists, etc. These disparate groups are, however, joined on the topic of individual freedom and autonomy, and often a desire to strengthen local and regional economies and cultures. Such groups would be seen as sources of real negativity, locking arms in the Great Refusal.

The work of Carl Schmitt, who is probably unknown to many theorists outside the Telos circle, was offered as a means of understanding how and why autonomous groups form. Schmitt was a Nazi, who wrote during the late 1920s to the early 1940s. The very fact that Telos reviewed and discussed his work was enough for some to brand

the project as "conservative" and deeply suspect. Schmitt predicted the decline of federations and nation states, seeing them as inherently unstable, while Telos celebrated loose federations. For the communitarians and Telos federalists it was Schmitt's understanding of homogeneity that was intriguing. A homogeneous group had similar mental constructs, life experiences, religious and political values, separate from the state and therefore homogeneity could be a real and meaningful source of authentic negativity. (Of course, if you read Schmitt's work as a celebration of the "volk" and Aryan values, you would see this as an apology for and potential justification of the Nazi regime.) While it was useful to introduce Schmitt to American readers, there were mainline sociologists whose work on culture and subculture was more succinct and potentially less inflammatory.

Multiculturalism and All That

The gist of the above is that there is a remarkable consistency of analysis in the Telos pieces. If you were not familiar with the journal you might be startled to find that multiculturalism (which included all identity programs, "survivor" groups, women's studies, queer studies, and so on) was not regarded as a good thing. The reasons are intriguing. If a liberal society like ours passes laws, which it does, declaring that all difference is to be ignored, then it leads to a crypto-status and, ultimately, to the criminalization of difference. It leads necessarily to political correctness: to approved speech, and speech that is not approved. Colleges have generally given up on trying to create "speech codes" but many tried usually to the point of absurdity. It is good to understand things from many perspectives. It's good to see that—from the perspective of Critical Theory– we are well down the path described in dystopian fiction.

The Good the Bad and the Ugly

Telos, the journal, the editors and others who came together for meetings, conferences, helped an immeasurable number of people: those of us who were learning for the first time about Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School; those of us who thought Marx might have the answer to some of the political and economic problems facing the country; those of us who had not been exposed to Continental Social Theory, as well as some more arcane members of the theoretical establishment; those of us trained by graduate departments that only taught the sociological "giants," (e.g., Durkheim, Weber, Mead, and Cooley); and, finally, those of us who might have been lazy thinkers and believed that the answers to Vietnam, the commodification of all culture, and the vacuity of modern society were easy to find. Some of us passed this legacy on to our graduate students; some used the ideas to sharpen our own thinking and to look beyond the borders of this continent for political movements and parties from which we could learn strategy, tactics, and wonder what could pose legitimate and workable challenges to our own government.

In preparation for writing this essay, I considered more closely the whole run of Telos than I ever had before. There were issues raised in these journals to which I will return, even though many of the articles I found relevant are over a decade old. That says something about the staying power of the core set of beliefs that undergirded the journal. I don't think I realized until now how important Hegel was to the whole effort. By this I don't mean a search for some ultimate truth, or the belief that history has an inevitable end, regardless of the title of the journal. I mean, quite simply, the understanding that the main problem facing humans in modern societies is alienation. We can talk, although I don't think productively, about alternatives to capitalism but the real problem is modernism—and its love-child, post-modernism– and how they have absorbed all sources of potential change, all negativity.

The journal literally sought high and low for challenges to modernism, in obscure third parties in Europe, Asia, and within movements in the United States. They considered the virtues of regionalism in the United States, wondered if some of what the South hoped for in the pre-Civil War period wasn't valid, and considered the virtues (even though bizarre) of the French Right, and the Central European Union.

They were unrelenting in their criticism of liberal democracies, which lead to no end of grief. But they understood, as few did and still do, that the trends observed by Adorno and Horkheimer that lead the rise of fascism and Bolshevism were present in our own modern society. They challenged members of the New Left who tried to appropriate theories grounded in other historical realities; and excoriated those who saw pre-modern and traditional systems and ideals as something to be uprooted to spur progress. The New Left was also—appropriately–chastised for defaulting to the liberalism of the Democratic Party.

They were remarkably consistent, theoretically. If you understand alienation to be the central problem, then it follows that you must search for and create alternatives that often exist only in the interstices of modern capitalist

society. This was not a celebration of the atavistic; it was a search for real alternatives, real ways to create decent and humane societies.

There were many problems and issues that Telos did not tackle. They never looked at problems of population growth, or resource depletion. They could not have anticipated that Russia would re-emerge as a powerful political force, having overcome the vestiges of bureaucratic necrosis that plagued the Soviet Union, and garnered new wealth as the price of oil sky rocketed. They did not anticipate the re-emergence of nationalist movements across the globe, although they might see these movements as possible sources of opposition to the homogenizing forces of the WTO or the World Bank. There was little or no understanding of ethnic violence, or cleansing (although there were discussions about whether NATO's intervention into Serbia made sense), or Islamic fundamentalism. There were and are many sources of alienation, decadence, and degradation.

If I have any complaints about Telos, it has primarily to do with the fact that I did not think that on the whole they were very good sociologists. (Of course, some of the writers weren't sociologists.) Sociology is a science, at least in theory. This means that we look for patterns in behavior; try to develop theories based on our observation of what real people do when they are in groups, and systematically try to disprove our ideas. Like "real" scientists, we look for the negative cases. There are problems, of course in developing rigorous theory, because we seldom get to experiment on real people, and there are few opportunities to engage in systematic and rigorous testing of our ideas. Normally, we compare groups across periods of time, in different situations (countries) and try to build explanations in that manner. This minimalist characterization does not describe most of what was in Telos. (And, it wasn't because such submissions were actively discouraged; they just weren't part of the ethos.)

The real problem for me is that if I tried to craft a social movement, program, set of ideas that would animate people, I could not find it in Telos. When people say to "think globally, act locally," I take this to mean that on a practical basis we ought to be able to do something simple like win a local election, elect people to office who support what we value. Telos was on to something when its writers understood that political and economic ideas needed to resonate with people and that trying to craft solutions that were Federal (as we mean that term today) were doomed. My charge of political irrelevance could, of course, be laid at the door of almost every professional journal and association. We focus on theory at the expense of what is in front of our noses and we often substitute theorizing for the framing of solutions that might make a difference. We search for answers in the texts of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Hermeneutics is a stand-in for observation and the development of answers to the problem of alienation.

My own concerns at the moment relate to the degradation of the environment, the loss of biodiversity, global warming, and the possibility that humans can destroy the conditions which make our existence possible. We've made great progress so far! When I pick up an article, or am asked to review a piece, explaining for example that Marx had an environmental ethic, my response is "So what!" Whether he did (it's stretching it to suggest he did) or did not is simply beside the point. The point is to figure out how we can get people to listen and take responsibility for what they are doing. It's a huge and daunting challenge. We know that modernism is responsible for most of our modern pathologies, inequalities, and destruction of the very means of survival. So, what are we going to do about it?

Endnotes

1. Scott G. McNall is currently the Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development at California State, University Chico. Smcnall@csuchico.edu

2. The discussion of the journal's evolution draws heavily on the interview with Paul Piccone published in Telos (fall 1999:133-166).

References

Gross, David. 1993-1994. "Rethinking Traditions." Telos. Winter:5-10.

Piccone, Paul. 1999. "Interview." Telos. Fall:133-166.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.008

Schmitt, *Telos*, the Collapse of the Weimar Constitution, and the Bad Conscience of the Left

Stephen Turner

The strange dispute over Carl Schmitt has deep roots. It begins with finger pointing about the failure of the Weimar Republic and presently takes the form of an oddly ferocious dispute over the reception of Schmitt in the United States. The debate over the reception touches on and is motivated by, without explicitly addressing, some of the most divisive issues in the realm of political thought, including issues about the political meaning of the twentieth century, the ambiguous significance of the Frankfurt School, the politically correct consensus of the academic Left, and the significance of Nazism. The finger pointing, which began as soon as the Weimar order collapsed, was over responsibility, especially the responsibility of the Left. The generation that lived through the collapse was haunted by the question. The dispute over the meaning of the twentieth century involved the merger of two central political narratives. The Left story, or one of them, makes the century into a struggle between the progressive forces of the Left and the evils of reaction, which the Left eventually (and after the war) more or less won and turned into the ideal of social democracy; its triumph was the expansion of the state against the opposition of liberals. The "liberal" or Left liberal view was that the progressive part of the century is to be found in the struggle between liberal democracy and its many worse enemies, including the Communist Left, Nazism, Catholic authoritarians, and fascism, a struggle which was won as a result of a humane accommodation with the legitimate demands of the Left for economic justice or at least economic security that (correctly) stopped short of socialism and provided freedom that (correctly) stopped short of libertarianism. The two narratives, deriving from sources originally hostile to one another, in the end come close to one another, in the vision of an economically just civil society with a strong state and a strong public sphere. For the politically correct, the great achievement of the twentieth century, represented in such thinkers as John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, is the mutual accommodation of the best values of both traditions: justice and free political participation, under the benign restrictions of rationality.

Both parties to this accommodation also shared a particular trait: the tendency toward the moralization of politics that comes with the sense, especially vivid on the Left and central to the interwar Left, of being suspended between a future which lays slightly out of reach and a present in which politics is beset with oppositions which are seen as irrational, superstitious, inhumane, racist, religiously fanatical, and the like, which is to say morally inferior and intellectually blighted. Schmitt's thinking stands as the most unambiguous Other to this consensus. The fact that Telos publicized Schmitt and led the way in addressing the challenge of Schmitt has seemed, to more than a few bien pensants, to be a scandalous breach of scholarly morality.

There are those, however, both on the side of the Left and on the side of liberalism, who reject the standard story. Among liberals there was a conflict between those who were more concerned by the weaknesses of liberal democracy, and focused on its fragility, and those who focused on its imperfections but saw it as perfectable, usually by making it more egalitarian. Those liberals who focused on fragility tended to reject perfectability, which typically relied on an expanded state and a rationalistic view of politics, and emphasized the contingency and non-universality of the conditions of liberal politics. These liberals, such as Michael Oakeshott, were utterly incomprehensible to the

adherents of the more conventional liberal account.[1] Some on the Left, notably Paul Piccone and Chantal Mouffe, also rejected this version of the triumph of Leftism as an "accommodation with managerial liberalism" (Piccone and Ulmen 2002). They were the ones who turned to authors from outside the Left and on the edge of liberalism as sources. Schmitt was the most prominent of these, and the use of Schmitt was, to both perfectability liberals and statist Leftists, scandalous, because he was, in the context of their versions of the century, unambiguously a foe. For the others, he was a source of insight into the inherent problems and conflicts of liberal democracy (conflicts he had relentlessly exposed), as well as the failures of past Left politics.

The Puzzling Discussion of the Schmitt Reception

The conflict over the master narrative is an important part of the background to the strange dispute that has raged for the last few decades over the reception of Schmitt. But it cannot explain its extraordinary venom and intensity. But what does? The strangeness can hardly be overstated: there is no comparable discussion of any other thinker. Even Heidegger's Nazi period, which produced a small academic industry, did not produce a literature attacking those who had commented on Heidegger by dissecting their motives, accusing them of various political sins or secret political leanings of a totalitarian kind. But this kind of attack is the norm in the discussion of the Schmitt reception. Alan Wolfe claims that thinkers on the Left "impressed by his no nonsense attacks on liberalism and his contempt for Wilsonian idealism," see Schmitt as "someone who, very much like themselves, opposed humanism in favor of an emphasis on the role of power in modern society, a perspective that has more in common with a poststructuralist like Michel Foucault than with liberal thinkers such as John Rawls." The attitude of this Left– represented particularly by Telos, according to Wolfe, is that "anything would be better than Marx's contemporary, John Stuart Mill, and his legacy," and that "in turning to Schmitt rather than to liberalism, they have clung fast to an authoritarian strain in Marxism represented by such 20th century thinkers as V. I. Lenin and Antonio Gramsci" (Wolfe 2004).

Telos indeed published major translations of Schmitt, provided a forum for the defenders of Schmitt's intellectual significance and the coherence and legitimacy of his political reasoning, and also supplied opportunities for those who wished to rebut and anathematize Schmitt's "apologists." Even providing a forum for this discussion was controversial. Some members of the editorial board resigned over it. But the fury is still curious. Authoritarianism obviously has nothing to do with it, contra Wolfe. The critique of Schmitt is fundamentally about his association with and support of the Nazi regime. But this explains little about the venom on the Left against the mere discussion of Schmitt. Schmitt was not on the Left– his guilt belongs elsewhere. So why should anyone on the Left apologize for taking an interest in Schmitt, as distinct, say, from Lenin, who does belong to the Left, and whose guilt does belong there? And why is it not enough to denounce Schmitt as a Nazi, opportunist, and so forth, as all the "apologists" have? What is it about taking Schmitt seriously rather than merely denouncing him that produces this reaction?

Schmitt was not himself a Nazi ideologist– the ideology, in which he had little interest, was already invented before he supported Hitler. Yet he did, long before his association with the Nazis, make an argument that, in the light of the Holocaust, was incendiary: he noted that democracy created novel problems pertaining to minorities, especially those minorities who could never hope to attain power in a democratic state, and argued that the disruptive potential of these problems was such that democracy required a homogenous population.[2] It should be noted that these concerns, like the other issues he raised about liberal democracy, were extensions of concerns of contemporary liberals. In the United States, the issue was whether immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe– among them Jews from the Pale of Settlement– could ever be assimilated and function as citizens in a liberal political order. His discussion of the conflict between liberalism and democracy can be compared to similar observations about the consequences for liberalism of working class parties made by liberals, such as Albert Venn Dicey ([1914] 1962), who also saw, in the development of purely interest based working class parties, the end of liberal democracy in the sense of government by discussion. Schmitt added to these observations by his reflections on the new phenomenon of totalizing parties, which gained legitimacy by promising something purer, but destroyed even the possibility of a degenerate kind of parliamentarism based on interest driven deal-making. These observations were and are not especially controversial, and certainly not "fascistic."

His contribution was at the level of meta-ideology, or philosophy: like Plato, and like Thomas Hobbes, whom he saw himself as following, Schmitt was a defender of the idea of the concentration of power. Perhaps he was

also a worshiper of power, as one critic has plausibly claimed (Weiler 1994: 113). But this is hardly anomalous in the history of thought– Popper traced this worship of power throughout the history of western thought from Plato to Hegel, and found it in such contemporaries as Karl Mannheim. Moreover, totalizing and authoritarian tendencies are hardly absent in Mill (Cowling 1963), and the redistributive state that would be necessary to implement Rawlsian justice would be a powerful one as well. And it is a legitimate question as to whether Habermas's Kantianism, and Kantianism generally, does not necessarily culminate in totalizing authoritarianism in the name of reason rather than in the political fulfillment of reason. Why is Schmitt not treated as they are, namely as a convenient means to think through such issues?

Who Killed the Weimar Republic?

In what follows, I do not pretend to answer this question directly. I will consider instead one of the hidden sources feeding the Schmitt problem– the question of responsibility for the demise of the Weimar Republic. As I will show, real issues about the past are tangled up with differences over the nature of politics and the nature of knowledge of the political, and together these issues are important sources of the fury over Schmitt. All of these topics are issues for the Left for good reasons: one is that some commonplace Left ideas can be traced to Schmitt. Another is that Schmitt challenges a certain kind of moralistic Leftism and assigns it a degree of historical responsibility for the collapse of Weimar and thus for all that followed. The first issue has been discussed at some length in Telos itself. The Left has a deep and peculiar relation to Schmitt. His thinking continues to be an acknowledged and unacknowledged resource– often having passed through several hands-- for the contemporary Left. It is difficult to imagine, for example, feminist theory without the Schmittian argument that every distinction has the potential for becoming political– that words need to be understood in terms of who is affected, combated, refuted, or negated by them. And such iconic texts of the new Left as Marcuse's essay "Repressive Tolerance" ([1965]1969), which analyzed the notion of tolerance as itself repressive, would be empty if this thought were removed from them.

The Frankfurt School is at the center of the story of the Left's use of Schmitt. Not only did it supply lawyer critics of the Weimar constitution, but the critics included one of Schmitt's own students, Otto Kirchheimer. The other, Franz Neumann, used Schmitt's ideas extensively, and like Kirchheimer, hid this appropriation under a layer of dismissive references to Schmitt. These were the most intimate of enemies. Nor were they wild Italians or Leninist authoritarians. On the contrary, they were part of the most enlightened and "humanistic" Leftism, to use Wolfe's phrase. And the dependence on Schmitt did not end with these thinkers or with the end of Nazism– typically Schmittian themes are obvious in the critique of liberalism found in Habermas as well, especially in his discussion of the public sphere. Grand philosophical questions about the public sphere and issues of influence will be avoided here.

My concern will be with a more concrete problem within the Left: the remorse and soul-searching that followed the failure of the various socialist parties of Europe to stop fascism in their own countries and stop Hitler's military expansion. The questions are compelling on their own terms. Why did the SPD, which was the largest and most powerful party in the Weimar political order, fail, creating the political opportunity Hitler exploited? Why, with the example of Italian fascism before its eyes throughout most of the period, did the party not respond to the danger of a German form of fascism with a more effective political strategy of coalition formation? Why were no effective measures taken against the sworn enemies of the constitution when it was still possible? Here Schmitt is highly relevant. Schmitt's discussion of the demise of liberalism and its inevitable replacement by rule by a totalizing party bears directly, and ominously, on this problem. The Left welcomed, and the far Left welcomed most of all, the kind of party development that Schmitt had in mind under the heading of totalization, and was at best ambivalent about the suppression of the most aggressive totalizing party on the Left, the KPD (German Communist Party). And this suggests that the Left in Germany bears a part of the burden of responsibility for the collapse of the Weimar political order into Nazism.

Making the Problem Vanish: The Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School had a peculiar place in relation to the problem of responsibility. The Frankfurt School

in general had little interest in politics or the law, and placed its analysis above the grubby level of party politics. But its two outlier lawyer members, Kirchheimer and Neumann, could not evade the political questions. They had written commentaries on the issues of the Weimar constitution while it was still in effect (Neumann [1930]1987; Kirchheimer [1930]1969). Kirchheimer's was a particularly compelling piece, which analyzed the contradictions of the Weimar Constitution, and damned it both for the contradictions and for the failure of the state to apply it in the most aggressively Left-wing way. Neumann had worked within the constitutional structure for legal reforms benefiting the workers, but had been frustrated by the limits of this approach. By 1932, as he confessed in a letter to Schmitt, he was wavering in his belief that socialism could be achieved without revolution, the idea that had, for the SPD, been one of the main justifications for cooperating with the Weimar order (Tribe 1987:21).

The standard Frankfurt School line on Nazism did not dwell on these matters, though there are some deep and odd connections. The psychoanalytic account of personality authoritarianism in the middle class filled many of the books that the 1960s Left was raised on, works such as Erich Fromm's Escape From Freedom (1941) and The Sane Society (1956). It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the lesson taught by these texts, and many others popular at the time, such as the prewar writings of Wilhelm Reich ([1933]1970; [1929]1972; 1972), was that the Nazi phenomenon and most of the ills of capitalist society were the more or less direct product of the sexual repression self-imposed by the petit bourgeoisie and especially the new middle classes of white collar workers. Needless to say, this account places historical responsibility on forces that had no connection to the activities of the Left, or to the political choices made by the members of the Frankfurt School themselves. Indeed, it completely exculpates the Left.

The actual role of the Left in the demise of the Weimar republic, especially the ultra-Left within the SPD and the Communists, was carefully airbrushed out of the story of the rise of Nazism itself. The actual role allowed for an alternative narrative– the suicide narrative– in which the Nazis were empowered and allowed into office by the political acts of both the Left and the non-Nazi Right and by a Chancellor and President who failed to act decisively against the anti-Democratic parties when action was required. This was Schmitt's narrative, and it is the narrative that haunted the émigrés: could the collapse of the Weimar Republic have been prevented? The question haunted Kirchheimer and Neumann. Kirchheimer himself asked the question in his major work, Political Justice: "If every link in the chain of repressive action at the disposal of the Weimar republic had been used differently [i.e. if the judiciary had not protected and lightly punished him], would the ascent to the summit of power have still been open to Hitler?" (1961:139). Neumann, similarly, included three hundred pages on the Weimar background in the draft of Behemoth ([1944]1966), only to leave all but forty of them on the cutting room floor. Much of what remained was about the finger pointing on the Left over the failures of the SPD and the tactics of the KPD,

The Bigger European Picture

This story of the failure of the SPD to prevent the rise of Hitler has its own larger context, in the problems of the Left all across Europe in the interwar years. The core problem involved socialist morality. Socialist parties had argued for decades about the morality of participating in a "bourgeois" government, of allowing parliamentary democracy to be propped up with their support, and indeed of supporting any political goal other than the immediate realization of socialism. When the SPD was in power in Germany, it was uncomfortable– opposition and the pleasures of moral denunciation suited it much better. Parliamentary democracy or parliamentary politics were seen as instrumental activities– with the aim of destroying the present type of society and replacing it with a new socialist order.

The Left thus played a peculiar double-game not to their liking. As Neumann quoted Fritz Tarnow:

> It seems to me that we are condemned both to be the doctor who earnestly seeks to cure and at the same time to retain the feeling that we are the heirs, who would prefer to take over the entire heritage of the capitalist system today rather than tomorrow. (Tarnow 1931, quoted in Neumann [1944]1966: 31).

Socialist politicians, though typically not their supporters, realized that the immediate enactment of socialism– a concept that was very vague in the understanding of the leaders and followers alike, was impossible, and the enactment of socialism would produce a civil war. So those who took political responsibility, such as Léon Blum in France and Friedrich Ebert in Germany– attempted to govern as socialists who knew they did not have a mandate to transform society. Blum, indeed, saw himself as a healer, and tried to produce social peace and prosperity, through something like Roosevelt's New Deal.

One casualty of this double game was the last pretense that parliamentary government was operating normally. The basic requirements of representative democracy of a liberal kind, as Schmitt himself outlined them, were that representatives allow themselves to be persuaded with respect to the truth or validity of the arguments of other parliamentarians, and to take responsibility for explaining their actions to those they represent. This was precisely what the Left could not do. It depended on the hope for "socialism" and could not tell the workers that it was an impossible hope. Nevertheless, the SPD was pragmatic and open to compromise and back room deals. The Ebert-Groener pact at the beginning of the Weimar republic, which allowed the Army to suppress Red uprisings, was the most notorious of these. But the SPD also evaded political responsibility, took a role in government reluctantly, and adopted a rigid and narrow class interest strategy. Parliamentary discussion and writings in party papers degenerated into stagey performances. Schmitt's writings on parliamentarism placed this degeneration of liberal democracy in historical perspective.

Why should these observations be thrown out and tabooed along with Schmitt's later defenses of the Nazi regime? The answer– and more generally the fury over the reception of Schmitt– derives in part from the challenge which Schmitt as well as his "defenders" posed to the exculpation of the Left. Schmitt's message was that the Left played a large role in the suicide of the regime, both through the actions of the Communists, who were openly hostile to the constitution, and the SPD, which was tepid in support and unwilling to see the Communists repressed, but more importantly had behaved in parliament in a way that made a mockery of the idea of representation and discussion. As we have seen, the problem was structural: the SPD could neither tell the truth, namely that 'socialism' was not achievable in any realistically near future, if at all, nor could it speak this truth to its rigidly socialist worker followers, for fear of losing them to the Communists. So it was obliged, in parliament, to act out a pretense which satisfied the workers by enacting a drama of socialist devotion and purity, while defending their interests in a framework of politics and an economic order that they rejected in principle. The SPD was not an aberration. It was a condition of Left politics throughout Europe in the interwar years.

The very thing about the Left that made it attractive to idealists, its devotion to principles, also raised both the fascists and the Nazis above the grubbiness and compromise of what we now call liberal democracy. The Liberal parliamentary regimes of the times were unloved by those who lived under it in Continental Europe. They had few defenders and no ideological resonance. The German Liberals were of little political significance. Some of them longed for monarchy, calling themselves "Republicans by Necessity." On the Left, even moderate German workers marched to the chant of "A Republic is not so Grand, for Socialism we Take our Stand." The less moderate on the Right and the Left wanted the immediate end to the Republic, and the moderates– the SPD on the Left, had little room to act because they knew that the message of "not yet" was unpopular with their own constituents, who could, and did, turn to the Communists. Delivering the goods, in the form of redistributionist measures, such as pensions and unemployment payments, and strengthening the hand of the unions became their main aim. Failing to do even this meant the end of their balancing act, and ending the balancing act amounted to risking the end of the postwar republican constitution, or civil war, as Blum understood. The risk was real. In France, as in much of the rest of Europe since the 1920s, there were armed political factions ready for action. In each of the face-downs between the armed Left and the armed Right or the military the socialists lost and an authoritarian regime took over. Blum didn't need to believe in Liberal Democracy in order to realize that provoking violence would lead nowhere other than to catastrophe for the working class.

What was the alternative? Many of the political choices made by the Left in the interwar years did lead to catastrophe– to civil war and then to fascism or directly to fascism, as in Spain and Austria. Blum stands out as the best face of the Left– a Left that solved the problem of co-operation between the various factions of the Left (by the Communists supporting the Blum government but not participating in the cabinet), held power, avoided producing a reaction leading to a fascist regime, and accomplished something for the working class, in this case in the form of workers' rights. But this nevertheless ended badly for France– by defeat at the hands of the Germans and in a new world war.

The Austrian Left played its hand differently. The main Left party promoted the idea of a "democratic" Austria, and the Austro-Marxism of its leading theoretician, Otto Bauer, was later held out by humanist Marxists as a model. The party unified the Left by including in its Linz program of 1926 a clause about the "dictatorship of the proletariat" that read:

> If, however, the bourgeoisie were to resist the radical social change which will be the task of the working class in government

> by systematically bringing economic life to a standstill, by violent revolt, by conspiracy with counter-revolutionary forces abroad, then the working class would be obliged to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie by the methods of dictatorship (quoted by Bruno Kreisky in Berg 2000: 69-70)

This language assuaged the militants, and kept the party from breaking into Communist and "Socialist" wings. But it also assured that the party would never come to power, that it would be feared and loathed by those inclined to resist. In his memoirs Kreisky called it "a terrible error" (Berg 2000: 69).

The fact that "dictatorship" was kept on the table as a legitimate option frightened the opposition and legitimated the dictatorship of Engelbert Dolfuss which followed the Austrian constitutional collapse. But the Austrian left was a totalizing party itself: Kreisky's subsequent recollections make this clear, while putting the most favorable possible gloss on it: "For many people, the Labor movement became their new, and true home. It enabled them to feel that their life, even with all its misery, had human dignity." And it did so by providing films, workers libraries, a chance to go out in the countryside, becoming a new Heimat (Kreisky in Berg 2000: 68-9).

The socialists in Austria and in the rest of interwar Europe had an instrumental view of politics– the point of participation in parliamentary politics, or government itself, was to advance socialism, not govern. They argued about the morality of any kind of participation in politics, and lamented the transitional situation they thought they were in: lacking the strength to bring about radical change, and having to prop up a system of parliamentary government they rejected and wished to abolish. So what happened in Austria? There was a brief "Civil War" involving armed workers, and Dolfuss announced a two front war against the Nazis and the Left, both of which he banned. The Dolfuss regime resembled some of the political remedies that have figured in the retrospective historical discussion of the collapse of the Weimar constitution, including Schmitt's original idea of expanding the powers of the state to suppress the anticonstitutional totalizing parties. It did not work in Austria: the Nazis assassinated Dolfuss and took power, leading to the Anschluss with Germany.

In Germany itself, the SPD was torn by the same dilemmas as Blum, in different degrees. They were pressed hard on the Left by the Communists. They routinely abdicated political responsibility in the 1920s, even when they were the leading parliamentary party. A change in heart by Stalin, who had learned from Hitler's takeover what risks a disunited Left posed, allowed for the creation of a popular front in France, in which the Communists supported a Socialist government but did not participate in it. Blum came to power as a result of this change in tactics. Neumann described the dilemma the Left faced at the end of the Weimar Republic, and how it understood this dilemma, in these terms:

> The situation was desperate and called for desperate measures. The Social Democratic party could choose either the road of political revolution through a united front with the Communists under Socialist leadership, or co-operation with the semi-dictatorships of Brüning, Papen, and Schleicher in an attempt to ward off the greater danger, Hitler. There was no other choice. The Social Democratic party was faced with the most difficult decision in its history. Together with the trade unions, it decided to tolerate the Brüning government when 107 National Socialist deputies entered the Reichstag in September 1930 and made a parliamentary majority impossible. Toleration meant neither open support nor open attack. (Neumann [1944]1966: 31)

The German political crisis that eventually led to Hitler's Chancellorship was the proximal product of this deal breaking down with the refusal, on principle, of the Social Democrats to reduce benefits for the workers in the face of a fiscal crisis– a rerun, in slightly different form, of the parliamentary crisis led to the Dolfuss dictatorship.

The Collapse

One version of the collapse of the Weimar Republic casts the SPD in a benign light. The grand coalition that had resulted from the 1928 elections was faced with an economic crisis. The Center party, the other crucial member of this coalition, wanted an authoritarian, Presidential government, and to push out the SPD. When the fiscal situation of the state deteriorated in the face of increased unemployment claims, the SPD resisted placing the burden of suffering on the workers alone, the coalition collapsed, and no government had the backing of a parliamentary majority until the Nazis. Heinrich Brüning, the leader of the Center party, governed under the constitution by decree, with the tacit co-operation of the SPD, which feared that if it forced the government to resign, it would have brought the Nazis in to ensure its survival. The SPD, on this account, was merely standing up for its constituents and resisting

the demonic designs of the Authoritarian Right under trying circumstances, with no good alternatives. Brüning, who was to become known as the Hunger Chancellor, was a villain who preferred authoritarian rule and suffering. The Rightward drift could not be stopped, and the Nazis fulfilled the plan of the bourgeois parties to suppress the Left. The Left resisted nobly, but resistance failed.

This airbrushed story allows Carl Schmitt to be allocated a specific and emblematic role: first as an advocate of the strengthening of the authoritarian aspects of the Weimar state, second as the enthusiastic supporter of the Nazi fulfillment of the original design. But the story is dubious and incomplete, and especially problematic in relation to Schmitt's own actions and writings. Who in this story was the defender of the Republic, anyway? What did being for the Republic mean in this context?

The SPD gave Brüning acquiescence. But it was more than acquiescence. The system of public opposition and backroom cooperation was, as a recent historical account has put it, "an enduring form of semi-parliamentary government based on dozens of private consultations between the chancellor and SPD leaders, where the SPD's need to respond to Communist attacks was balanced carefully against the chancellor's need to appear independent of the Left in the eyes of Hindenberg, the army command, and the parties of the moderate right" (Patch 1998: 351). The last pretense of a functioning government by parliamentary discussion vanished into this sham; or more precisely, the only aspect of republican government that remained was the pretense.

The issue which divided Brüning and Schmitt was the extent of the emergency powers contained in the Weimar constitution. Schmitt believed that circumstances might justify the temporary violation of any provision of the constitution, limited only by the requirement that when things returned to normal the constitution would be restored; Brüning thought this power was limited to the seven provisions listed in Article 48, Paragraph 2 (Patch 1998: 347; Bendersky 1983: 74-119). As a practical matter, using state power, meaning the military, to suppress the anti-constitutional parties was a possibility with a very limited application. In theory, the Nazis and the Communist could both be suppressed, or either one of them could be suppressed. In reality, the Army would have been reluctant to act against the far-right parties, but willing to take on the Communists. Suppressing the Communists would have taken a major prop of support for the Nazis off the table, and have allowed the Republic to be restored. The SPD however, which demanded the curbing of Nazi violence, would never have assented to the state taking on the Communists– despite the willingness of the Communists to denounce the SPD as Social Fascists and worse. Insisting, as Schmitt did, that the constitution allowed for its own defense– that it was not a suicide pact– thus was a proposition with only one plausible application, precisely the application that the Left, however understandably, resisted.

The arrangement between Brüning and the SPD was doomed. When there was a vote in the Prussian state election, the Nazis and Communists improved their positions. Schmitt understood that even for the SPD, the constitution was a purely instrumental arrangement, that the constitution was unloved, a foreign imposition, along with most of the key political facts of Weimar, including the credit problems that made the fiscal crisis insoluble without doing what Brüning did. The Republic was discredited by these failures to agree and by the failure of the parties to persuade others of the need for agreement. The totalizing parties were destined to inherit the state, and behaved accordingly. It was only a question of which one. The Communists welcomed not only the end of the Weimar Republic, but Hitler himself. What Brüning feared, they embraced. "Herr Brüning has expressed it very clearly; once they (the Nazis) are in power, the united front of the proletariat will emerge and make a clean sweep of everything . . .. We are not afraid of the fascists. They will shoot their bolt quicker than any other government" (Adam Remmele, KPD leader, speaking in the Reichstag, October 1931, quoted in Hallas 1985). If the Communists had taken power they would have imposed the dictatorship of the proletariat without any scruples. The voters themselves chose to roll the dice. The SPD lost a crucial election in Prussia for control of the state. They continued in power as a caretaker government because neither they nor the other parties could come to terms on a coalition government. Prussia was an SPD stronghold, which they governed. The voters failed to stand by the SPD. The communists advanced. But the Nazi vote increased more. The end of the Weimar system was more or less assured.

The situation fulfilled Schmitt's gloomiest predictions. The totalizing parties had effectively destroyed the sham parliamentarism of Weimar, and were now making even the patchwork of coalitions and back-room arrangements collapse. The SPD had lost its capacity to enter into these deals, a capacity which was based on controlling enough of the vote of the proletariat to bargain. The dice had been rolled, and now there was a series of forced choices of a novel kind. The first choice was between a state which defended itself by banning parties even if this involved overriding the explicit constitution and acting on a theory of inherent powers to defend itself. When the state failed to do this, there was a second choice: between the totalizing parties that were capable of destroying the constitution. This was precisely the choice that the Communists themselves understood to be on offer. Schmitt, notoriously, chose

to not only back the Nazis but join up in the totalization itself.

The Nazis were the only totalizing party that could have taken power without civil war. This is the main exculpatory fact. In retrospect, of course, the risk of open, violent political conflict, perhaps ending in a military dictatorship on the model of Józef Piłsudski, would have been better. But the options were not appetizing in any case. The 'defenders' have sometimes said more in the way of defense, notably about Schmitt's instrumental attitude to the Nazi regime and his irrelevance to the doctrines and practices of the real Nazis. This has the effect of normalizing his political choices– normalizing them to an exceptional situation. For a moralistic political thinker, this is to defend the indefensible. For a political thinker with a sense of what Weber called the tragic character of politics, it is an overwhelmingly powerful example of the risks inherent in the pacte diabolique with state violence that, according to Weber, is at the heart of politics. For such a thinker, it becomes possible to ask whether Schmitt was completely in error, and to entertain the thought that he drew a reasonable conclusion with a disastrous outcome– and that this time the moral risks of politics proved to be far greater than any previous one.

Wasn't Schmitt simply wrong in his political prognoses? Didn't liberal democracy prove to be the big winner among the political forms of the twentieth century? Isn't its supposed fragility merely an excuse for repression? A short glance at liberal democracy in the twentieth and early twenty-first century should be enough to answer this question: rivalry between class parties of Right and Left, coalition rule, the problem of the far Left, or Communist parties, which oppose the state and sometimes emerge as armed movements, the periodic intervention of the military when the parliamentary system is paralyzed, when prime ministers go beyond what the military deems acceptable, or fails to act against security threats, the irruption of nationalism and charismatic leaders, the threat, implicit or explicit, of civil war, minorities who fail to find a place for their grievances and interests in the party system– these are the actual conditions that have determined the course of politics in many of the "liberal democracies" of the world outside of Europe, North America, and Australia. But the major states of Europe did not degenerate into civil war. Was Blum simply deluded about this threat? Was Schmitt? The threats to liberalism Schmitt concentrated on were not fantasies, and the extreme Left contributed greatly to the risk profile of most of these states. The threats did not develop for two reasons. They were suppressed in the Postwar period by the United States, which invested mightily in the creation of a Europe of liberal democracies, operated clandestinely and through economic policy to support political pluralism, and by the fear of Soviet power that Europeans had, which the far Left never extricated itself from. Without the Cold War, matters might have been very different.

Neumann and Kirchheimer: Two Paths

Kirchheimer's role in relation to the collapse of the Weimar regime is well-documented. His critique of the Weimar constitution, "Weimar – and What Then?" ([1930]1969), left no doubt that he was on the side of those who regarded it as a failure, and among those asking "what now?" What did he learn from the collapse of the constitutional order? What did he regret? Not much, it seems. His account of the rule of law, in the 1930s, was focused on the hot button issue of the 1930s' Left, expropriation, for which the law was a significant obstacle. His account collapsed the rule of law into "accordance with the plan"– simultaneously replacing the bourgeois notion of law with executive decree and embracing the1930s ideology of planning.[3] He was nostalgic for the true opposition parties of the interwar era and the period before the First World War, and wrote extensively on what he called "the waning of the opposition," a Left version of the end of ideology thesis. He was contemptuous of the heterogenous, principle-less, vote-seeking parties of the postwar period. He called them catch-all parties. American parties were the paradigm of the catch-all party. He was deeply concerned to refute the claim that the post-war SPD had made any progress in recruiting in the middle class, arguing that the electoral gains of the post-1949 SPD were solely the result of losses from the KPD.[4] Nostalgia for the totalizing parties of the past was never far from the surface of his thought: "To the older party of integration," as he put it, "the citizen, if he so desired, could be closer. Then it was a less differentiated organization, part channel of protest, part source of protection, part purveyor of visions of the future. Now, in its linear descendant in a transfigured world, the catch-all party, the citizen finds a relatively remote, at times quasi-official and alien structure" (quoted by Burin and Shell 1969: xxix). This is a reminder, and a sinister one, of what the overcoming of alienation meant to the Old Left, both in theory and practice: not the elimination of Scarsdale angst, in the fashion of the 1960s New Left, but absorption into a party.

Kirchheimer was, at least, consistent: consistently hostile to both bourgeois democracy and the older liberal ideal

of the rule of law: in 1930 he dismissed the problem of defending the Weimar order with the remark that "the point at which bourgeois democracy is transformed into bourgeois dictatorship is not clearly definable" ([1930]1969: 42). Like Schmitt, he decried the tyranny of the 50% plus 1, with the observation that "The less agreement there is about the preconditions and the social principles of the society, the more the ruthless application of the majority principle tends to transform it into a technique for oppression, with the general will becoming a phantom" ([1930]1969: 40-1). His Political Justice (1961) was an attack on liberal ideals of the separation of law and politics. But it was sufficiently even-handed, especially by virtue of its attacks on Soviet political trials, that a naive reviewer could take it as liberal. [5] The basic reasoning, and even the style of even-handedness, was nevertheless characteristically Schmittian. The conclusion, that what counts as legal or political is a political matter, is Schmitt's thought as well as the doctrine of the Communists. This book had a familiar political motive. Kirchheimer was obsessed with the Rosenberg-Sobell case as an example of political justice, the great moralizing cause of the American Left for decades, either never grasping that the cause was based on lies, or not caring.[6]

The Old Left took care of its own. Talcott Parsons' convergence thesis was in full flower, and it provided a cover for sealing the deal. Columbia was full of ex-Communists such as Richard Hofstadter. Neumann had taught there before his death in a car accident in Switzerland. Kirchheimer was appointed in 1960 to Columbia, after a long stint at the New School, where he became the author of the emblematic moment of the Schmitt reception: he was placed on George Schwab's dissertation committee at the last moment to replace a director who had died. He used his power to have the dissertation, which later became the first survey of Schmitt's thought in English ([1970]1989), rejected, forcing Schwab to start again on a new dissertation topic and preventing him, temporarily, from publishing the book for fear of Kirchheimer's retribution. Schwab later described this attempt at suppression as an act of political justice (1988b: 449). It was also a means of burying the question of his own responsibility, a question that Schwab had raised by describing Schmitt's defense of the constitutional order, and by citing Kirchheimer's own attack on the constitution. Schwab notes in his description of the event, "the fact that Kirchheimer attempted to torpedo the Weimar constitution from his perspective as a left-wing Social Democrat did not . . . prevent him from posing among his American colleagues as its defender" (1988a: 79). Schwab inadvertently ripped off the mask in his dissertation, and Kirchheimer was furious. "Of all my writings . . . you had to single out those" he complained in the course of the dissertation exam (quoted by Schwab 1988a: 80). Kirchheimer may have regretted nothing, but he was well-aware that others thought he bore a burden of responsibility.

Neumann said far more about the collapse of the Weimar order. His masterwork on Nazi polyarchy, Behemoth, perhaps got its title as a response to Schmitt's 1938 defense of the regime as a Leviathan– Leviathan being the powerful monster of the sea, Behemoth the messier monster of the land.[7] The few pages of the original manuscript devoted to Weimar that remained in the published version deal directly with the problem of responsibility, and as part of a dispute within the Left. It is a remarkable exercise in finger pointing. None of it appeals to depth psychology. Although the text as a whole is larded with negative references to Schmitt, and dubiously attributes Nazi arguments about homogeneity to Schmitt (Neumann [1944]1966: 153), it is Schmitt as a defender of Nazism rather than Schmitt as a political thinker who is Neumann's target. The focus of the discussion of the collapse of the Weimar order is on the Left itself. Neumann quoted the comment of Otto Braun to the effect that the cause of the failure of the SPD and the Nazi seizure of power was a combination of Versailles and Moscow– the burden of having taken responsibility for signing the treaty and the machinations of the Moscow dominated KPD, but by extension the ultra-Left generally, which circumscribed the ability of the SPD to compromise. Neumann also appreciated the dilemma which prevented the leaders from developing a coherent reformist policy: "the threat that the workers might desert the reformist organizations and go over to the communist party," ([1944]1966: 19) and the fact that they were losing the young to the KPD ([1944]1966: 18).

Neumann's verdict was that the leaders of the SPD failed, and failed specifically to attract the new middle class of office workers, the salaried employees, to socialism ([1944]1966: 13, 17, 29, 32). This thought connects with the psychoanalytic story, as it was this class whose inner authoritarianism was a main object of the psychoanalytic account given by the Frankfurt School. Neumann himself made no connection to this thesis, and provided an alternative account. He also blamed the failure of the Republic on the lack of democratic values. But he acknowledged that the SPD did little to create the democratic consciousness that was needed to keep the constitution alive, seeing it only as "a first step to a greater and better future. And a transitory scheme cannot arouse much enthusiasm" ([1944]1966: 30). He admitted that the new idea in socialist constitutional theory, the "social Rechtsstaat" promoted by Kirchheimer, grew out of Schmitt's critique of the decisionlessness of the Weimar constitution itself, and attempted to provide a coherent purpose for it. But even this idea was never understood in the interwar Left as anything more than a

transitory stage before socialism. Nor, as he conceded, did the economic justice ideas of the SPD ever persuade the salaried workers to join. Unlike Kirchheimer, Neumann died as he was moving toward a kind of uneasy liberalism (Jay 1986: xiii). From the start he had appreciated the moral ambiguities of politics in a way Kirchheimer never had. Where Kirchheimer remained on the side of the politics of faith, Neumann turned to the politics of skepticism.

Failure of Imagination

Neumann made a telling comment: "It was the tragedy of the Social Democratic party and trade unions to have had as leaders men with high intellectual qualities but completely devoid of any feeling for the condition of the masses and without any insight into the great social transformations of the postwar period" ([1944]1966: 32). This focus on leadership is strangely Weberian. Neumann did not give the Weberian explanation of this fact: that it was the structure of leader selection within the party itself that produced functionaries of this sort rather than leaders. But Neumann's comment indicates something more profound, and closely related to the problem of Schmitt. The SPD blundered into the failure of the Weimar constitution not through a lack of intelligence, but because, as Neumann saw, they failed to understand the social transformations of the time. So they persisted in a politics which moralized small differences in policy– by regarding matters of the funding of benefits as matters of principle so significant that it made sense to them to bring a government down over it in a situation in which the enemies of the constitution were rapidly gaining votes and support. They did not grasp that when coalitions collapsed and governments fell over minor issues things would not simply go on as before. If we ignore the drastic consequences of this particular constitutional failure, the actions of the Weimar Left begin to look very familiar. They are precisely the kinds of actions valued by the moralistic Left today. They stood up for principles, or at least were on the right side of, or they resisted– all acts of political virtue. They held on to their ideals, the ideal of socialism, and saw every political act as a compromise of those ideals. They had no respect for the political opinions of their opponents– the true mark of illiberalism.

In retrospect, of course, the Left's tepid support or outright hostility to the Weimar Republic, the embrace of sham parliamentarism, and the rest of it mark them out as underminers if not enemies of the Republic. The contribution of the SPD was tacitly agreeing not to strangle the Republic, and allowing the crisis to become more serious, while holding on to what power they had. They lacked the imagination and depth to think politically to do anything more, so they did not see that they were the authors of a catastrophe. Like managerial liberals today, such as Rawls, they believed that they had arrived at fundamental moral issues when they quibbled over details of policy. Kirchheimer believed that boldness would have consisted in demanding more. That it ended so badly was incomprehensible to them. Schmitt is incomprehensible to the present versions of this kind of cloistered political thinker, and for the same reasons: a lack of imagination and a moralistic focus on the trivial. The lesson that academic managerial liberalism and its Left counterpart wishes to draw from Schmitt is that thinking beyond these limits leads to disaster. But it would be more relevant, given the narrowness of conventional academic political correctness today, to consider the lesson that thinking in terms of the trivial can also have monstrous consequences.

The role of the Left in the destruction of the Weimar Republic was treated by the generation that lived through it as a family secret to be acknowledged only by changing the subject. Schmitt was a reminder of this episode, its Cassandra, to be anathematized but at the same time surreptitiously borrowed from. The denial of the role of the Left distorted the discussion of the historical meaning of Nazism, and through this distorted the academic discussion of politics that relied on the Left. The Frankfurt School was both the beneficiary and author of this collection of self-deceptions. It is no accident that in the project of liberating the Left from these ideas Telos turned back to Schmitt himself. The hysteria of the response shows that this was well-judged: Schmitt remains a powerful solvent of moralistic illusions, including those of the "public sphere" Left.

The usual question asked about the Schmitt reception is this: why should we be concerned, now, with a fascist theorist whose views have been decisively refuted by history, which has revealed the evil of the fascist option and the open vista of greater democracy, in the form of social democracy governing managed capitalism? The answer this question points to has to do with a lack of imagination and depth, and with an unwillingness to come to grips with the world– the social transformations, as Neumann put it– of the present. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the Schmitt discussion was fully underway in Telos, the world was returning to the kinds of conflicts and problems of the interwar years. The unions in Britain had shredded the Labour majority, bringing Margaret Thatcher to power.

The demands of various constituents of the Democratic coalition in the US pushed Jimmy Carter into paralysis and brought Ronald Reagan to power with the backing of a problem minority which rejected the liberal consensus: the religious Right. The breakup of Yugoslavia brought the problem of ethnic minorities– and Schmitt's insight into the relationship between democracy and homogeneity-- back into focus. The genocides that followed the departure of the generation of authoritarian decolonizers in Africa, and the ethnic cleansing that followed democratization in the former Soviet republics both underscored the close connection between democracy and the problem of minorities. During this time, the Left in the United States descended into a long fugue of internecine moral one-upmanship about which groups was most oppressed, and wrote political theory and political philosophy as though the only important problem was to find new ways to make people equal.

If one opens the Schmittfrei pages of the journals that were the counterpart of Telos in the conventional disciplinary literatures of the time– journals like Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs, Economics and Philosophy, Political Theory, Theory and Society, Sociological Theory, and so forth, one finds paper after paper on the fine points of distributional questions, an elaborate attempt to accommodate the identity politics of the time, and an obsession with the public sphere. These were the concerns of the managerial liberalism of the time. They presumed a "normal" in which the state could manipulate the distribution of goods through policy and legitimate itself by accommodating endless demands for the recognition of deserving victim identities, and a public sphere concerned with negotiating the terms of payment. When Schmitt's issues intruded, they were in tame forms: the problem of politically unintegrated minorities was treated in terms of the novel values of inclusion and as a problem of the dominant group's infliction of otherness and victimization of those who were different. Although "homogeneity" was a taboo term, communitarianism and the active role of the state in promoting appropriate political values, which meant something similar, were acceptable. The fact that a more aggressively "social" democracy committed to values would itself generate new forms of the problem of minorities was registered only indirectly, and dismissed (e.g. in Pettit 1997, 96).

Time will tell whether this was a failure of imagination, and how large a failure of imagination it was. But it should be evident now that the crises of the present are crises of managerial liberalism. Schmitt would have been amused at the fact that the President who made the promotion of democracy the announced goal of American Foreign policy was followed by one who has made preventing genocide a major focus. The present economic crisis shows that the "normal" in terms of which policy-makers performed their manipulations over the last two American presidencies was an illusion– a Ponzi scheme. The failure of the West to create stable liberal democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan and the rise of the Chinese model show that the model of liberal democracy itself is based not so much on the nature of things, much less universal rationality, as on local traditions. And that the others are indeed "other."

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Gary Wickham for a useful organizational suggestion.

Endnotes

1. It is difficult to find a better example of this, or of academic invective, than Oakeshott's dismantling of the assumptions of his managerial liberal critics in "On Misunderstanding Human Conduct: A Reply to My Critics" (1976).

2. This argument, and its relation to Schmitt's own antisemitism, is discussed in Strong (2008).

3. The later account of the concept of the rule of law is mostly a discussion of the need to revise the concept to permit "the discretionary power of administration in the interest of public welfare," which, he charged, Dicey ignored out of middle-class myopia. This is the point at which managerial liberalism and Kirchheimer's left social democratic position converge in a legal program for the support of the administrative state devoted to what Weber called substantive justice. "The Rechtsstaat as Magic Wall," page 3, Otto Kirchheimer Papers, Box 2, Folder 95, German and Jewish Intellectual Émigré Collection, M.E. Genander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University at Albany, State

University of New York (hereafter Kirchheimer Papers).

4. This is an important them of his postwar papers, for example, the untitled paper in Kirchheimer Papers, Box 2, Folder 83.

5. Max Rheinstein, the Weber translator and lawyer, said this in a review (1962/1963). But as his review and later correspondence with Kirchheimer reveals, he had no idea who Kirchheimer was, and did not even realize that he was a lawyer. Kirchheimer Papers, Box 1, Folder 133.

6. The Kirchheimer papers reveal that the Rosenberg and Sobell cases were of great interest to him. For Sobell see Box 8, Folder 10. Rosenberg is discussed inter alia in Political Justice.

7. The meaning of these terms is discussed at length in Weiler (1994: 37-45, 122). The relation between Schmitt and Behemoth is discussed in Kelly (2003: 258-97).

References

Bendersky, Joseph W. 1983. Carl Schmitt, Theorist for the Reich. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Berg, Matthew Paul, ed. In collaboration with Jill Lewis and Oliver Rathcolb. 2000. The Struggle for Democratic Austria: Bruno Kreisky on Peace and Social Justice. Translated by Helen Atkins and Matthew Paul Berg. New York: Berghan Books.

Cowling, Maurice. 1963. Mill and Liberalism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dicey, Albert Venn. [1914]1962. Law and Public Opinion in England: During the Nineteenth Century 2d ed. London: Macmillan and Company.

Fromm, Erich. 1941. Escape from Freedom. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc.

------. 1956. The Sane Society. London: Routledge.

Hallas, Duncan. 1985. The Comintern. London: Bookmarks. Retrieved October 21, 2008 (http://www.marxists.org/archive/hallas/works/1985/comintern/ch6.htm).

Jay, Martin. 1986. "Forward." Pp. ix-xiv in The Rule of Law: Political Theory and the Legal System in Modern Society, edited by Franz Neumann. Leamington Spa, UK: Berg Publishers, Ltd.

Kelly, Duncan. 2003. The State of the Political: Conceptions of the Politics and the State in the Thought of Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Franz Neumann. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kirchheimer, Otto. "Papers." German and Jewish Intellectual Émigré Collection. M.E. Genander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University at Albany, State University of New York.

------. 1961. Political Justice. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

------. [1930]1969. "Weimar – and What Then? An Analysis of a Constitution." Pp. 33-74 in Politics, Law, and Social Change: Selected Essays of Otto Kirchheimer, edited by Frederic S. Burin and Kurt L. Shell. New York: Columbia University Press.

Marcuse, Herbert. [1965]1969. "Repressive Tolerance." Pp. 95-137 in Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse. A Critique of Pure Tolerance. Boston: Beacon Press. Retrieved October 21, 2008 (http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/60spubs/65repressivetolerance.htm).

Neumann, Franz. [1944]1966. Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism (1933-1944) 2d ed revised. New York: Harper.

------. [1930]1987. "The Social Significance of the Basic Laws in the Weimar Constitution." Pp. 27-43 in Social Democracy and the Rule of Law: Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann, edited by Keith Tribe; translated by Leena Tanner and Keith Tribe. London: Allen and Unwin.

Oakeshott, Michael. 1975. On Human Conduct. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

------. 1976. "On Misunderstanding Human Conduct: A Reply to My Critics." Political Theory 4(3):35367.

Patch, William L. 1998. Heinrich Brüning and the Dissolution of the Weimar Republic. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pettit. Philip 1997. Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Piccone, Paul and Gary Ulmen. 2002. "Uses and Abuses of Carl Schmitt." Telos 122(3):3-32.

Reich, Wilhelm. [1933] 1970. The Mass Psychology of Fascism. Translated by Vincent R. Carfagno. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

------. [1929] 1972. "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis." Pp. 3-74 in Sexpol: Essays, 19291934, edited by Lee Baxandall; translated by Anna Bostock, Tom DuBose, Lee Baxandall. New York: Random House.

------. 1972. Sexpol: Essays, 19291934, edited by Lee Baxandall; translated by Anna Bostock, Tom DuBose, Lee Baxandall. New York: Random House.

Rheinstein, Max. (1962/1963) "Political Justice: The Use of Legal Procedure for Political Ends." reviewed by Otto Kirchheimer. The University of Chicago Law Review:197-203.

Schwab, George. [1970]1989. The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of C. Schmitt between 1921 and 1936 2d ed. Berlin: Dunker and Humblot.

------. 1987. "Enemy or Foe: A Conflict of Modern Politics." Telos 72(Summer):194-201.

------. 1988a. Carl Schmitt. Pp. 70-87 in Schmittiana: Beiträge zu Leben und Werk Carl Schmitts (Eclectica). Vol. 1, edited by Piet Tommissen. Brussel: Economische Hogeschool Sint Aloysius.

------. 1988b. "Progress of Schmitt Studies in the EnglishSpeaking World." Pp. 447-59 in Complexio Oppositorum: Über Carl Schmitt, edited by Helmut Quaritsch. Berlin: Duncker and Humblot.

Strong, Tracy. 2008. "Foreword: Carl Schmitt and Thomas Hobbes: Myth and Politics." Pp. vii-xxviii in The Leviathan in the State theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol, by Carl Schmitt, translated by George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tribe, Keith. 1987. "Introduction." Pp. 1-26 in Social Democracy and the Rule of Law: Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann, edited by Keith Tribe; translated by Leena Tanner and Keith Tribe. London: Allen and Unwin.

Weiler, Gershon. 1994. From Absolutism to Totalitarianism: Carl Schmitt on Thomas Hobbes. Durango, CO: Hollowbrook Publishing Co.

Wolfe, Alan. 2004. "A Fascist Philosopher Helps Us Understand Contemporary Politics." The Chronicle of Higher Education, April 2. Retrieved October 21, 2008 (http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i30/30b01601.htm).

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.009

What is Federalism?: On Piccone's Late Political Philosophy

Robert D'Amico

Paul Piccone thought, wrote, and argued polemically. It is not surprising then that the journal Telos often shared this style. The context of the journal's birth is that Piccone found himself in the academic world of the United States where there was dogmatic opposition to a tradition and intellectual movement that still survived in Europe. I will call this tradition philosophical idealism, and I think that it was the central accomplishment of Telos to have promoted the study of it and to have kept it breathing in a period when it was thought to be largely dead and buried.

My comment may seem quite odd and even bizarre to some readers of the journal since it is more common to think that the journal promoted and defended philosophical Marxism and the Frankfurt School, and of course those traditions published by the journal were critical of idealism. I am not denying that those matters loomed large in the journal's early years. But it is my view that to understand the journal's evolution and transformation from roughly 1968 until 2004 (and of course those of Piccone himself) is to understand that a version of idealism predominated and often provided the intellectual prism through which these other traditions were viewed and then assessed.

I think my claim becomes clearer in Piccone's late writings on politics and those are my topics in this article. The role of Marxism and critical theory had largely faded by the time of these writings, at least in my opinion, and even when Piccone touches on them they are read through his own version of Hegelian idealism.

I am making an ambitious claim about both the journal and Piccone's intellectual career, and I am only providing some defense of it with regard to ideas Piccone sketched within the last decade. But in part I am doing so because of why I think idealism has become more central and important over time. I offer two general reasons for its importance and then a third reason specific to my topic.

In general, idealism is a richer and more comprehensive philosophical view than either Marxism or critical theory. Also, Marxism and critical theory were explicitly or implicitly pulled toward "philosophical eliminativism."[1] I am excluding that from my discussion here.

A second general reason is that philosophical idealism has made a sudden and intriguing reappearance within mainstream philosophy.[2] It has done so because there is a revival in the importance of fundamental metaphysics in philosophy and because challenges to physicalism are based on a current broader understanding of metaphysics. These approaches were, however, not part of mainstream philosophy during Piccone's editorship of the journal.

But specifically I want to show in some detail here how important idealism is to Piccone's unique and important insights into the role of federalism and populism within political philosophy. My focus will be on the essays "Rethinking Federalism" and "Postmodern Populism" (Piccone and Ulmen 1994; Piccone 1995a). Thus, I will outline a way to defend the metaphysics of society behind Piccone's view.

Piccone's reasons for marrying federalism with populism are his larger criticism of representative systems of democracy and defense of direct democracy.[3] Federalism is a complex political organization in which a central state exercises strictly limited control over largely autonomous federated subcommunities while those units remain federated.

Piccone and Ulmen offer two defining characteristics of federalism; it requires a right to secession and subsidiarity. Piccone and Ulmen stress that the right to secession is crucial since otherwise a federation will simply devolve into a traditional centralized nation state. Though I think this problem of devolution toward a central state

is a challenge to most theories of federalism, I do not see how an unlimited right to secession can solve it while still preserving a stable federation.

For instance, Robert Nozick (1974) argues that self-defense alone (by a hidden-hand mechanism) will lead any set of communities to form some minimal state authority. Whether he was correct or not, the task for Piccone and Ulmen is more difficult because the question is not how to explain the necessary emergence of a "night watchman state" as a response to the thesis of anarchism, but to explain what can prevent even a limited central state from subsuming the autonomy of the federated units. Also, the problem is not practical or contingent, but theoretical. In other words, the answer that federalism might succeed just by the exercise of power or threat does not respond to the question raised nor, as I will show, coherent on its own terms.

Piccone and Ulmen define the second condition of subsidiarity as one where "only those functions which cannot more effectively be carried out on a lower level will come under the jurisdiction of the next higher level" (1994:7). I also have a concern with this second condition. As stated the condition emphasizes managerial efficiency only, and I believe such a focus would lead inexorably to the decline of federations. Thus, efficiency is not a foundational feature of federalism as a social formation (though it may be a practical fact about its stability in some circumstances, but perhaps not in others).

I now turn to the complex argumentative strategies Piccone and Ulmen offer for this view. I will be rejecting some of these strategies and my emphasis will then be, as I said, on the brief comments Piccone makes about what grounds any theory of society whatsoever. Those are the comments I will try to extend and expand upon.

First, Piccone and Ulmen offer historicist arguments in support of his conception of federalism. By historicist reasons I mean claims about how current social and political facts or conditions make federalism possible. This approach is found in the following passage.

> The waste and irrationality which obtained for decades within the military-industrial complexes of both the US and the USSR ... can no longer be justified by the need to confront any imminent danger. The resulting legitimation crisis generates a problem of accountability and, ipso facto, ungovernability after it becomes clear that hitherto accepted administrative practices need no longer be tolerated ... Thus, all states today suffer from substantial democracy deficits, which precipitate rationality, motivational and fiscal crises as the state cannot possibly meet all the demands made on it by an increasingly state-dependent citizenry (1994:4).[4]

The idea here is close to classical Marxism since it depends on the notion that certain social formations must await their historical moment when, and only when, they become possible. While there is some truth to such an argument because, for example, specific forms of productivity or communication may be a precondition for some social arrangements, the question of historical contingency is not relevant to political philosophy and it is not responsive to the problem of foundation that I am raising in this discussion.

First, these historicist reasons rest on speculative claims about what matters of facts do prevail at any given historical moment. While classical Marxism believed that these claims had scientific answers that view is not widely held today and of course Piccone in other writings explicitly rejects it. Therefore, there is considerable room for debate about these facts or about their continuing to hold over time. But the problems of political legitimacy (what Piccone refers to in other places as the problem of preserving self-regulating traditions) ought not be held hostage to disputes about contingent matters of fact. I hope to show that there is a stronger way to support legitimacy.

Second, historicist arguments of necessity postulate an historical logic or sequence of stages in history. But these ideas are ones that Piccone explicitly rejects in other writings, and they are even rejected in other passages of the essay I am considering. I doubt then that dependence on historical stages should be considered as central.

Another strategy Piccone and Ulmen offer is to reject political philosophy as a whole and replace it with appeal to the necessity of power or force to sustain societies. Here is a characteristics expression of that view.

> The bottom line is that either human rights are contractual, in which case they can be enforced only on all parties joining in the contract, or else transcendental, in which case they rate no better than a dogmatic religion and can be imposed only in the same that the Crusaders sought to convince Moslem 'infidels' of the universality of Christianity. When all is said and done, these rights can only apply if there is enough muscle behind them. Ultimately, it comes down to Thraysmachus' position anyway, and all the rhetoric about university is only meant to reassure the enforcers of the sanctity of their way (Piccone and Ulmen 1994:11).

My disagreement here is not with rejecting theories of rights as metaphysically foundational, but with the reasons given for rejecting rights.[5]

There are three weaknesses in appealing to what Piccone and Ulmen call the Thrasymachus argument. (Plato's

character Thrasymachus in The Republic attacks Socrates by asserting that justice is simply whatever is in the interest of the strongest). First, this view is part and parcel of the so-called "value neutrality of the sciences" that Piccone, for instance, condemns when discussing John Dewey and John Rawls in other essays. Value neutrality holds that matters of social organization or political authority can be divorced from moral-political concepts such as democracy, accountability, autonomy, and freedom. I do not wish to make this concession to neutrality and in other essays Piccone is correct to dismiss it. Second, by suppressing the problem of legitimacy this line of argument can then be used to assert central state power over regional and local authorities. To embrace the Thrasymachus strategy makes the defense of federalism even more difficult. Third, it shifts the debate to matters of threat, managerial success, and thus finally utility. Again these are matters Piccone rightly criticizes in other essays when he finds them in the words of opponents. Therefore, this approach is a serious strategic error. I will have more to say below about Piccone's flirtation with moral nihilism since that position bears an internal connection to the Thrasymachus argument.

In contrast, what I consider the promising strategy lies in those fleeting passages where Piccone turns from practical and supposedly factual matters to the question of how theories of society are grounded fundamentally. Piccone speaks of the "organicity" of communities and treats that feature as constitutive of political life and individuality. He describes this underlying order of society as the internalization of "collectively shared rules and regulations concerning social behavior, conflict resolution, general expectations" (Piccone 1995a:53). This idea leads to the following complex claim.

> At the national level, the rules of the game can only be formal, codified, and, therefore, incomplete, since they necessarily miss the lebensweltliche pre-formal dimension of being, while in organic communities face-to-face interactions, tradition, custom, and other extra-conceptual modes of communication remedy such inadequacy by complementing the merely conceptual (Piccone 1995a:53-54).

Piccone discusses in different contexts the advantages of this foundational approach over neo-Kantianism, pragmatism, and what he broadly calls "Enlightenment hubris" about political theory. But the content of the above claim is neither made fully clear nor developed. Piccone's case depends then too heavily on his intuitions, rhetorical devices, and promising, but largely undeveloped appeals to what he calls in several places "non-conceptual realism." This version of realism motivates his conclusion that theoretical reasoning and conception cannot be adequate to reality. I will have more to say about it as well below.

To introduce the discussion to follow I must now lay out as clearly as I can where Piccone and I disagree on these broader matters. These points cannot, of course, be fully addressed here, but I briefly review them, because if I can provide at least the sketch of a social metaphysics, then perhaps these disagreements loom less large and can be set aside.

First, I am discussing problems of political philosophy, and I consider them part of moral philosophy. Also, political philosophy is not reducible to the social sciences (it is not reducible to economic theory, for instance). Philosophical Marxism (especially the version that held sway over many European intellectuals during the cold war) treats moral philosophy (and philosophy as a whole) as an ideology and understands itself as proposing either a science as opposed to an ideology or a critical theory. For example, if Marx's theory were a science, then moral philosophy would be irrelevant. In contrast if Marxism is a critical theory, then objections are raised against moral philosophy (and perhaps philosophy as a whole) based on various historical and deconstructive arguments. Piccone of course belonged early in his career to the critical theory group.

Marx's work and the Marxist tradition is too large a topic for this paper. Suffice it to say that both aspects (the scientific as well as that of critical theory) can be found in Marx's later writings. Certainly Marx saw himself as contributing to economics, a field he took to be a science, and he understood economics as providing underlying causal explanations for historical events, thereby making possible a science of history. At the same time, but largely in passing, Marx raised general philosophical issues about mind-dependence, determinism, social kinds, and materialism. He also appealed to moral notions (again implicitly) in reaching judgments about whether social relations were just, equitable, or humane. But Marx does not discuss nor defend either his scientific or critical perspectives.[6]

I now turn to the possibility that all of moral philosophy (and thus political philosophy) is an illusion. Arguments for moral nihilism are quite rare, but Nietzsche is perhaps the classic example of the view. As shown above, Piccone considers the Thrasymachus objection to Socrates when rejecting theories of rights. He also often flirts with moral nihilism as a result. He cites, for instance, some limited agreement with Michael Foucault, and Foucault seems to have carried on Nietzsche's project of rejecting ethics by tracing ethics back to psychological formations and rationalization. I will briefly give reasons for resisting this approach.

Of course the key concept of power that is supposed to replace the moral concepts is often left vague in these accounts. If we take Michel Foucault as an example then he defends the following views: realism is false; there are no natural or social kinds; incarceration of the mentally ill is unjustified because there is no such disease as mental illness; punishment of criminals is based on pseudo-scientific theories in law and psychology. Are Foucault's views strategies of power?[7] Does he have reasons for these conclusions other than the opportunity to exercise power? If his views are just strategies within the struggle for power, why ought we to accept them? If they are not, why are they not? Foucault dismisses the proclamations of various medical or legal authorities as masked claims to power. Does he exempt himself and if so how does he?

But even if moral nihilism can be formulated in a fashion that is not self-refuting, it is based on highly controversial assumptions about both ethics and metaphysics. Without entering into these debates, the point is that moral nihilism remains as speculative and controversial as the various biological, religious, or philosophical theories it claims to overturn and subvert. Thus, I will set this view aside and look for some further clarification and defense of the metaphysical foundations Piccone hints at in his discussion of federalism.

Metaphysical Foundations

I aim to provide a foundation for political theory outside factual matters, historical stages, power, or rights. Further, I will try to show how this approach entails a certain criticism of cosmopolitanism.

Recently philosophers from different camps (Habermas 1990, 1994; MacIntyre 1981; Taylor 1975, 1985, 1994) have offered defenses of Hegel's politics and ethics, and specifically emphasized Hegel's criticisms of Kant. But I will focus on F. H. Bradley (1951) and his attempt to revive key features of Hegel's political philosophy. Bradley was among the most prominent and productive of the British neo-Hegelians. His attempt to sketch an idealist theory of politics and ethics, influenced by both Kant and Hegel, has particular relevance to a fuller consideration of what might have motivated Piccone's views, as well how to defend such views. He is not the only idealist philosopher of importance, nor even perhaps the most impressive, but his insights into political theory are worth a closer hearing.

After I have presented my defense I raise three objections that I think are difficult for Piccone's version of federal-populism to overcome. These objections, if I am correct about them, suggest that the problems that this position intends to address cannot be solved by either political philosophy or procedural reform alone. Thus, I am a pessimist in the end about Piccone's federal-populism.

Ethical Community

Bradley begins with an argument against the notion of pleasure for pleasure's sake as a moral good. He points out that if pleasure were a good in and of itself, then it would not matter how the pleasure was realized for any given agent. But Bradley responds that if some pleasures are such or are realized in such a way that they require that the agent relinquish his autonomy or produce the agent's heteronomy, then they are not morally good. Thus, pleasure cannot be intrinsically good.

Though I will not say more about this clever argument, it should be noted that it leads Bradley to offer the agent's self-realization as the proper goal of moral and political life, and I will return to this idea below. We should recall in this context that Kant also opposed utilitarianism and hedonism and Kant was a critic of powerful nation states since he held that the nation state ought not to use coercion to promote happiness or well-being. To do so, Kant held, is to deny citizens their moral and political autonomy. The question then is why Bradley thinks he needs to modify Kant's argument against the paternal state further.

The central reason is that Bradley rejects Kant's basic concept of duty. He argues against Kant's defense of duty for duty's sake and Kant's idea of the formal necessity of the moral law.[8] I should note here that Piccone's defense of his view also rests upon the inadequacy of abstract concepts of duty or morality. Piccone, like Bradley, intends to respond to "Enlightenment hubris."

As Bradley puts his concluding points against Kant, "A will which does not act is no will, and every act is a particular event; an act is this or that act, and an act in general is nonsense … To act you must will something and

something definite. To will in general is impossible, and to will in particular is never to will nothing but a form … Will, when one wills nothing in particular, is a pure fiction' (Bradley 1951:91-92).

Bradley tries to overcome this clash between the deontological and utilitarian pictures of state power by adapting parts of Hegel's political theory. For Bradley what makes an action moral is the will or intent of the agent, not the effects or consequences of the act. However, given Bradley's criticisms of Kant, he argues that ethical obligations have to be specific actions or duties and that the specificity of the action requires conditions within the surrounding world that allow for such agency. Persons have to be the kind of beings who can act and the institutional superstructure of society provides both the occasion and possibility of that agent's self-realizing actions.

The pure logical form of the moral law is not then enough nor does it provide proper moral motivation. " A more psychological consideration leads us still to the futility of duty for duty's sake. A will which does not act is no will, and every act is a particular event; an act is this or that act, and an act in general is nonsense" (Bradley 1951:91).

Hegel held that the nation state, while being the culmination of political organization, is not foundational for society. Rather, nation states are themselves founded upon and constituted by families, communities, and civil society. The existence of these pre-state formations is necessary for any political order whatsoever and by extension moral agency itself. As Charles Taylor (1985) argues, Hegel's views are Aristotelian in orientation and thus stand outside the divide between deontology and utility that has shaped modern moral philosophy.

Bradley's Hegelianism then takes the good will as aiming at an agent's self-realization by way of concrete duties and acts: "It is the self-realization of each member because each member cannot find the function which makes himself, apart from the whole to which he belongs, to be himself he must go beyond himself, to live his life he must live a life which is not merely his own, but which, nonetheless, but on the contrary all the more, is intensely and emphatically his own individuality" (1951:100).

This idea of "organicity," as Piccone calls it, leads Bradley to stress how the surrounding social world must be such that an agent can achieve concrete identity. Bradley states, "In short, man is a social being; he is real only because he is social, and can realize himself only because it is as social that he realizes himself" (1951: 111).

Bradley then takes the discussion to a new and important problem. He asks how such action can escape "the capriciousness of circumstances." This question may seem at first perplexing. How can Bradley both demand concreteness and specificity of actions while also demanding that actions not be capricious or circumstantial? Is this not an impossible demand? But this question is similar to the one I raised above with regard to Piccone's reliance on factual contingencies or historical stages as providing foundations for federalism. I was holding that force or power is not adequate to the task of foundation because it is a capricious circumstance.

Bradley's solution is found in his slogan "my station and its duties."[9] This view has often been unfairly dismissed because of connotations read into that phrase. Such readings are unfair since Bradley makes clear that a "station" is not a given, preordained order of society in the sense of a class or a caste. He speaks of choosing a station "according to my own liking." But his point is that a station (or what might be called a social sphere or domain) has duties pertaining to it and those duties are not up to the agent; they are objective. Bradley's point requires him to defend a modestly organic conception of the state. Stations and duties are what preserve and maintain the underlying communities and their social relations and thereby provide agents with opportunities to realize themselves through concrete actions and decisions. I call this approach Aristotelian because it sees society as intimate, communal, and made possible by personhood.

Bradley concludes by stating that "The point here is that you cannot have the moral world unless it is willed; that to be willed it must be willed by persons; and that those persons not only have the moral world as the content of their wills, but also must in some way be aware of themselves as willing this content" (1951a:113-114).

One way to understand the force and persuasiveness of Bradley's conception is to relate it to a current discussion of cosmopolitanism. Piccone challenges such views in his presentation of federalism and he thinks cosmopolitanism is one among many misguided efforts to universalize the notion of duty outside of local social order. For example, Martha Nussbaum's (1996) presentation of "world citizenship" or cosmopolitanism is also in part a defense of multicultural tolerance as well as a criticism of patriotism.[10]

Nussbaum argues that since the question of what is one's nation-state is an accident of birth, then citizenship in a national-state is not a morally relevant idea. "The accident of where one is born is just that, an accident, any human being might have been born in any nation. Recognizing this … we should not allow differences in nationality or class or ethnic membership or even gender to erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings" (Nussbaum 1996:7).

First, an aspect of this argument is in harmony with the federalist impulse since it contributes to weakening nation state authority as against that of the local community or local identity. But Nussbaum's argument suffers from a flaw that can be shown by the following analogy. It is an accident of birth that one has the parents that one has, but it does not follow from the contingency of parenthood that one's obligations to one's parents are not morally significant and even weighty. Thus, one has some morally relevant obligations to one's nation state just as one has some moral obligation to one's parents. What Nussbaum has called the accident of birth cannot support her stronger conclusion.

Nussbaum seems aware of this point I am making since she introduces a second argument in the article in defense of cosmopolitanism that I will call the "concentric circle of duties and responsibilities" argument. Here she holds that cosmopolitanism is compatible with the local political duties and commitments (the ones Piccone is stressing) because it should be understood as part of an expanding circle of responsibilities and loyalties ending with humanity as a whole.

This argument is, however, weaker than the accident of birth argument. It does not, for instance, support the Stoic view that Nussbaum claims as her inspiration and that she summarizes as holding "we should give our first allegiance to no mere form of government, no temporal power, but to the moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings (1996:7).

While we may agree then that we owe some moral consideration to humanity as whole, the problem is that it is difficult to specify what those duties are. We should now recall Bradley's point about how duties have to be concrete, specific and able to be willed. Furthermore, if there is some vague duty to humanity as a whole, the question is whether it trumps the specific and concrete duties at the lower levels of the expanding circle. Therefore, the problem with concentric expanding responsibilities with regard to Piccone's project is that duties lower in the concentric circle are precisely foundational. At least they are if the metaphysics of social being outlined above is correct. They are thus not just stronger, but specific and fundamental. In addition, they are resilient duties and less likely to issue in unintended or irreparable harms that are the obvious danger of vague cosmopolitan duties.[11]

Nussbaum's contrast in her lecture between the morally defensible cosmopolitan and the morally culpable patriot is therefore misleading. Even if for purposes of argument there is some status of world citizenship, the idea could hardly be used to supplant or lessen obligations incurred at close, immediate circles. That is especially the case if acting from the vantage point of world citizen were at the expense of local, specific duties. There are, of course, negative connotations to the word patriot, implying as it does that the person's obedience is blind and reactive. But that is a moral failing separate from the issue of what duties one ought to consider binding. A person who sought release from his immediate and local duties and responsibilities would not, I suspect, be seen as an admirable world citizen but as a local scofflaw. This result would especially be the case if duties to humanity were abstract and potentially dangerous.[12]

In contrast then to Nussbaum, there is Bradley's specificity and realism leading him to a resolute suspicion of projects that detach the moorings of society from the fundamentals of agency. "Everybody knows that the only way to do your duty is to do your duties; that general doing good may mean doing no good in particular; and so none at all, but rather perhaps the contrary of good. Everybody knows that the setting out, whether in religion, morals or politics, with the intent to realize an abstraction is a futile endeavor; and that what it comes to is that either you do nothing at all, or that the particular content which is necessary for action is added to the abstraction by the chance of circumstances or caprice. Everybody suspects, if they do not feel sure, that the acting consciously on and from abstract principles means self-deceit or hypocrisy or both" (Bradley 1951:91).

Three Problems

If I am correct, the account above defends Piccone's thesis linking together his views about political organization and decision-making as motivated by core, foundational concerns over accountability and freedom of action. My questions now concern whether this view can ameliorate the problems that gave rise to it.

The basic insight of federalism is that subunits federate underneath a central state but with significant restrictions on the power of the central state over the federated units and significant autonomy for these communities to develop their own ways of life. The glue that holds the federation together is that the central state functions to defend and protect the units, but no more. For example, military defense and perhaps some control over general conditions of

citizenship belong to the central state. Such then are the minimum conditions for a federation.

Obviously, federalism aims at some perhaps difficult to define point between, at one extreme, the threat of a despotic central state and, at the other extreme, devolution into scattered groups that fail to cohere as a federation. But this midpoint (and of course there may be several such possible midpoints) is not only difficult to specify in practice but difficult to capture theoretically. This matter will arise in my criticisms.

The concept of populism, as Piccone admits, has been used in many diverse ways, but his use of the term is wholly with respect to direct democracy via majority rule. Thus, it is opposed not only to representational democracy, but also to weighting decisions with respect to minority preferences.

One should notice, at first, that populism so stated might well be at odds with federalism. The reason for this tension can be seen in considering a traditional picture of how populist democracies differ from liberal democracies. They differ, it is often argued, on whether or not rights (however they are defended) act as constraints on majorities. Even assuming for now that citizens always vote their interests (more about that problem below), the idea is that majorities ought not to be allowed to restrict freedom in some range of specified matters.

For example, majority votes ought not to be able to specify whether men should have beards or not, what books adults should or should not read, or what religious faith citizens should or should not have (or whether they ought to have such a faith at all). If populism enthrones the decisions of majorities as definitive, then such rule could conceivably be used to weaken the autonomy of federated units. Majority votes could simply stipulate what other federated states can and cannot do thereby ending the point of federalism itself.

Therefore, I think a proponent of such a combination of federalism with populism must intend that the majorities that rule in the sub-units cannot be aggregated to create in effect nation-state super majorities. The federated units must be protected and thus understood as free to develop what John Stuart Mill called "experiments in living."[13]

Why, then, add populism at all? I think the motivation for it remains the accountability of decisions within each federated community. The idea is that voting by the direct decision of each and every citizen neither dilutes nor bargains away that authority. Thus, as long as the central-state cannot use aggregated majorities against other federated units, the federated units still ought to act by direct democracy so to limit the authority of representational decisions and maintain strict accountability for their own decisions.

Let me briefly summarize my defense of this view before proceeding to my three criticisms. Bradley provided an important part of the defense. Certain arrangements of society provide the basis for self-realization. In this way, agents may alter their lives as they gain experience and as society provides them concrete opportunities to act. The close surrounding social world protected from distant authority provides the right balance of security with such active citizenship. I suggested that we label such an approach as Aristotelian-Hegelian, and we could call the kind of society resulting from it Republican.[14] I think the passages Piccone wrote on the preconceptual features of social life and the need for open-ended projects of life within society are captured by this defense.

The first problem I will raise is a regress objection. By a regress objection I mean that the problem that motivates federalism as a solution can be seen replicated at another level. Piccone names the problems that federalism responds to as alienation, loss of individual freedom, arbitrary rule, and illegitimacy.

I will focus on the idea that federalism preserves freedom and accountability. Federalism does so by devolving authority and decision-making to smaller and nearer communities. Thus, immediate proximity is the key. It also preserves diverse ways of life by standing as a veto against large-scale planning.

But my criticism is that federalism gives at best only the appearance of legitimacy by having majority decisions local. If we want the decisions to be legitimate, then we need to ask what makes a decision legitimate whether near or far. But to that question federalism gives no clear answer. In Piccone's account it is taken to be legitimate by simple fiat or stipulation. This point is reflected in how he defends and incorporates the role of populism. But even direct democracy does not necessarily preserve either accountability or freedom. While Rousseau could simply and infamously declare that whatever the general will decides must be free, I assume such question begging is no longer acceptable. While Piccone is justified in saying that a political theory cannot accommodate the details of actual life and contingent circumstances, that does not speak to this question. If majority decisions are definitive and unlimited in range, then what makes them also legitimate?

The second problem arises when considering that perhaps federal-populism simply confers legitimacy by way of the autonomy of each federated unit. Piccone does set the bar for autonomy very high by allowing for the unrestricted right to secession. Of course he does not explain why the notion of such an unlimited right arises

especially after Piccone, as shown above, also attacks the very notion of rights. But even if that problem can be set aside, the basic idea of a majority vote is now critically ambiguous. It has at least three different meanings. It can simply mean rule by a majority or it can mean rule by what the majority of voters in fact want or prefer. But it has been known and discussed for some time that these two senses of majority rule are distinct and can come apart. What that means is that a majority vote may not in fact result in producing a majority's actual preference. Hence, in this fashion the device would undermine accountability as well as freedom. Third, majority voting can mean, as I said above, that the majority rules only in some areas of decision-making but not in all areas. This meaning seems to be the one Piccone is willing to bargain away in constructing his view and I consider that a serious weakness.[15]

At this point then federalism becomes a "bait and switch" maneuver. It speaks of a certain central decision-making as destructive because it erodes local autonomy and threatens despotism and tyranny. Representative procedures that make for these decisions, it is argued, will in the long run overturn the diversity, stability, and engagement that are the hallmarks of communities. I have called this picture Aristotelian and even Hegelian, since defenders of the state can appeal to it. Bradley, as I said, gives this picture its best defense and a defense that steers away from strong central state power.

But when switching to the local level, the very same problem arises since there the will of the majority is definitive. Why is a local majority always preferable to a representative majority? It may be possible to give reasons for advocating the tyranny of the local majority, but then not by simply invoking the threat of state tyranny. After all, those in the minority have their self-realization held hostage to the vagaries of local majority approval, distant state tyranny not withstanding.

For example, experiments in living, as Mill argued, immediately confront the intolerant neighbor. Mill's concern seems if anything more pressing today since there are now more ways to express "neighborly" intolerance of others and the scope of those who are one's neighbors grows with the power of communication technologies. Piccone, I suspect, would agree with my invoking some historical conditions at this point. But to then condemn the distant bureaucrat so as to enthrone the local magistrate is a failed solution.

The third problem concerns an aspect of the Aristotelian-Hegelian defense of federalism. I will just discuss Aristotle for the moment. Aristotle argues, as I said, that there must be preconditions for any society whatsoever. He also defends the idea of a ranking or hierarchy of ways of life. What he means is that certain beings are capable of practical reasoning, but once that capability arises then ways of life are judged better or worse. I think Piccone has exactly this point in mind when he defends the importance of both autonomy and self-reliance. Social beings are not neutral between the ways of life available to them.

This kind of analysis has two important implications. On the one hand, it can challenge those ways of life that erode these preconditions. For instance, the notion of a dystopia rather than a utopia (often found in fictional literature) represents such an erosion. But actual conditions such as extreme famine, violence, or repression may likewise serve to remove the possibility of social formations. On the other hand, this kind of analysis also raises the question of what is needed to preserve societies and personhood.

Defenses of federalism, such as given by Piccone, go directly from the preconditions for personhood to the proper decision-making. For example, Piccone argues that small-scale communities provide the preconditions for personhood; and, he thinks majority votes or even unanimity is thus the proper form of decision-making. But while we may agree that for there to be a society there must be persons, we may not agree on what produces persons nor on whether that process supports such and such a social arrangement.

For example, paternalism (to varying degrees of course) may well be part of what turns children into persons, but that point hardly supports paternalism for society as whole. Mill makes a persuasive case for how paternalism damages personal autonomy -- a case echoed in Piccone's warning that welfare states produce "citizen clients." Paternalism is also Mill's central reason for condemning the growing power of nation states.[16]

The debate has moved in a circle. Federalism in trying to challenge central state paternalism gives unbridled rule to local majorities. It supports, in effect, local paternalism. While Piccone's motivation was to maintain the social formation of federated communities, by appealing to stability, protection, and making judgments definitive (rather than the concept of legitimacy) his strategy ends up defending and expanding the case for central state power.

Of course I have not shown that no defense of these views is possible; nor have I responded to every version of federalism. I hope I have shown the need for a deeper defense and how the strategy of simply stipulating consistency with political procedures or general principles is inadequate to the issue. Piccone's federalism promises something theoretically substantive; namely, it promises to motivate what is required for a proper or just society.

But I do not see how a political philosophy could have the result that it required federalism. Rather, federalism

may be the type of social organization compatible with different political philosophies, or it may simply be a type compatible with what Bradley called capricious circumstances. That should not come as a surprise since the appeal of federalism is its "let a thousand flowers bloom" vision of society. But then that liberality is precisely the problem with it since this tolerance for diversity in social arrangements and values could precisely be what is corrosive to the preconditions for public life; and public life is what federalism claimed to defend above all else.

Endnotes

1. By this term "philosophical eliminitavism" I mean arguing that philosophical issues are pseudo-problems, or disappear into the sciences, or are linguistic errors, or are historical ideologies. Piccone was not entirely unfriendly to the historical ideology account, unfortunately in my opinion. These opinions have become gospel within the academic world and are promoted by postmodernists, pragmatists, and positivists alike (for different reasons of course).

2. I cannot provide an adequate definition of idealism (or metaphysical foundation) for this presentation and obviously there are different types of idealism in philosophy. Also this article is not an attempt to defend or criticize idealism. Piccone's comments about non-conceptual realism should be understood as compatible with a range of metaphysical positions, idealist and materialist. In this article the forms of idealism closet to Piccone's project are Hegelian and Aristotelian. But this passage from David Chalmers gives something of the view I have in mind. "There is a sense in which this view can be seen as a monism rather than a dualism. but it is not a material monism. Unlike physicalism, this view takes certain phenomenal and protophenomenal properties as fundamental. ... It is an idealism very unlike Berkeley's, however. The world is not supervenient on the mind of an observer, but rather consists in a vast causal network of phenomenal properties underlying the physical laws that science postulates" (Chalmers 1996:155). For further discussion see Foster 1996.

3. "Popular participation alone is not sufficient to qualify any movement as populist. The sine quo non of populism is a living dialectic between individual and community, whereby the first internalizes the norms of the latter while subsequently enriching and reproducing them. The role of Islam in the Iranian revolution may contribute to an understanding of its fervor and energy, but it does not lead to the conclusion that the regime it brought o power has anything to do with populism." (Piccone and Ulmen 1995c:8) In another context Piccone holds; "In other words, the populist politician's distinguishing feature is direct access to the very precategorical dimension rationalist and liberals dismiss as 'irrational' and, consequently, responsible for most of the major 20th century authoritarian involutions" (Piccone 1995a:53). The appeal to a "living dialectic" or the access to the "precategorical" are not foundational arguments in my view, but I do agree that popular participation is not a sufficient condition. Piccone's appeal to majority rule is a concrete way to address this question of sufficiency and I discuss it further in my criticisms.

4. "Today, when the premodern conditions conducive to these disastrous authoritarian outcomes no longer obtain within most of the industrialized world, the prospects of populism as a viable political alternative may be much brighter than at any time in the past. This is also facilitated by the fact that, within the crisis of modernity, the New Class has entered a phase of delegitimation and decline. As a result, the populist antimodernism assumes an altogether different meaning. In an age of postmoderntity, after the collapse of the concept of progress has undermined all unilinear theories of history and dethroned modernity as the ultimate achievement of civilization, the populist rejection of modernity, hitherto regarded as a sign of backwardness and immaturity, now becomes merely another political choice" (Piccone 1995a:49).

5. In discussing a theory of rights Piccone and Ulmen state; "Ultimately 'human rights' fare no better than any other set of values accepted by any other people for whatever reasons ... To impose them on communities that do not accept them is nothing more than act of cultural imperialism ... Confronted with the objection, Johnstone throws up his hands and claims that historical and cultural particularity do not invalidate universality. But can he prove that, in a situation in which universal rights are not actually universally accepted, other than by claiming that he regards these rights as universal? Doing so implies a shift to Thrasymachus' relativism from his initial Socratic universalism. True universalism can not be a matter of metaphysical deduction. It is the result of de facto universal acceptance of particular norms. One single dissenter invalidates the claim" (Piccone and Ulmen 1994:p. 11). Though I agree that a theory of rights does not admit of direct proof (like any matter of political philosophy it is simply more or less coherent with other foundational claims), this criticism of rights has two problems. First, Piccone and Ulmen do not distinguish universal claims from unanimous claims. Universality is a matter of the scope of the claim, not a matter of how many agree to it. A single dissenter does not refute a universal claim any more than a single dissenter refutes the universal law of gravity. A law or universal claim can, of course, fall to arguments against its coherence or recalcitrant facts, but those matters are not about the number of votes. Second, this idea of a single dissenter invalidating a political decision

would then directly weaken Piccone's later argument for definitive majority rule at the local level. Since that is his central idea for defending populism, I will set aside this passage as curiously anomalous. I have more to say about dissent in my criticism of Piccone's federalism.

6. Part of the reason for this lack of defense probably rests with Marx's false belief that he had shown how capitalism would inevitably collapse due to an intractable problem in the appropriation of surplus value. Perhaps he took that supposed fact of economics concerning the limits to profit and the inevitable fall in wages as allowing him to postpone clarification of his moral criticism or the other problems in philosophy of science. For further discussion see D'Amico 1989.

7. A fuller discussion with references can be found in D'Amico 1999:199-230.

8. "[T]he categorical imperative alone can be taken as a practical law ... because what is necessary merely for the attainment of an arbitrary purpose can be regarded as itself contingent, and we get rid of the precept once we give up the purpose, whereas the unconditional command leaves the will no freedom to choose the opposite. Thus it alone implies the necessity which we require of a law" (Kant 1969:43). In Kant's technical language, then, moral laws are synthetic a priori judgments.

9. Hegel's comments on public opinion exhibit the idea that Bradley is developing. "Public opinion, therefore, contains within itself – in the form of healthy human understanding – the eternal, substantial principles of justice, the true content and result of the entire constitution, all legislation and the universal condition on the whole ... The principle of the modern world requires that whatever I am to recognize shall reveal itself to me as something justifying recognition ... Once one has had one's say, and so one's share of responsibility, one's subjectivity has been satisfied..." (Hegel 2002:245-246).

10. Bradley dismisses what he calls "cosmopolitan morality." "Men nowadays know to some extent what is thought right and wrong in other communities now, and what has been thought at other times; and this leads to a notion of goodness not of any particular time and country"(Bradley 1951:139).

11. Not only is it difficult to state what an obligation to all of humanity would require one concretely to do, but also even acting to assist the destitute poor, for instance, may be inconsistent with a vague duty to all of humanity. In fact, cosmopolitanism, in the way Nussbaum defends it, appears to work against an expanding concentric circle of responsibilities since she treats duties to humanity as always predominant.

12. Bradley's criticism is of duties not connected to concrete circumstances that realize and determine them. "And since the principle is a formal empty universal, there is no connection between it and the content which is brought under it"(Bradley 1951:94).

13. "[T]hat there should be different experiments in living; that free scope should be given to varieties of character, short of injury to others; and that the worth of different modes of life should be proved practically, when anyone thinks fit to try them ... but the evil is that individual spontaneity is hardly recognized by the common modes of thinking as having any intrinsic worth, or deserving any regard on its own account. The majority, being satisfied with the ways of mankind as they are (for it is they who make them what they are), cannot comprehend why these ways should not be good enough for everybody" (Mill 1978:54).

14. The term Republican here of course refers not to a political party but to the Roman and Renaissance concept of the political community. For further discussion see Pettit, 1997 and D'Amico 2000.

15. John Stuart Mill's On Liberty (1978) is an extended argument in defense of the third meaning of democratic voting with respect to what Mill calls "self-regarding actions." Mill defends this view in terms of both its expansion of freedom but also because it defends autonomy against mass conformity.

16. "The mischief begins when, instead of calling forth the activity and powers of individuals and bodies, it [the State] substitutes its own activity for theirs; when, instead of informing, advising, and upon occasion, denouncing, it [the State] makes them work in fetters. Or bids them stand aside and does their work instead of them" (Mill 1978:113).

References

Appiah, A. K. 2006. Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Bradley, F.H. 1951. Ethical Studies: Selected Essays. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Chalmers, David J. 1996. The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

D'Amico, R. 1989. Historicism and Knowledge. New York: Routledge.

-------. 1999. Contemporary Continental Philosophy. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

------. 2000. "Holistic Republicanism." Telos 117: Winter, 183-192.

Foster, John. 1996. The Immaterial Self: A Defense of the Cartesian Dualist Conception of the Mind. New York: Routledge.

Habermas, J. 1990. Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action. Translated by Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

-------. 1994. "Struggles of Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State." Pp. 107-148 in Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, edited by Amy Gutman. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Hegel, G.W.F. 2002. The Philosophy of Right. Translated by Alan White. Newburyport, MA.: Focus Philosophical Library.

Kant, I. 1969. Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals. Translated by Lewis White Beck. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company.

MacIntyre, A. 1981. After Virtue: A Study in Mortal Theory. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Mill, J. S. 1978. On Liberty. Hackett Publishing Company.

Nozick, R. 1974. Anarchy, Utopia and the State. New York; Basic Books.

Nussbaum, M. 1996. "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." Pp. 2-21 in For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism, edited by Joshua Cohen. Boston; Beacon Press.

Pettit, P. 1997. Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Piccone, P. and G. Ulmen. 1994. "Rethinking Populism." Telos 100: Summer, 3-16.

-------. 1995a. "Postmodern Populism." Telos 103: Spring, 45-86.

------. 1995b. "Populism and the New Politics." Telos 103: Spring, 3-8.

-------. 1995c. "Introduction to Special Issue on Populism II." Telos 104: Summer, 3-12.

Piccone, P. 1995d. La Revoluzione Federaliste: Con Un Saggio di Gianfranco Morra. Rome: Settimo Sigillo.

Taylor, C. 1975. Hegel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-------. 1985. "Hegel's Philosophy of Mind." Pp. 77-96 in Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

------. 1994. "The Politics of Recognition." Pp. 25-73 in Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, edited by Amy Gutman. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.010

"Carving out an identity for itself": The Work of *Telos* over Forty Years

Elisabeth Chaves

When a group of graduate students at the State University of New York-Buffalo began Telos in 1968, they created a publication that would still be in existence more than forty years later. I can imagine that in May 1968 as the first issue of Telos circulated, it passed from hands to hands in university building hallways, its corners becoming bent with its increased circulation. Perhaps the table of contents advertised on its front cover too closely resembled the dry publications that proclaimed themselves to be scholarly works. It hid its status as a radical publication, foregoing any cover art that shouted its provenance. Its readers that would later become its editors first encountered it among the stacks in the darkened corners of college libraries. Maybe with some of the excitement of Howard Carter entering King Tut's tomb, they opened the cover of the unassuming journal to find exotic ideas and foreign names. More likely, since I cannot imagine that college students have changed all that much, they took one look at the cover and an article title like "Theory, Empiricism and Class Struggle: On the Problem of Constitution in Karl Korsch" and moved on to the next item on the shelf. But for the brave or crazy few, the journal would quietly enter into history and persist there mostly unnoticed on the margins. That this was a conscious strategy and not just a result of its nature will be discussed more below.

Today, if they had the time to spare from their teaching and research assistantships, conference papers, papers for publications, teaching loads, and the other bases to be covered on the way to landing an academic position, graduate students might start up a journal, especially if it might also increase their attractiveness to a future employer. Likely empty of any political rhetoric aimed at any specific target and not free of footnotes and hallowed names, the student journal of today would probably be published on-line, suiting academic budget constraints. Also, as an electronic journal, the students could envision the world-wide audience that would stumble across their site, attracted by its title, and then captured by the effects of its well-designed style sheet.

Changes in the media ecology create disruptions sometimes larger than the seemingly simple change in materiality might suggest. A shift in legitimacy can occur through the introduction of a new technology. Are newer electronic journals as legitimate as print journals? These shifts can also affect the structure of the intellectual field. This article will utilize the field theory of the sociologist Bourdieu.

> The intellectual field, which cannot be reduced to a simple aggregate of isolated agents or to the sum of elements merely juxtaposed, is, like a magnetic field, made up of a system of power lines. In other words, the constituting agents or systems of agents may be described as so many forces which by their existence, opposition or combination, determine its specific structure at a given moment in time. In return, each of these is defined by its particular position within this field from which it derives positional properties which cannot be assimilated to intrinsic properties and more specifically, a specific type of participation in the cultural field taken as a system of relations between themes and problems, and thus a determined type of cultural unconscious, while at the same time it intrinsically possesses what could be called a functional weight, because its own 'mass,' that is, its power (or better, its authority) in the field cannot be defined independently of its own position within it (Bourdieu, 1969, p. 89).

I am interested in three things: first, what is Telos's position within the intellectual field; second, how has this position changed over time; and third, how have changes in the materiality of communication altered its position. Answering any of these questions fully requires more space than is available here. So, I treat what follows as beginning

explorations into these areas, especially the third.

While the arrival of electronic media, including the television, and now "new" media, such as the Internet, have altered positions within the intellectual field, I do not think it is possible to create a before and after argument. These changes are sometimes gradual and sometimes abrupt, and they interact with other social, political, cultural and economic changes to produce varied effects. Further, communication technologies not only act upon subjects and objects but also are themselves acted upon. So, they cannot be the single focus of attention. As I mentioned before, Telos' perhaps willing push to be a journal on the margin also obviously affects their position. Still, as Debray argues, the role of new information technologies cannot be underestimated:

> This sudden rise to power of [the information] apparatus that was formerly subordinate or peripheral has had the side effect of shattering the coordinates of the 'intellectual field,' taken here to mean 'the system of social relations within which creation takes place as an act of communication.' [citing Bourdieu, "The Intellectual Field and the Creative Project"]. The order of its coordinates has changed, but inversely. Spatially, there has been a broadening of the base; temporally, a narrowing. Increase in the potential audience; decrease in creative intensity: is it possible that the modern humanities have lost comprehension and gained extension, like the concept in classical logic?" (1981).

However, understanding Telos's position on the margin of the intellectual field does not entirely rest on tracking its shifts through changes in the rise of the information apparatus. That is part of the story, but not the whole story. We will have to hold two things in mind at once, that the position(s) in the intellectual field can change, and that changes in technology/media ecology can affect those shifts but are not the only cause of those shifts.

Furthermore, while it is easy to analyze Telos as a marginal journal, since the journal so named itself, and while there seems to be nothing more absorbing for scholars and intellectuals[1] than describing the intellectual field and defining where someone, something, or they themselves fit within it, tracing the history of Telos as a journey through the intellectual field cannot be the whole story either. At worst, this analysis will portray the intellectual field as static, while presenting a structuralist theory that makes defining Telos as dependent on the definition of the New Left Review or The National Review as on anything having to do with Telos itself. At best, I might write a very neat and tidy argument that ties Telos' every move to shifts in the intellectual field and thus create some real insight into the journal's history—insight that would seem not to depend on the actual political content or, maybe a coarse word, motivation of the journal. Rather than depicting a journal and its editors and authors trying to influence political thought or practice, I could write the story of a journal and its associates trying to carve out a consecrated position for themselves within the intellectual field. Neither analysis seems particularly worthy nor whole but maybe somehow taken together a thicker analysis might be derived? This article, in the space available, will contribute to the latter, the analysis of Telos' position within the intellectual field. Hopefully, this issue, taken as a whole, will improve my limited contribution.

Mapping the Field

As I said before, scholars and intellectuals regularly map the intellectual field, assigning positions to the objects of their study, in an attempt to what? – create markers so that they can best navigate the intellectual landscape that is their environs; define what are legitimate positions within the field and which are not; or, maybe to gain some understanding of the social world, or even to facilitate some action within it. Additionally, while not always surveying the field, efforts like this issue that seek to answer questions of the impact and legacy of an intellectual object, also can be explained in terms of this field logic. They are attempts often to shore up or tear down certain positions within the field or perhaps make room for new positions while honoring the old position's passing. I agreed to contribute an article to this effort, so I too am playing a role in the construction of the field. Therefore, my own position should probably be explained.

I am a doctoral student working on a dissertation at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. I was born almost a decade after Telos began publication. My advisor, Tim Luke, has been and continues to be involved with the journal. I am studying Telos as part of my dissertation. This article will aid my professionalization as an entry on my curriculum vitae, but it will also help me in my studies, which I hope will make a valuable contribution to some body of knowledge. I have also, along with a group of other graduate students, begun a student-run electronic journal here at Virginia Tech, not unlike the one described above. Therefore, I apologize to any graduate students undertaking a similar endeavor with perhaps loftier or different goals. I do not know if I can say whether I have attained a

recognized position within the intellectual field. An interesting study would simply be to define what is required to enter the field today. So, I approach this analysis from somewhat of an outsider position, probably more outside Telos than most of the other contributors to this issue, and outside, or at least, on the borders of the intellectual field, and yet my survey of the field might be the creation of my entryway to it, or perhaps some sort of reconnaissance for a future mission.

In a similarly reflexive vein, Telos has provided recaps of its history over the years, publishing self-examinations, at fifty issues, at the age of twenty, at one hundred issues, and at the death of its founding editor, Paul Piccone.[2] So, while I try to map Telos's position within the field, I am also using its past navigations to aid my own. Obviously, this approach can be problematic, as I am relying upon the object's own analysis for my analysis. (And I am somewhat confusing myself here too in this M.C. Escher infinity loop). Further, as I reviewed these past reflexive excursions in the journal, I was struck by how well the language of their own analysis matched my expectations (if that is the word) after having studied Bourdieu, upon whom the analysis of this article is largely based. I then wondered if perhaps the editors and contributors to Telos had somehow internalized Bourdieu for themselves and reproduced his "findings" in the telling of their own history.[3] If this is the case, then this internalization would only seem to confirm Bourdieu's argument that the field of production, whether cultural or intellectual, is a collective effort, and the public meaning of a work is collectively defined.

> The relationship with any work, even one's own, is always a relationship with a work which has been judged, whose ultimate truth and value can never be anything but the sum of potential judgments of the work which the sum of the members of the intellectual world would formulate by reference in all cases to the social representation of the work as the integration of individual judgments of it (Bourdieu 1969).

Some may argue that Bourdieu's field analysis is not useful or is flawed. I will not argue against the latter. And as I said above, tracing Telos's position within the intellectual field may not get us close enough to the Truth of Telos. However, mapping has become a catchword in academic and intellectual discourse, especially on the Left. There is a lot of talk of the need to map. Positions, locations, and spaces appear to have become fundamental to understanding ourselves as subjects and objects, especially in our hypercapitalist world. Our epistemologies seem to rely so much on being able to understand the terrain of knowledge, its geography. Some argue this is a question of space, others say place, where others put us in spheres, scapes, flows, fields, networks, ecologies, and hegemonies.

I am still grappling with this process of "mapping," or the use of the spatial as an analytic tool, as I think many others may also be doing. Mapping can act as a stabilizer in an unproductive, dominant way, putting subjects and objects in "their" place. But arguably, a map can also serve as a useful guide giving a sense of direction to a political or social movement that may at present be lost. For Bourdieu, mapping is a means of navigating the field of production, recognizing the terrain, important landmarks, etc., that allow an occupant of the field "to be able to navigate in a hierarchically structured space in which movement is always fraught with the danger of losing class" (1993).

Space has become destabilized in that so many diverse readings of it are possible, or perhaps these multiple means of sense-making have led to the destabilization of space. As Lefebvre and Jameson suggest, some sort of re-composition or stabilization that makes sense of space may be necessary to a political project, especially for the Left that seems to have lost many of its markers. To quote Lefebvre

> The reconstruction of a spatial 'code' – that is, of a language common to practice and theory, as also to inhabitants, architects and scientists – may be considered from the practical point of view to be an immediate task (Lefebvre 1991).

And Jameson also states that

> [T]he conception of space that has been developed here [in his outline of postmodernism] suggests that a model of political culture appropriate to our own situation will necessarily have to raise spatial issues as its fundamental organizing concern (Jameson 1984)

This re-composition may recreate critical distance. But are all these mapping impulses really efforts to reclaim some political agency for a collective movement or group? Or, following Bourdieu, do we continue to draw maps of our field in order to secure our (individual) position within it?

What I am struggling with is the question of whether this is an entirely cynical outlook that appears only to give intellectuals a self-serving raison d'etre. Bourdieu presents his arguments for the field and its construction, but he never seems to judge it. I guess this is left to others, including us. And, to repeat myself once more, even if we

follow Bourdieu here, it does not mean that we have captured the impact and legacy of Telos in all its complexity and can check it off our to-do list. However, incomplete or not, I believe the use of field analysis does add something to our understanding, and as more and more attempts to map the field are made, I cannot help but think that there is a strong argument to be made for this analysis.

For example, a 2007 article in the New Left Review by Goran Therborn demonstrates the ongoing desire to map. In the article, Therborn attempts to create a map of the current positions within the Left (Therborn 2007). They include post-socialists, non-Marxist leftists, Marxologists, post-Marxists, neo-Marxists, and resilient Marxists. He also explores different thematics on the Left, from an interest in theology, to sexuality, to networks. He emphasizes the need for mapping but notes that with the loss of Marxism as a compass, "it should be expected that this [creation of new bearings] will take some time" (Therborn 2007). Again, this article can be read as an attempt to trace various theoretical horizons in order to find the paths of best resistance to capitalism, or it can be read as a means of firmly situating various thinkers in the field, reifying their positions, and maybe demonstrating their value by defining their difference while also somehow limiting their value to the space they occupy.

Jockeying for Position

In steeplechase racing, the "field" refers to the horses and their riders. The jockeys must carefully position their horses as they take each fence so as to come out in a dominant position on the other side. This jockeying for position occurs at each fence, before a winner can be declared at the race's finish line. In other words, the positions are continuously shifting; they never become set or secure until the end of the race. Telos is still a publishing journal, so it would be premature to call its final position, if it can ever be determined. However, it may be useful to review its past and present negotiations through the intellectual field.

Telos, began in May 1968 as a journal of radical philosophy. Paul Piccone, the founding editor of the journal, stated that "[i]t is no accident that one of the early subtitles of Telos was 'a journal definitely outside the mainstream of American philosophical thought" (2008a). From its inception, Telos sought to distinguish itself from other players within the intellectual field. First and foremost, the journal chose to separate itself from academia as best it could, despite its birthplace being the philosophy department at SUNY-Buffalo – an illegitimate birth, as the journal was never formally institutionalized as belonging to SUNY-Buffalo or any other university. For the journal's founders, academia was not a productive setting for the type of philosophical and political thought that interested them.

> Whatever still passes for radical thought today has long ceased to be an alternative promising to revitalize or threaten anything: it lingers as a barely tolerated subspecialization for marginal intellectuals seeking to bypass traditional exclusionary mechanisms of an academic establishment infested through and through, like all similar institutions, with clientelism, nepotism, and assorted run-of-the-mill biases. Today's academic radicalism prefigures, at best, only a modest academic career and a comfortable intellectual retirement (Piccone 2008a).[4]

Ironically, the Western Marxism and Critical Theory that the journal would introduce to its largely North American audience would also become canonized and consecrated by the University. The journal's strategy to place itself outside the scholarly field and into the intellectual field would cause many of its editors and contributors to live double-lives, writing for a journal that garnered little favor in academic circles, especially when it came to tenure review, but holding jobs within academia that could professionalize even the most resistant.

The journal's desire to position itself outside the bounds of academia precluded, as mentioned above, the journal from ever finding a university home, or much regard within the university.[5] This strategy of non-institutionalization, however, exceeded any anti-academic intention to include a fear of institutionalization of any sort. Piccone asserted that this non-institutionalization saved the journal from conformity (2008a). Again, the journal "chose" a dominated pole rather than the dominant pole of the intellectual field. How much of this choice was a conscious strategy, or maybe more accurately, how much of this choice was a choice, implying that there were other options, could be debated. However, choice or not, this non-institutionalization, in academia or elsewhere, helped keep the journal distinct from other positions within the field, and it reveals a kinship to artists within the field of cultural production that choose to practice art for art's sake, disdaining the economic and political power found at the dominant pole because it would interfere with the "purity" of their art (Bourdieu 1993). I will return to this idea below.

The journal also somewhat distanced itself from the political movement that it appeared closest to, the New

Left. Piccone insisted that the publication of the journal's first issue in May 1968 was strictly coincidence. Still, a group of graduate students did form the journal during this time – a group largely comprised of working-class and lower-middle class students in philosophy at SUNY-Buffalo. Further, while not identifying themselves with the New Left movement, the journal's editors and contributors saw their project as one in common with the New Left, although not the same.

> The objective [of the Telos project] was always to vindicate the ineradicability of subjectivity, the teleology of the Western project, and the possibility of regrounding such a project by means of a phenomenological and dialectical reconstitution of Marxism in conjunction with the New Left (Piccone 2008b).

With the collapse of the New Left, Piccone labeled the journal a "political orphan," and asserted that the journal needed "to rethink its identity and to revise its project" (2008a). These comments were made retrospectively in 1988. Six years later, again in one of the journal's reflexive analyses of its past, Piccone added that

> [t]he phenomenological project of an epistemological foundation for an otherwise arbitrary dialectic (understood as the Weltanschauung of a movement presenting itself as a radical alternative to the given) did not collapse. It only became superfluous with the disintegration of the political structure that it was ultimately meant to support (2008b).

This latter statement seems to suggest that the journal's identity was not necessarily dependent on the existence of the New Left, but that the journal's project became irrelevant without it. Other editors and contributors may disagree with Piccone's assessment. I argue though that this difference lends support to placing Telos within the intellectual field, rather than the political, and again points to the journal's kinship to those artists practicing art for art's sake. Not meant disparagingly, Telos practiced theory for theory's sake, and this placed the journal farther away from other publications more directly influenced by or positioned within the economic and political fields.

This distancing from other publications was also a product of the journal's style and content. The former, what one of Telos's past contributors called the "journal's notoriously hermetic style" distinguished the publication from other New Left publications that were more accessible and could be more easily culled for slogans and statements for the movement (Breines 1988). Again, the parallel can be drawn to the artists in the restricted field of production creating art that could be read neither by the bourgeoisie nor the masses.

A look to the past provided the foundation and beginnings of Telos and also influenced its style. As Piccone stated, "[w]e began to search for forgotten and repressed texts that we had occasionally seen mentioned in passing or referred to in stray footnotes" (2008a). Remembering may help orient a journal, allowing it to see how it differs from other projects. As Adorno remarked,

> 'All reification is forgetting,' and criticism really means the same as remembrance – that is, mobilizing in phenomena that by which they have become, and thereby recognizing the possibility that they might have become, and could therefore be, something different (Adorno 2000).

Telos's dependence on past texts shaped its identity. Whereas most academic journals in political science or sociology consider their intellectual heritage to be the past five or ten years, Telos looked to the past fifty or hundred years (Agger 2000).[6] As Piccone stated, "[o]ur critique had to speak a language other than that of our opponents, and this necessitated the resurrection of otherwise forgotten philosophical traditions (2008a) (emphasis added).

Further, many of the figures the journal published and wrote about were individuals who had also lived on the margins, having little political impact and small audiences. Paul Breines, who resigned from Telos in the mid-80s due to disputes, recalled a question posed by Robin Blackburn of the New Left Review at an early Telos conference in Waterloo, Ontario, where Blackburn essentially asked why Telos was so interested in publishing these marginal figures.

> I do not recall how any of us responded at the time, but I would say now that the very lack of political success, the distance from actual power typical of these figures, their isolation, are in crucial respects the very things that drew us to them, their marginality serving as the ideal outpost for the activity of continual criticism. That we ourselves, for reasons both circumstantial and subjective, were in fact far less marginal that were our models and heroes is also part of the picture – the picture of Telos' formative desires (Breines 1988).

Bourdieu traces a similar return to the past by avant-garde artists, calling this "'return to the sources'" the "strategy par excellence," as it forms "the basis of all heretical subversion and all aesthetic revolutions, because it enables the insurgents to turn against the establishment the arms which they use to justify their domination" (1993).

The journal also included their contemporaries, specifically in the form of critiques of other journals. Begun in 1974, Telos published a section of Short Journal Reviews that "grazed rather widely" and were often quite critical. The journal's Toronto group was largely responsible for writing these critiques. Members of the group remember being directed to make the reviews "damning" (Genosko, Gandesha, and Marcellus 2002). Once again, Telos sought to distinguish itself from the other occupants in the field, especially those similarly situated. "[T]he self-image of Telos rested from the very beginning of the publication on special, most often not very flattering attention being paid to other new journals, especially those staffed by other graduate students" (Genosko, Gandesha, and Marcellus 2002).

Fast-forward to today and Telos itself is the subject of a journal critique within the Times Literary Supplement. While the journal desired to be chosen for a TLS critique, presumably so as to gain a wider audience, I wonder if this move does not run counter to the journal's long-professed intention to be a marginal journal. Now, in the TLS anyway, it is one journal among other "Learned Journals," the title of the section in where the critiques appear, which also makes it appear old and stodgy. Further, the TLS placed the journal under the subsection of "Social Studies," in a sense re-disciplinarizing it and academifying it. Lastly, the critique explicitly questioned the journal's carefully cultivated (former?) position within the intellectual field, stating that "Telos still vaunts its anti-orthodoxy, but might not many of the ruling powers in the world today, if they shared the vocabulary, define their own double-thinking views similarly?" (Leslie 2008). Presumably, the "double-thinking views" is the author's reference to the journal's use of controversial figures like Carl Schmitt in what was, or what was read as, a journal on the Left. I will return to this issue below.

Another way the journal was able to distinguish itself was through the creation of the concept of artificial negativity as an aid to understanding the continued vitality of capitalism and its co-option of intellectuals as members of the New Class, an expression borrowed from the journal's literal next-door neighbor, Alvin Gouldner. Due to my limited space here, I will refer the reader to an article titled "Artificial Negativity as a Bureaucratic Tool" originally published in issue eighty-six of the journal for a full discussion of the term. This concept became a hallmark of the journal and can be viewed as a contribution made by the journal to political theory, although it is not without its critics.[7] Telos's own reflections on its history and also reflections found outside the journal have emphasized the journal's introduction of the artificial negativity concept. This memorialization of the contribution, in a way, serves to reify the concept. Further, it is indicative of intellectuals' need to label themselves or other intellectuals with identifiable markers that position them within the intellectual field. "Oh, you're talking about the Telos crowd, the ones that came up with artificial negativity." Immediately, this places the journal and its associates in a certain place within the field, perhaps on the Left, on the dominated pole, near Theory and Society, sort of, and opposed to neoliberal ideas. I am not yet making the argument that the journal sought to distinguish itself with the concept of artificial negativity or wanted the journal to become self-identified with it. However, this thematization, as Jameson has named it, while carving out a certain identity for an intellectual position can become totalizing (Jameson 2009). Adorno warned of this tendency when he said,

> As very often happens in the case of major intellectual phenomena, when the unity and grandeur of their original conception disintegrates, individual fragments are torn out by the epigones, who each seek a chunk for themselves, if you will forgive me in this inelegant image, and regard it as the philosopher's stone by which absolutely everything can be explained. In contrast to this, the truly important conceptions are almost always distinguished by the fact that they do not include any such magic words, that they do not have any specific category by which everything can be explained once and for all. Rather, they form contexts or constellations of categories as a means of explanation, instead of calling on one of them to be a maid-of-all-work. But—and this is a socio-psychological observation—just when a theory has a keyword, such as Jung's 'collective unconscious' or Durkheim's 'collective consciousness' or whatever it may be, such 'maxims,' as Hegel already termed this phenomenon, take on a peculiar suggestive power. And one can only encourage scholars who want to make their mark in the world and have a big success in the market to think up such a 'maxim,' some single category that can be attached to everything, so that everything under the sun is given a label (2000).

With the decline of the New Left, the pessimism engendered by the theory of artificial negativity, and the rise of the video age, the journal began to look to rather controversial sources for new inspiration that caused the journal to gain a reputation as "conservative" and "right-wing". (As still, relatively-speaking, a youth, I might add that the ageing, coupled with the institutionalization in university-life[8], of the journal's earlier founders, editors, and contributors may have also played a role. Churchill's famous phrase leaps to mind.) For Piccone, this conservative involution could itself be considered a radical move.

> At a time when the collective amnesia of a generation raised on MTV tends to collapse the past in the immediacy of the image, traditional conservatism may take on a new radical role. As Gross has put it, by refunctioning alternative models, tradition provides the means to establish a critical distance from an otherwise ubiquitous present whose very being constitutes its own legitimation (2008b).

By the late 1970s, the journal had already given Marx his proper burial, and by the early 1980s, the journal was becoming more and more outspoken in its anti-communism, especially of Soviet-type systems. As Breines recalled,

> That this amounted to an articulation within the journal of the broader neo-conservative tendency underway outside seemed to me, as it did to some other editors as well as some discontented readers, quite obvious. But that only enhanced... its dynamism. For leaving aside the substance of the issues, Telos' new anti-communism drew energy from the very act of violating a number of not only Old Left but also New Left taboos, and transgression (in political if not in social or cultural terms) is in our milieu a highly valued activity (1988) (emphasis added).

Unlike Piccone's comment that suggested the journal's "conservative turn" to be a source of energy and/or creativity, Breines points to the value of transgression in the intellectual field as, I would argue, an end in itself for purposes of position-taking. Transgression for transgression's sake, perhaps functionally alike but more routinized than art for art's sake, becomes a position within the field in and of itself. In his discussion of avant-garde art, Bourdieu examines the "ritual sacrilege" of certain artists attempting to destroy any link between the artist and the economic field. However, these are failed attempts, since

> Art cannot reveal the truth about art without snatching it away again by turning the revelation into an artistic event. And it is significant, a contrario, that all attempts to call into question the field of artistic production, the logic of its functioning and the functions it performs, through the highly sublimated and ambiguous means of discourse or artistic 'acts'...are no less necessarily bound to be condemned even by the most heterodox guardians of artistic orthodoxy, because in refusing to play the game, to challenge in accordance with the rules, i.e., artistically, their authors call into question not a way of playing the game, but the game itself and the belief which supports it. This is the one unforgivable transgression (Bourdieu 1993).

While Telos has taken pride in its transgressions over the years and used its functionality to carve out an identity, I think it completely oversimplifies the journal to say that its mode of operation is just transgression for transgression's sake, and not just because to think this way would imply that Telos disregards the intellectual field in toto. However, the journal's style and its affinity for the margin, and letting everyone else know that it prefers the margin, may give the impression that heterodox is not just a manner of critique but a way of being.

To the charge that the journal has become "right-wing," one of its not-uncritical contributors replied in 1994, "[n]ow most of those who say this are just not reading the journal closely (or are reluctant to question old beliefs). But our style invites misinterpretations" (Ost 1994). Again, the journal's style, a strategy for positioning itself in a certain place within the intellectual field, can substitute appearance for substance. Further, the journal's past strategies, or position-takings, accumulate and harden into its most current identity. More clearly, the public meaning of Telos contains within it all the past positions; no reading of the journal now can be divorced from what the journal was, becoming a source of confusion for some. Moreover, those very readings also transform the journal, as its editors and contributors, whether consciously or not, incorporate them into their work.

> The incessant explication and redefinition of the foundations of his work provoked by criticism or the work of others determines a decisive transformation of the relation between the producer and his work, which reacts, in turn, on the work itself. Few works do not bear within them the imprint of the system of positions in relation to which their originality is defined; few works do not contain indications of the manner in which the author conceived the novelty of his undertaking or of what, in his own eyes, distinguished it from his contemporaries and precursors (Bourdieu 1993).

Therefore, it makes almost no sense to try to divine some break where Telos abandoned its Leftist roots and joined the conservative camp. However, criticisms, like the following, are fair, because they question not an identity or fixed position but the product instead.

> The problem is that Telos has moved out of its marginality, but seems unwilling to face the responsibilities that come with this. Telos has in fact become a kind of policy journal. But it has done so only half-way. Telos is now routinely crammed with recommendations for the dismantling of all kinds of state programs that allegedly only help the interests of the New Class elite. At the same time, there is an almost complete absence of any systematic analysis of the real implications of such policy recommendations. The problem, in other words, is not that the journal has changed, but that it has not changed enough (Ost 1994).

Even though Piccone once wrote in 1988 that after the Habermasians left the journal's editorial board the time was ripe for the journal to settle its theoretical identity, arguably, no such settling has occurred (Piccone 2008a). My argument here is that such a consensus is not possible, since it depends upon fixing the journal at a particular time and place. Further, with changes in the media ecology and the often temporary nature of new media, this "fixing" becomes even more difficult. And such a consensus would also depend upon the perceptions of the audience, the journal's readers, and their perception also shifts with changes in society. To quote from Piccone at length,

> If a journal manages to survive for 100 issues, it is reasonable to assume that the editorial board has managed to reach some sort of internal consensus and can finally rest on its laurels. Such is not the case with Telos. Far from constituting a self-congratulatory occasion, the editor's critical reflections on the history of the journal amount, at best, to a collective roast or, at worst, a theoretical free-for-all. The closest they come to a consensus is a general sense that there has been a conservative involution, that the analyses being published are becoming increasingly indistinguishable from those articulated elsewhere, and that there is a tendency to follow popular political fads. Whatever this may mean, it certainly does not betray internal complacency. After all of these years, nothing seems to be settled [emphasis added], and the editorial board remains a hopelessly heterogeneous group still trying to come to some agreement concerning many crucial and not-so-crucial issues, such as precisely what constitutes this conservative involution, who has fallen victim to it, what the journal originally sought to accomplish, what it in fact has accomplished, and what it should be doing now and in the future. While predicaments of this kind usually denote widespread confusion, they can also be the source of creativity. This is why this theoretical bellum omnium contra omnes may be interpreted as evidence of lingering internal vitality, an unwillingness to take anything for granted, and a suspicion of all positions even faintly resembling conformism and passivity. The point of departure in confronting such a predicament must be a critical reevaluation of what Telos has been for more than a quarter of a century, and where it fits both within the short parabolic trajectory of the New Left and, more generally, within contemporary intellectual history (2008b).

To further complicate things and to return to the opening of this paper, I must reinsert the question of how changes to the intellectual field made by new forms of communication affect Telos's identity and position in the field. How does the changed materiality of communication alter perceptions of legitimacy, which influence who is listened to and who is disregarded. How does it alter the journal's project? How does it shape or reshape the journal's present, future, and even past identity?

To begin, the journal has made the last ten years of its articles available in electronic format. For a reader new to Telos who may only have access to the electronic articles or may choose only to read those, that reader may arrive at a different understanding of the journal than someone who reads farther back into the journal's history or experiences the journal in its print form where, for example, ads for other journals help provide context for itself. Also, you can now search the journal on-line through TELOSthreads and look up articles by author and subject area, to name some of the filters. A reader can take from Telos whatever piece he/she likes. Readers no longer have to struggle to accommodate or make sense of all the various positions represented. Does this mean that the journal's identity or position within the intellectual field is now more in the control of the reader? Is complexity being sacrificed to visibility?

Additionally, how do the journal's recent forays into social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter affect its position? Does a marginal journal tweet? How do such efforts shape the journal's audience? The TELOSscope blog now found on the journal's website also creates more interaction between journal and audience. Readers can become writers as they post comments (reactions) to the blog posts written by Telos contributors. The very existence of a website for the journal may allow it to reach more readers than it otherwise would, but how do all these new media extensions of the journal affect the journal's project? Someone's energies, whether owner's, editors' and/or contributors', are going into the creation and maintenance of these electronic manifestations of the journal rather than into the construction of the print journal itself. Does the understanding of the journal as an embodiment of both print and electronic forms also affect the nature of the journal's project? In other words, do they effect the telos of Telos. As I stated above, I can only begin to ask these questions as most of these new media changes to the journal are in embryo. However, what I can say with more certainty is that Telos is an ongoing pursuit, and I doubt that it has reached its final position within the intellectual field.

Endnotes

1. It seems that Bourdieu presents these as occupants of two separate fields. At least, he refers to them separately or independently of one another. I think this may be an arguable point. But for purposes of this paper, I will consider scholars as those who produce works for or within the university while intellectuals produce works for or outside the university. This does not preclude someone from being a scholar and an intellectual.

2. See, for example, Issue 50, Winter 1981-1982; Issue 75, Spring 1988; Issue 101, Fall 1994; and, Issue 131, Summer 2005.

3. The journal published an essay by Bourdieu in their 81st issue in the Fall of 1989 titled, "The Corporation of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World."

4. Lest this be considered a harsh indictment of academia, Piccone also had this to say, "today Telos thrives outside a mainstream which mostly does not understand it, does not appreciate it, and, because of the widespread prosperity generated by new technological innovations, need not take it seriously. Safely mothballed in universities, most intellectuals write articles no one reads, debate issues no one cares about, and continue miseducating students in dire need of official certification (who are actually acculturated not by the universities, but by the culture industry). Seemingly obsessed with seeking to resolve self-perpetuating pseudo-problems of race, class, and gender, most intellectuals, posturing as the self-righteous opposition, while, in fact, legitimating the totally administered society, are even worse off than Gregor Samsa, who at least was troubled by his strange metamorphosis. Presumably, it beats the hell out of holding a regular 9-to-5 job. Within such a context, Telos remains the project of a few intellectuals and of a limited readership still interested in Truth, and optimistic that, despite the general cultural decline, there are still a lot of possibilities for a society so mesmerized by its material success to be able to ignore or even to formulate its spiritual impoverishment" Piccone, Paul. 1999. "elements Interview." Telos 117:133-166.

5. "Although it proclaimed itself to be a philosophical publication, its actual disciplinary attachment was hardly clear, which to most academics signified incoherence rather than promise, not to mention the fact that, instead of currying favor or buttering careerist bread, the opening editorial statements in the early issues calmly denounced as totally bankrupt and conformist virtually every known school of American philosophy. The editorial group, moreover, was composed of graduate students, meaning that manuscripts were not refereed by known scholars. Finally, in this connection, Telos was emphatically and explicitly linked to Marxism and to the Left at a time when intellectual work from this camp had not yet achieved credibility in university environs" Breines, Paul. 1988. "Recalling Telos." Ibid.75:36-47.

6. However, this reach farther back into the past could have its problems. "[T]he very impulse to construct a historical tradition [Western Marxism from the 1920s-1950s] for ourselves tended to blind us to much of the originality of our own historical situation and of the social movement to which we were definitely, if often uneasily, linked" Ibid.

7. For example, "An extreme form of this 'State' omnipotence is the 'artificial negativity' thesis put forward by Telos editors Piccone and Luke. Outdoing Marcuse's 'one-dimensionality' tendencies of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Piccone and Luke argue that 'the New Left along with the various counterculture movements of feminism, black consciousness, and student activism were part of the constitution process of artificial negativity.' So too were the victories in Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, plus nearly every anti-capitalist protest and struggle during the 1960s and 1970s. Without all these internal and external forms of opposition American capitalism would become irrational and develop internal problems with which it could not cope. Thus what is needed are 'social counter-weights to the bureaucracy. I order to provide these, it is necessary to reconstitute internal critique and opposition—so much so that where these critiques and oppositions do not develop spontaneously, they tend to be bureaucratically planned.' It is interesting to note that Piccone and Luke's extreme pessimism goes together with an overinflated admiration for the foresight of 'State' and 'Capital.' In this scenario the 'rationality' of capitalism can never really lose; for if all the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s were merely necessary developments for the continuation of 'the system,' how can one ever engage in social struggles that are 'genuine negations' and not 'artificial negations'?! The absence of large working class parties in North America (compared to Western Europe) seems to breed a peculiar form of abstracted radical pessimism where faith in the capacity of capitalism is widely shared by both its apologists and its so-called opponents such as Piccone, Luke and Willhelm" Frankel, Boris. 1982. "Identifying Dominant Misconceptions of States." Thesis Eleven 4:97-123.

8. "One's income does not necessarily determine what one thinks, but in the long run experience proves that a mental attitude becomes untenable when it no longer fits in with the way one produces one's means of subsistence. It is never easy to think one way and live another. An intellectual who lives on the right and thinks on the left is in a precarious position and is constantly torn in two. It is not surprising that there are fewer and fewer of them, or that there are more and more men and women who are sincerely convinced that the words 'left' and 'right' are meaningless: it is cheaper to change a way of thought than to repudiate a way of life" Debray, Regis. 1981. Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France. Translated by D. Macey. London: Verso .

References

Adorno, Theodor W. 2000. Introduction to Sociology, Edited by C. Godde. Translated by E. Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agger, Ben. 1990. The Decline of Discourse: Reading, Writing and Resistance in Postmodern Capitalism. New York: The Falmer Press.

—. 2000. Public Sociology: From Social Facts to Literary Acts. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1969. "Intellectual Field and Creative Project." Social Science Information 8:89-119.

—. 1993. The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature, Edited by R. Johnson. New York: Columbia University Press.

Breines, Paul. 1988. "Recalling Telos." Telos 75:36-47.

Debray, Regis. 1981. Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France. Translated by D. Macey. London: Verso

—. 2007. "Socialism: A Life-Cycle." New Left Review July-August:5-28.

Frankel, Boris. 1982. "Identifying Dominant Misconceptions of States." Thesis Eleven 4:97-123.

Genosko, Gary, Samir Gandesha, and Kristina Marcellus. 2002. "A Crucible of Interdisciplinarity: The Toronto Telos Group." TOPIA 8:1-18.

Jameson, Frederic. 1984. "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." New Left Review 146:53-92.

—. 2009. "Sandblasting Marx." New Left Review 55:134-142.

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. The Production of Space. Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Leslie, Esther. 2008. ""Telos"." Pp. 24-25 in Times Literary Supplement, vol. 5509.

Ost, David. 1994. "Search for Balance." Telos 101:137-154.

Piccone, Paul. 1999. "elements Interview." Telos 117:133-166.

—. 2008a. "20 Years of Telos." Pp. 231-258 in Confronting the Crisis: Writings of Paul Piccone, edited by G. Ulmen. New York: Telos Press Publishing.

—. 2008b. "From the New Left to the New Populism." Pp. 287-329 in Confronting the Crisis: Writings of Paul Piccone, edited by G. Ulmen. New York: Telos Press Publishing.

Therborn, Goran. 2007. "After Dialectics: Radical Social Theory in a Post-Communist World." New Left Review 43:63-114.

Fast Capitalism
Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2009

ISSN 1930-014X
doi:10.32855/fcapital.200901.011

My Telos: A Journal of No Illusions

Ben Agger

There are many Teloses, as many as there are readers. My Telos was the very first few issues, when I was a graduate student and becoming a theorist. This was the Telos of Paul Piccone's phenomenological Marxism, Enzo Paci, Karil Kosik, the early Russell Jacoby. I still have those issues and occasionally I dust them off and re-read them. As I discuss below, Piccone's article, "Phenomenological Marxism," is an important part of my auto-bibliography—the stuff I cite and on which I build. My intellectual formation depended on early Telos as I developed an un-American sensibility and opened myself to Europe.

Telos helped form me. I read it, and I pursued its many sources. It was, in effect, my bibliography in graduate school that saw me through much of the rest of my academic career. In reflecting on Telos' impact on me, I remember two things: Telos helped me understand why theory needed to be grounded in everyday life, the lifeworld. I never forget the lessons of existential phenomenology, even as I blended these with the work of the Frankfurt School and French theory. And Telos showed me by its example that distance and disaffiliation afford clarity of insight. I learned from the examples of Piccone, Jacoby and others that there is a real gulf between professional academics and intellectuals, and I knew I wanted to be an intellectual who ranges widely across diverse literatures. Telos made me mistrust disciplines and their usual narrow scope and methods. It also helped me distrust organizations, including academic ones.

And so my Telos helped me situate myself and my own writing around everyday life and it helped me feel comfortable as an academic outsider—somehow who lucked into a job, tenure, publishing opportunities. Sometimes, like Piccone and Jacoby, I was unlucky, losing jobs, friendly colleagues, institutional support. Telos toughened me up, much as Paul and Russell were tough, no-bullshit guys. But this toughness was set against the extraordinary bonds of friendship and nurturance that many people experienced in their contact with Telos. Paul, Russell and many others were wonderful mentors and, for all of their reputation as irascible and 'difficult,' they would come through in the clutch, much as my own graduate-school mentor John O'Neill would. I learned that the intellectual life must be lived rigorously, but also that, for all of us who were foot soldiers in the New Left and readers and writers for early Telos, we must put our money where our mouths were: we needed to live lives prefiguratively, treating our comrades well and refusing to postpone liberation to a distant future time. That was an invaluable lesson from early Telos, the French left existentialists and Marcuse.

The Lifeworld and the New Left

The gist of phenomenological Marxism, as I understand it, is that conceptual categories arise from everyday life, from people's struggles and experiences. As I grew up and read more widely, I realize that this is the core of Marxism and critical theory. Piccone's early essay on phenomenological Marxism complemented other reading I was doing in Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and the Frankfurt School. All of these people were, in their various ways, trying to explain why 'the revolution' had failed or simply never come to pass. Telos helped shift this discussion forward into the sixties, where 'the revolution' also arguably failed, or at least it was derailed by the hard right which has retained hegemony for nearly forty years. Telos fashioned itself, in its early years, as the self-consciousness of the New Left, much as the European lifeworld-oriented thinkers mentioned above were the self-consciousness of earlier European

social movements.

I came to social theory and social philosophy under the tutelage of John O'Neill, who was deeply affected by French existentialism and phenomenology. It seemed to me that Piccone's journal and the French theorists such as Merleau-Ponty were making many of the same points about how the analyses of social structures needed to be grounded in the lifeworld, both to ensure that the concepts were valid and useful and to preserve the person as the centerpiece of a liberating social theory. As I was reading through existentialism, phenomenology, critical theory and Hegelian Marxism under O'Neill's guidance, I was also traveling in western and eastern Europe and becoming affected by the Praxis group in the former Yugoslavia and by the Prague Spring. 1968 saw the May Movement, the Prague Spring and of course major upheaval in the United States, with a hardening of the anti-war movement after Chicago and the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King. 1968 also saw the founding of Telos. In retrospect, these were not coincidences. A lifeworld-grounded critical theory was forged in the crucible of the social movements and psychic turmoil of the times.

This is not to say that Piccone was a big fan of the counterculture or even the more political wing of the New Left. Telos needed to be decoded for contemporary relevance. But it was obvious to me, even at that early stage in my reading and writing, that phenomenology helped place lived experience at the center of theory and its images of liberation. Telos was not a turning away from politics but a vital new way of viewing politics, both structural and personal, with resources from Europe. In this sense, reading Telos paralleled and enriched my European travels and studies as I immersed myself in non-Anglo-American approaches to philosophy and theory. Telos, like other reading I was doing in the French and Germans, helped ensure that I wouldn't remain a small-town boy.

Much of the reading was tough going. Nor is it to ignore the fact that Telos became its own subculture, with regular authors and a certain engaged approach to writing. This became quite personal for me when Piccone moved to Toronto for a few years and started a Toronto Telos group, to which I was briefly affiliated. We met with Paul and did reviewing of books and journals. Of course, Paul was a cyclone of energy and charisma! He fit in to the intellectual culture of Toronto, which, in the late sixties and seventies, was dominated by ex-patriot American intellectuals and by Europeans who taught at York and University of Toronto, where I got my degrees. Toronto, a most un-American city, was becoming my lifeworld and the University of Toronto library contained many of the books that were referenced in the pages of Telos. I remember struggling through the French version of History and Class Consciousness, before the Merlin translation came out in 1971, and integrating this reading into the work I was doing in my classes and with the Telos group.

It is no wonder that Telos over the years has been dominated by European authors and European issues. Piccone and other grad students at SUNY-Buffalo, where Marvin Farber taught phenomenology, started Telos to get beyond arid Anglo-American analytic philosophy, which dominated the academy then. It still does in many quarters, especially now that postmodernism is demonized by American and British academics uncomfortable with Derridean wordplay and seeming relativism. (See my commentaries on these aversions to theory [Agger 2008].) Intellectual work and authors' personal trajectories blend in my recollections of my intellectual younger years, and of my debt to Telos. In particular, I recall two early Telos articles and the fate of their authors (and the impact of that fate on my own work).

The first is Piccone's aforementioned "Phenomenological Marxism" (Telos 9, 1971, 3-31). The second is Russell Jacoby's commentary in early Telos entitled "A Falling Rate of Intelligence?" (Telos 27, 1976, 141-146, Jacoby's piece presaged his later (1987) book Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe. Both Piccone and Jacoby were public intellectuals. And both were effectively shut out of academia, demonstrating the validity of their own trenchant critiques of American intellectual life in the "age of academe." Piccone was turned down for tenure in sociology at Washington University in St. Louis. Jacoby never established a tenure-track career in history but moved from one impermanent appointment to another, but without developing a robust curriculum vitae full of timely critiques of public life and intellectual trends.

The two articles that had the most impact on me were written by academic outsiders, perhaps reflecting the fact that distance, in an Adornoian sense, sharpens one's critique. Or perhaps people with sharp critiques of the established state of affairs are not predisposed to play the game effectively enough to become insiders. It has been remarked that Piccone and Jacoby were "difficult" people. But anyone who knew them realized that they were charming and affable, if always rigorous and candid. We students in the Toronto Telos group could be certain that our youthful drafts would bring instant condemnation from Paul, who would smile broadly as he told us that our sentences were "bullshit"! Coming from him, this was a red badge of courage and it prompted us to rethink and

rewrite.

I remember composing a brief book review for Telos during Paul's Toronto stay. I was reviewing Lucio Colletti's Marxism and Hegel, as I recall. This fit into my emerging interest in Hegelian Marxism and its critics. I went through draft after draft, each marked up by Paul. The book review editor was Paul Breines at Boston College. Breines asked me if I wanted to stay on the "merry-go-round" of Piccone's incessant urging to redraft the brief review. Finally, the review was published, but with whole phrases italicized unintentionally. We had all lost track of the drafts, and Paul's underlining of my sentences found its way into italics. I learned from this that all versions, including the published one, are iterations, works in progress—a very valuable lesson for a young academic. Perhaps this lived experience of iterability prepared me later for Derrida, who also had a big impact on me as I developed a perspective on the sociology of science (and on scientific sociology) that stresses the inseparability of method and writing—a critique of positivism via the Frankfurt School and Derrida.

De-Institutionalized Intellectuals

The Piccone and Jacoby essays were important to me, both for what they said and for the eventual circumstances of their authors, which tells us much about the harsh nature of American academic life. My father, also an academic, taught me (in my words) that second-rate people frequently lord it over first-rate people, who are seen as threatening. My dad was a progressive political science who did not derive from theory but was active in sixties civil rights and anti-war movements. He was in the vanguard of the first generation of quantitative American political science, although his research took him to western and eastern Europe, where he also became un-American and indeed quite anti-American. He also lived in Toronto and met and liked Paul. My father's second wife was an Italian intellectual who published in Telos. I immediately saw the similarities between my father and Paul; they were irascible, charismatic and spoke truth to power. Paul could be puckish, while always grinning, in his relations with peers and students. But with my father he was straightforward and did not play any roles. Perhaps they recognized some of themselves in each other. Both taught me to be iconoclastic.

Toronto was one connection for me. Another was Buffalo, the site of Telos's founding and of Paul's graduate school years. I left the U.S. for Canada in 1969, for the obvious reason. I went to college and grad school in Toronto and began a short-lived teaching career up there. I joined a positivist sociology department at the University of Waterloo, a hundred miles from Toronto. But I lost my job in an apparent cost-cutting move (or internal reallocation or departmental politics or all of the above). I sat around unemployed for a year, tasting the bitter fruit of my early academic demise. But then I lucked into one of the few 'theory' jobs in American sociology at SUNY-Buffalo and returned to the U.S. in 1981.

During those twelve years away I had, like my father, become un-American and anti-American. I had spent a lot of time in Europe, reading, studying and becoming an intellectual flaneur. And I had been exposed to O'Neill's heady blend of existential phenomenology and Hegelian Marxism during my years at York in Toronto, before I went to University of Toronto for my PhD in political economy. Coming to Buffalo to teach brought me to a university that sponsored 'theory' and theorists in several prominent departments, largely outside the social sciences. Georg Iggers in History had an early influence on Jacoby. Rodolph Gasche and Henry Sussman taught in Comparative Literature, in which I had an affiliated appointment. It was as if the legacy of early Telos was still in the air.

During the mid-1980s a number of academic units sponsored a visit by Russell Jacoby, who gave four lectures, as I recall. I realized later that these lectures were prolegomena to his Last Intellectuals book, which was soon to appear in print. I chatted with him during his visit about ideas and about academic life. He was already a hero of mine, dating back to his piece in early Telos and to subsequent work such as his 1975 book Social Amnesia, an important Adornoian critique of 'conformist' psychology. By that stage of my career I had become quite cynical and resonated with Russell's experiences as an outsider. I was working in a quite mainstream/positivist sociology department. My closest friend in the department was Lionel S. Lewis, a prominent sociologist of higher education who published Scaling the Ivory Tower: The Role of Merit in Academic Careers. He provided ample evidence of what my father had told me about how heavy producers are resented by slower-paced writers. Jacoby cited Lewis in his Last Intellectuals book.

And I had almost been turned down for tenure at Buffalo. The university, like many others, was in a status-seeking phase, attempting to become a "major public research university" (its term). The university had just gained

membership in the prestigious AAU (American Association of Universities), and it was "on the make," busily measuring the prestige of its departments against the prestige rankings of departments at other universities (MPRUs, in the dreadful acronym of the time). And, of course, comparing our funded research dollars to the dollars amassed by other universities. Our tenure system had just acquired an Orwellian dimension: the outside evaluative letters on our junior professorial candidates for tenure needed to be written by scholars from a short list of these MPRUs—Illinois, Berkeley, Michigan and the like. My department had a chairperson who was not fully aware of this portentous institutional shift and so he sought letters on me from people who worked in my fields of critical theory. But theory has a strange topography: people who do critical work are dispersed off the beaten path, at the Arlingtons, Kansases, Wesleyans, Virginia Techs of the world. Most of us hook on with departments that do not boast many research dollars but are intellectually open-minded enough to hire us!

Anyway, my initial round of letters were largely from people at universities that did not "count" for Buffalo's status-seeking purposes. In addition, the letters from people at MPRUs needed to attest that Buffalo's junior people would receive tenure at the home institutions of the letter writers—the Berkeleys and Michigans on that short list of fifteen major public research universities. But instead of getting new letters on me, from the 'correct' universities, the highest-level university committee simply turned me down. (I had received support at prior levels of review in the Faculty of Social Sciences, including my own department.) I protested, and I succeeded in convincing the progressive provost at the time to seek new letters, from a whole new cohort of people. I ended up with 14 or 16 letters in total. Apparently, the people assembling my case took a chance and, on the second list of reviewers, included Martin Jay, an esteemed scholar of the Frankfurt School. This was risky, I was later told, because Marty works in History at Berkeley and not in Sociology. At the end of a long and stressful process, I—unlike Piccone and Jacoby—lucked into tenure, sliding in the backdoor and, of course, never forgetting the experience of being an outsider looking in.

Journal of No Illusions

Buffalo is a major part of my story. Telos started there; it offered me employment; it had a tradition of radicalism, which crested during the late sixties; it was a declining but still vibrant and interesting—off-beat—American city. It unofficially called itself The City of No Illusions. I loved living in a place that was the butt of jokes, especially when we insiders had the North Buffalo Food Co-op, Talking Leaves bookstore, Delaware Park, great neighborhoods and a relative absence of chain stores and restaurants and malls. Buffalo was real—as real as anything can be for a person who drinks deeply of Baudrillard and the Frankfurt School.

Piccone and Jacoby were also real. Perhaps you become this way when you are locked out of academia. Others (apologists for academia) blame their marginality on their unvarnished attitudes. After his mid-1980s talks, I tried to persuade a senior academic administrator at Buffalo to offer Jacoby employment. He read Last Intellectuals and sniffed that it would unfair to tempt him with academic employment.

I loved early Telos because it was a journal of no illusions. It was unashamedly political, European, heterodox. It didn't seek to be prosaic or professional. I now realize that Telos was a Buffalo journal—a journal of no illusions. Piccone couldn't have imagined that he would become famous or get rich editing and writing work on phenomenological Marxism. Jacoby must have seen the handwriting on the wall as he composed his work for the journal and later wrote Social Amnesia, a brilliant work of sheer iconoclasm.

Jacoby would have believed that Telos could be iconoclastic precisely because it was independent, unbound to a suffocating institution or professional association. Independence affords distance and hence perspective. Most of the original Frankfurt School members, although bourgeois in their background and sensibilities, had very little institutional support. They did not live on Easy Street or in Tenure Tract, even though some of them ended their careers with academic appointments. Telos in this sense was a vehicle of public intellectuality, although Jacoby intends that to include the ability or willingness to write sentences that could be understood by general, not only academic, readers. In this sense, his Last Intellectuals was self-criticism, indicting his own Adornoian phase for its cryptic formulations. I'm not sure that one cannot be Adorno-like and also a public intellectual if by the latter we are referring less to writing style than to one's grounding in a public, and willingness to address vital public issues.

The early Telos guys were radicals—digging at the roots of institutional philosophy and also embracing much of the New Left project. This is not to ignore their ambivalence about the counterculture and the Weatherman phases. Piccone and his brethren derived from European Marxism and, like the Frankfurt School during the late sixties,

must have been highly ambivalent about the direction of Weatherman, the Panthers, the drug culture. As Marcuse argued in Counterrevolution and Revolt, the late-sixties radicals were not radical enough, insufficiently grounded in European left theories and too spontaneist. Early Telos sought to be the theoretical self-consciousness of the New Left, although much of the early issues and for that matter even some of the later issues did not comment directly on topical events or trends but approached the world through textual explication and a kind of grand theorizing. Piccone's "Phenomenological Marxism" could be read as a companion piece to Marcuse's 1969 Essay on Liberation which attempted to ground radical New Left change, via situationism, in the lived experience of the sixties "new sensibility."

Digging at the roots for early Telos meant digging down to the person and her everyday life. It also meant going back to the original European sources, which had been suppressed by Anglo-American analytic philosophy. Much of Telos was a translation project—translating other languages into English and then translating complicated concepts for uninitiated readers. This was why Telos mattered so much to a whole generation of post-1960s graduate students who were leaving the moribund New Left for academia and trying to stay in touch with the transformational politics of the sixties. We were political radicals somewhat disenchanted with late-1960s politics as well as with mainstream philosophy and social theory. Returning to Europe for intellectual rejuvenation meant sense in that context.

Although Piccone started from academic philosophy and Jacoby from academic history, they and virtually all of the Telos writers and many readers were multi-disciplinary. They were intellectuals, difficult to hem in. Piccone worked in a sociology department at Wash U, which may have been one of his problems, given the reigning positivism of the time in U.S. sociology. Telos crossed boundaries in the same way that Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and the Frankfurt School crossed boundaries; disciplines, with their vouchsafed methodologies and limited topics, were disciplining. All of us viewed ourselves as critical social theorists (see Agger 2007) not moored to disciplines and departments traditionally defined.

This was a strength and a weakness. It helped us read and write globally, but it prevented many of us from earning a living. Piccone and Jacoby were extreme examples—guys who couldn't or wouldn't hold down tenure-track jobs. Everyone knew that this was a cruel joke; they were 'better' in narrow terms of academic productivism than almost everyone else. But people like us were not likely to finish first in job searches or secure enough votes from tenure committees. We were out of bounds and out of step with the growing professionalism and the narrowing divisions of academic labor in post-sixties American universities. This is precisely Jacoby's point in Last Intellectuals, a book that is widely read but frequently condemned by ex-sixties radicals offended by Jacoby's implication that they have become professional and not public intellectuals.

In evaluating Telos's lasting impact, it is a mistake to ignore the journal's institutional independence or the marginal careers of many of its authors, from the top down. Uneven academic careers were the price paid for independence. Those of us among the Telos generation who were lucky enough to have tenured academic jobs are widely dispersed through the hinterlands of American higher education, in the Arlingtons and Blacksburgs and not the Berkeleys or Ann Arbors. Of course, paying the bills is what matters. And in the Internet age, it matters little where one offices. Finally, being off the beaten path is a safe bet, allowing one to avoid the nuclear first strikes from established academics in the major institutional power centers who jealously defend their disciplines' scope and method.

As I have been saying, early Telos brought attention to the lifeworld (Piccone) and to the decline of discourse (Jacoby). Academia is everyday life, too. Within it, power is transacted through the nucleic language games of publishing, teaching, conferencing, editing. Discourse has declined in Fast Capitalism for reasons that Jacoby and I (Agger 1990) have explored: the decline of independent bookstores; the demise of heroic literary individualism and independence; the electronic media; academic professionalization; the commodification of publishing; sheer failure of nerve. Telos was a non-traditional intellectual lifeworld in which what Habermas calls the power of the strongest argument held sway. Piccone spoke truth to power, and heard truth, too. The no-bullshit guys and women involved in Telos were opposed to hierarchy, as most of the New Left was. One's letterhead mattered less than the quality of one's writing and the incisiveness of one's critique. Indeed, I often thought that institutional and personal prestige varied inversely with intellectual rigor and risk-taking. Only the conformists establish successful careers, as Mills (1959) noted in The Sociological Imagination.

And so I read early Telos as a New Left project, attentive to 'everyday life' in general and to intellectual everyday lives in particular. I also read early Telos as a counterforce to the post-sixties bureaucratization and professionalization of American academic life, which has proceeded unchecked. The Reagan and Thatcher years have fundamentally

changed the relationship between the state and universities, with an academic capitalism both abetting the state through applied research and turning academic researchers into paying customers responsible for funding their own salaries through grants. As Telos ripened through the years, its relentless independence and anti-bureaucratic ethos stood in ever-starker contrast to the privatization and professionalization of academic life. Indeed, Telos, although widely known, is not much of a factor in the lifeworlds of most academics. It is not refereed in the usual sense; it is not supported by a professional association's dues; its political project is out of step with the times.

The legacy of Telos, to me, is both personal and generational. It helped me become who and what I am, and it affected others like me who were foot soldiers in the New Left and who decamped to universities after the civil rights movement and Vietnam war ended. It put everyday life on the agenda, and it helped us think about the relationship between our own writing and larger societal trends. Telos tried to reverse the tendency of the 'rate of intelligence' to decline as it provided a model of intellectual engagement nearly totally missing from mainstream academia.

Although I was never a Telos insider, only knowing Piccone for a short time and publishing merely one review in it, I considered myself to be a fellow traveler. Perhaps because I was never on the inside in the beginning, I was not disaffected by Paul's later turn and the journal's changing intellectual priorities such as the interest in the work of Carl Schmitt. These never struck me as betrayals because I was never on board with any Telos orthodoxy. I'm sure that Telos had its share of interpersonal politics. But these politics surely pale by comparison to the intensity of departmental politics in mainstream academia, where people hate, envy and resent each other.

Eventually, I and Tim Luke started our own electronic journal, Fast Capitalism (www.fastcapitalism.com), which, I'm sure we both understand, is our version of Telos. I doubt that either of us would have conceived this without having had Telos as our example. Indeed, one of the proudest moments of my intellectual life is to publish this special issue/book on the legacy of Telos in a collaboration between Fast Capitalism and Telos Press. This is a closing of the circle that opened for me when I got my hands on the first issues of Telos back in Toronto and then moved to Buffalo, where it all began. I'll never lose those issues, nor forget their imprint on me.

ISSN 1930-014X