Critical Studies of Education 5

Nicola Pizzolato
John D. Holst *Editors*

Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World

Critical Studies of Education

Volume 5

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We live in an era where forms of education designed to win the consent of students, teachers, and the public to the inevitability of a neo-liberal, market-driven process of globalization are being developed around the world. In these hegemonic modes of pedagogy questions about issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, and other social dynamics are simply not asked. Indeed, questions about the social spaces where pedagogy takes place—in schools, media, corporate think tanks, etc.—are not raised. When these concerns are connected with queries such as the following, we begin to move into a serious study of pedagogy: What knowledge is of the most worth? Whose knowledge should be taught? What role does power play in the educational process? How are new media re-shaping as well as perpetuating what happens in education? How is knowledge produced in a corporatized politics of knowledge? What socio-political role do schools play in the twenty-first century? What is an educated person? What is intelligence? How important are socio-cultural contextual factors in shaping what goes on in education? Can schools be more than a tool of the new American (and its Western allies') twenty-first century empire? How do we educate well-informed, creative teachers? What roles should schools play in a democratic society? What roles should media play in a democratic society? Is education in a democratic society different than in a totalitarian society? What is a democratic society? How is globalization affecting education? How does our view of mind shape the way we think of education? How does affect and emotion shape the educational process? What are the forces that shape educational purpose in different societies? These, of course, are just a few examples of the questions that need to be asked in relation to our exploration of educational purpose. This series of books can help establish a renewed interest in such questions and their centrality in the larger study of education and the preparation of teachers and other educational professionals.

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Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World

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Critical Studies of Education
ISBN 978-3-319-40447-9 ISBN 978-3-319-40449-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939598

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The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

John D. Holst
To Malicha.
Nico Pizzolato
To Leyla. This is what I have been doing in between Harry Potter movies.

Foreword

Recent scholarship in the light of the opening of Soviet archives has confirmed that Gramsci was above all a political activist, before and after his imprisonment. This does not mean that we can reduce his work to an immediate reflection on the political moment or derive indications for political action today in any simple way. But his engagement with the great political, social, cultural and economic questions of his period informed his theoretical work and was written from the point of view of someone who had a goal—political intervention. Indeed, the complexity and richness of his categories derive from the need to understand cataclysmic events which simply could not be explained by preexisting schema. This was the only way to remain politically relevant. This is why he expands and transforms the very language of politics (Sassoon 2000). His intellectual work had an aim, but this aim did not determine his categories or its content. Machiavelli was his predecessor (Izzo 2009).

This is as relevant to his notes on education as to his ideas on politics and the state. As the contributions in this book demonstrate, it is impossible to focus on one theme or thread in his writing without arriving at a much wider discussion. The notes on the relationship between leaders and led, on the nature of political power, on ideological influence and on popular discourses, indeed, on contemporary political events, all relate to education. This could not be more obvious as I write this 5 months after the referendum in the UK on our membership of the European Union and a mere 3 weeks after Donald Trump's victory in the American elections. One of the more interesting, if painful, lessons of recent events in both the UK and the USA is that formal levels of education, particularly higher education, seem to have been indicators of the likelihood of voting in a certain way.

We are forced at regular intervals to consider how Gramsci might still be useful, in particular national territories, in an international context. How can we carry on with pessimism of the intelligence, but find some basis for optimism of the will? Gramscian (1975) categories concerning the role of intellectuals—educationalists in the broadest sense as specialist thinkers who in one form or another engage in

politics in such challenging circumstances—the changing nature of politics, and the undermining of the nation-state in a tumultuous international situation could not be more relevant. The rise of xenophobia, racism and populism of right and left, after a grave economic crisis, the threats to the foundations of the EU and to the traditional norms of liberal democratic politics in the USA, pose the greatest challenge since the 1930s. The cards have been thrown up into the air.

His attempt to rethink political organisation and practice to prevent the estrangement between, in his terms, professional intellectuals/leaders/activists and those intellectuals of everyday life, who do not have a professional function of an intellectual, but who possess *buon senso* within their common sense, could not be more relevant. But nor was he a populist. He did not romanticise popular culture. He was critical of common sense and vehement about the need to move beyond it at the very same time as engaging with it. He understood why *l'uomo qualunque*—the man or woman on the street—was so tenacious in holding onto what she or he 'knows'. Confronted with polished or indeed emotional arguments from different sets of intellectuals—in Gramsci's terms politicians, journalists, academics and priests arguing amongst themselves but addressing the population at large—it is understandable that people retreat to what makes sense to them. What should I believe? I will stick with what I know, with personal experience, however limited it might be.

The rejection of experts in the referendum campaign and in Trump's campaign could not have been clearer or more familiar from a Gramscian perspective. The struggle between emotions and rational argument and what Ortega y Gasset termed the revolt of the masses framed both campaigns (Ortega y Gasset 1960/1930). But this by no means is to suggest that rationality belongs entirely to one side or the other.

The questions Gramsci's work might suggest that are suitable for our situation will inevitably be about politics in the very wide sense. An equally vital concern of Gramsci's, inseparable from the need to remain in touch with the wider population, was to stay in touch with what he called effective reality. Organic links with the people and engagement with effective reality were the preconditions for the development of effective politics, relevant political organisation as well as theory. This connects to what Marx (1974) was referring to when he wrote that men, and we would say men and women, make history but not in conditions of their choosing. We have no choice but to engage with reality as it *is*, if we want to effect change. Pessimism of the intelligence is a prerequisite for any effective political intervention. Political passion, the pursuit of ideals, must be harnessed to, paraphrasing again, a concrete analysis of the concrete situation. The need to understand what *is* in order to understand what *may be*. Machiavelli once again comes to mind—the *virtù* of political analysis and leadership in the context of whatever *fortuna* may bring.

This fluid, complicated reality was part of Gramsci's time and is part of ours. As is Gramsci's dictum that the only way to destroy the old is to build the new—construction as the prerequisite of destruction. Criticism is not enough. Anger and passion are not enough. The seeds of the new are contained within the old, which in any

case cannot be levelled to the ground—there is no tabula rasa. But to find these seeds of renewal requires both specialist, analytical tools and organisational and conceptual ways to link with the good sense of the mass of the population. Gramsci serves us still.

London, UK Anne Showstack Sassoon
November 2016

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Preface

This book is a collection of essays on the educational thought and the pedagogical approach of Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci. Preceded by a broad introduction that positions Gramsci in his context and in the literature, the essays critically revisit the many passages of the *Prison Notebooks* and pre-prison writings where Gramsci addresses the nexus between politics and pedagogy. Some essays apply those concepts to specific contexts. The book for the first time brings to the attention of an English-speaking audience voices from current Gramsci scholarship in Italy and Latin America.

Pizzolato and Holst open the volume by placing Gramsci's pedagogical approach in an historical and historiographical context. Notwithstanding the fact that terms *pedagogy* or *education* are rarely covered by synthetic accounts of Gramsci's work, the literature on Gramsci the pedagogist spans across several decades and has solicited debates in different countries. In the English-language context, the most notable of these is perhaps the debate over Gramsci's alleged conservative understanding of pedagogy, sparked in the 1970s by a book by Harold Entwistle (1979) and recently revived after the publication of a book by E. D. Hirsch (2010) and the responses to them. Italy is, unsurprisingly, the country where Gramsci's ideas on education have been debated the longest. Pizzolato and Holst's chapter introduces, for the first time to an English-speaking audience, the Italian scholarly discussion that had its heyday in the 1970s, but that continues to resonate within the current scholarship, though often unacknowledged. This chapter ends with an analysis of how Gramsci's pedagogical thought has influenced, sometimes indirectly, practitioners and thinkers of critical pedagogy and adult education.

Existing English-language educational scholarship on Gramsci has generally shied away from fully engaging with Gramsci's writings on schooling. After the generally harsh reception given to Entwistle's claim that Gramsci advocated for a conservative schooling, there has been a general dismissal of these parts of the *Notebooks* or at least a reluctance to fully engage with them. In part, this may have to do with the incomplete English translation of the *Notebooks*. Relatedly, with a few exceptions, English-language education scholars of Gramsci demonstrate very little familiarity, if any at all, of the long tradition of Italian scholarship which fully

engages Gramsci's writings on schooling. We believe that several contributions to this volume (Fusaro, Maltese and Pagano) of Italian scholars and of the French scholar Tosel, rarely, if at all, published in English, can help rectify the absence of these Italian and French debates on Gramsci's analysis of schooling and pedagogy in English-language scholarship.

The first part of the book 'Understanding Gramsci and Education' consists of chapters addressing some of the key concepts that have traversed the literature, such as the nexus between hegemony, philosophy of praxis and pedagogy; Gramsci's proposal of the 'unitarian school'; and the role of the intellectuals as pedagogues. Peter Mayo suggests Gramsci's body of work can be read as offering a coherent view of education and its relationship with hegemony. This relationship is central, he argues, to his philosophy of praxis. In this way, Gramsci's political project can be understood as an educational project—a contention that is core to the approach of this entire book. For Mayo, 'the quest for a process of "intellectual and moral reform"' warrants an educational effort on all fronts. Mayo's chapter is followed by those of two scholars, Riccardo Pagano and Diego Fusaro, whose work is published in English for the first time.

Pagano argues that in Gramsci's writings, culture, education and politics are inextricably intertwined. One cannot talk about one without discussing the others. His chapter sets out to explain how this interconnection operates in Gramsci's *Notebooks*. Gramsci's worldview had a political matrix as it addressed the theoretical and political principles that guide social and institutional relations. Pagano focuses also on the role of intellectuals and their pedagogical/political dimensions. Pagano concludes that, 'Gramsci's thought contains, in its pedagogical vision, the synthesis of the human political dimension, which includes history, historicity, tradition, values and practices, in short, everything that belongs to humankind and to the human aspiration to build societies and states based on equality and freedom'. Diego Fusaro builds on some of the concepts of these earlier chapters and firmly locates Gramsci's pedagogical thought within his philosophy of praxis. He uses Giuseppe Vacca's phrase of 'pedagogical obsession' to characterise the enduring interest of the Sardinian thinker towards education, broadly conceived. Fusaro points out to the frequent references to pedagogical themes in the Prison Letters. Concepts of self-consciousness, culture and transformative praxis were central to Gramsci in his writings on matters such as schools and education, and these writings, according to Fusaro, are particularly necessary in the current times of systematic destruction of everything Gramsci stood for in terms of public education at every level.

The second part of the book includes contributors who use a Gramscian framework for research. Much of the English-language educational scholarship on Gramsci, particularly the extended works, tends to be of a highly theoretical nature; there is not a lot of analysis of Gramsci's own pedagogical work, the pedagogical work of his revolutionary contemporaries or current examples of Gramscian pedagogy. In this volume, María Alicia Vetter's comparative work on the pedagogical philosophy of Gramsci's Chilean contemporary, Luis Emilio Recabarren, helps us understand the revolutionary milieu of internationalism while also highlighting the

Latin American context of the time. Rebecca Tarlau's case study of the pedagogical work of the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement (MST) adds an additional and contemporary Latin American example. According to Tarlau, MST activists use educational initiatives in public schooling as a 'war of position' to gain moral and intellectual leadership necessary to implement social change. Through the analysis of the pedagogical underpinning of the MST's strategic approach, Tarlau provides us with a living case of Gramscian pedagogy in action.

Alessandro Carlucci addresses the debate on the teaching of English as a 'global language' and the language policy of the European Union drawing on Gramsci's views on diversity and unification, on passive revolution and on linguistic hegemony. The chapter uses Italy as a case study of how English is perceived as an entry point to material and nonmaterial resources. Access to English as a global language is, however, typically restricted by cultural barriers and social inequality. The chapter builds upon the literature on Gramsci's longstanding interest in language and linguistics, a topic that has strong interconnections with his notions on pedagogy and hegemony. In her chapter, Flora Hillert applies Gramscian notions, such as that of historical bloc, to discuss how teachers in Argentina have positioned themselves at the front of the remarkable transformation of that country. In particular, she focuses on the ambivalent class perception of this group, at once part of the middle classes and of the popular classes, or *pueblo*, in terms of their political choices. Teachers are also analysed as intellectuals who, in a Gramscian sense, might or might not be 'organic' to the popular classes. Combining scholarship on contemporary educational policy and teacher subjectivity in the case of Argentina, Hillert shows us how Gramsci can help us understand how teachers and students live the contestation of hegemony in their day-to-day practice that is often merely theorised in the existing educational scholarship on Gramsci.

The third and final part of the book focuses on particular concepts drawn from Gramsci's work and their pedagogical import. Andrè Tosel tackles the complex question of the relation between the collective and the individual in Gramsci's notions of hegemony and historical bloc. These two spheres are, for Gramsci, closely connected and inseparable. There is a 'displacement' (*glissement*) from the individual to the collective level, and vice versa. Gramsci also famously talked about the individual as an historical bloc, an idea that Tosel dissects accurately. As a result, the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the pupil parallels and integrates into what happens at the societal level. The driving force of political leadership is a pedagogical relationship. In sum, the question of pedagogy, as addressed by Gramsci, allows Marxism to establish a form of congruence between the conceptualisation of the individual and the conceptualisation of society. For Tosel, Gramsci 'gives a real place to the recognition of the formation of the personality as a form of transformation of the social'.

In his chapter, Pietro Maltese embarks on a philological investigation of the term *subaltern* as employed by Gramsci and measures the distance between the original intent of the thinker and the ways this term has been deployed in the field of Subaltern Studies. As the author specifies, this does not necessarily undermine that scholarship, but complicates the way we should understand this term. The chapter

also explores the pedagogical implications of the notion of subaltern. Gramsci traced new paths of emancipation for the subaltern, stressing their incapability of spontaneous liberation without a political and pedagogical intervention. In sum, Maltese puts forwards a reconceptualisation of Gramsci's educational thought as a 'pedagogy for the subaltern'.

Lack of attention in the existing literature to the importance Gramsci placed on the political independence of the working class as an essential element of revolutionary pedagogy is taken up by Holst and Brookfield in their contribution. Holst and Brookfield frame the pedagogical process of political independence in terms of Gramsci's analysis of catharsis.

Overall, the volume provides evidence for the argument that pedagogy should have a central place in the interpretation of Gramsci's political theory. Gramsci's view that 'every relationship of hegemony is necessarily a pedagogical relationship' makes it imperative to dismiss narrow and formal interpretations of his educational theories as applying only to schooling. This book argues that what is required rather is an inquiry into the Italian thinker's broad conceptualisation of pedagogy, which he thought of as a quintessential political activity, central to understanding and transforming society.

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Minneapolis, MN, USA — John D. Holst

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Acknowledgements

John D. Holst would like to acknowledge the Center for Faculty Development at the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, USA, for a sabbatical leave which provided needed time for the completion of his chapter contribution to this book. In addition, he would like to acknowledge the University of St. Thomas library staff for their skilful and timely work in meeting numerous requests for materials related to his contributions to and editing of this book. Finally, he would like to thank Nicola Pizzolato for accepting his offer to share the tasks of editing this book.

Nico Pizzolato would like to thank Paul Gibbs and Mehmet Ali Dikerdem, from whom the idea of this volume has originated, and Bernadette Ohmer at Springer, for the support and encouragement. He also would like to thank the contributors of this volume for the enthusiastic response and the patience in waiting for the long editorial process. Finally, he is really grateful that John D. Holst joined as a coeditor at a crucial stage of the editorial process.

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Abbreviations for English Translations of Gramsci's Writings[1]

Pre-prison Writings

SPW-1: Gramsci, A. (1977). *Selections from political writings, 1910–1920* (Q. Hoare, Ed. & J. Mathews, Trans.). London: Lawrence and Wishart.

SPW-2: Gramsci, A. (1978). *Selections from political writings, 1921–1926* (Q. Hoare, Ed. & Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

PPW: Gramsci, A. (1994c). *Pre-prison writings* (R. Bellamy, Ed. & V. Cox, Trans.) New York: Cambridge University Press.

SCW: Gramsci, A. (1985). *Selections from cultural writings* (D. Forgacs, G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & W. Boelhower, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

AGR: Gramsci, A. (2000). *The Antonio Gramsci reader* (D. Forgacs, Ed.). New York: New York University Press.

HPC: Gramsci, A. (1975). *History, philosophy and culture in the young Gramsci* (P. Cavalcanti, P. Piccone, Eds. & Trans.). St. Louis: Telos Press.

Prison Writings

SPN: Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare, G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & Trans.). New York: International Publishers.

FS: Gramsci, A. (1995). *Further selections from the prison notebooks* (D. Boothman, Ed. & Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[1] Throughout the text, authors use the standard form for citations of notes from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* in which Q represents the *Quaderni* and § represents the note. In addition, citations from the *Prison Notebooks* or from Gramsci's pre-prison writings use the following abbreviations to aid readers in locating available English translations of Gramsci's writings.

LFP1: Gramsci, A. (1994a). *Letters from prison* (Vol. 1, F. Rosengarten, Ed. & R. Rosenthal, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
LFP2: Gramsci, A. (1994b). *Letters from prison* (Vol. 2, F. Rosengarten, Ed. & R. Rosenthal, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
PN1: Gramsci, A. (1992). *Prison notebooks* (Vol. 1, J. A. Buttigieg, Ed. & J. A. Buttigieg, A. Callari, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
PN2: Gramsci, A. (1996). *Prison notebooks* (Vol. 2, J. A. Buttigieg, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
PN3: Gramsci, A. (2007). *Prison notebooks* (Vol. 3, J. A. Buttigieg, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

The original version of this front matter was revised. The correct editorial board information has been updated.

Chapter 1
Gramsci, Politics and Pedagogy: An Interpretative Framework

Nico Pizzolato and John D. Holst

In what has been aptly called 'the labyrinth of Gramscian studies' (Finocchiaro 1984, p. 291), scholarly research on the educational and pedagogic thought of Antonio Gramsci inhabits a recognisable niche. Terms such as *education* or *pedagogy* rarely appear in the indexes of general works about Gramsci, yet, many would argue, education stands at the core of the theoretical architecture of his opus. For Giroux (2002), 'Gramsci redefined how politics bore down on everyday life through the force of its pedagogical practices, relations and discourses' (p. 41).

The literature on Gramsci the pedagogist now spans across several decades and comprises many titles in Italian, English, Spanish and Portuguese, as well as other languages. In addition, an educational reading of Gramsci underpins the school of critical pedagogy (Mayo 2015). A related field, represented in this book, is the interest on Gramsci's writings on language and its relation to other key concepts such as hegemony (Carlucci 2013; Ives 2004). Authors who work on adult education, a subject to which Gramsci himself assigned an important role, often draw on this body of scholarship, although there is paucity of dialogue between educational scholars who use a Gramscian perspective to current problems and Gramscian scholars who focus on his pedagogical writings (Holst 2015, p. 607). In this introductory chapter, our goal is to contextualise the contributions to this volume in an interpretive framework based in the Italian and English language scholarship on Gramsci and education. We believe this framework is of particular importance for our English language readers who may not be familiar with the extended and extensive literature on Gramsci and education in the Italian scholarship. Moreover, our goal in presenting this framework is to expand the discussion of Gramsci and education to include formal, nonformal and informal forms and contexts of education.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_1

The literature on Gramsci's pedagogy is characterised by an evolution from a focus on passages of his writings in the *Prison Letters* and *Prison Notebooks* that dealt specifically with the education of children and the organisation of education, towards the understanding that, as Peter Mayo (2010) has written, 'to do justice to Gramsci's writings that are of relevance to education, one should tackle Gramsci's work holistically' (p. 2). The contrary, as we will see, can also be said, that is, the focus on his educational thought is essential to understand the totality of Gramsci's work. Taken as a whole, this new literature of Gramsci and education signals that the time is right for this aspect to be incorporated in the general understanding of Gramsci's thought, beyond the specialised interest of educators.

The interest of Italian scholars in the pedagogical writings of the Sardinian thinker emerged soon after the Second World War, when a thematic anthology of the *Notebooks* was published, as well as the *Prison Letters*. The letters revealed Gramsci's paternal concern for the education of his sons and nephews. In some of these letters, Gramsci famously questioned both his wife's tendency to avail to a quasi-Rousseauian approach, centred on spontaneity, and the possible detrimental effect that the game Meccano, which symbolised to him the American technical-rational invasion, could bear on the development of his children's mindset. He also worried for the education of his nephews, sending heartfelt letters to his brother Carlo warning him that without their parental pedagogical guidance the children's 'spiritual formation' would be 'the mechanical result of the chance influence' of the backward social environment, not one inspired by self-discipline and 'moral judgements' (Gramsci 1994a, Letter 162, 25 August 1930, LFP1, pp. 347, 348). Overall, as Pietro Maltese (2010) has shown, the early concern of this literature was about Gramsci as a father figure and about his moral leadership in the family, which obscured his revolutionary politics and his critical stance of educational models.

Reading Gramsci pedagogically in terms of the father and son, or teacher and pupil, relationship, was narrow, but for all its limitations, this literature also identified some themes that would be enduring ones: such as the interplay between direction and spontaneity in the education of children. This was a sensitive point in the debate about education in postwar Italy when pedagogists addressed the question of how to shed the legacy of the Fascist regime in the school (Lodi 1977). It is only after the war that Italians fully discovered Dewey whose principles were adopted by pedagogists of progressive inclination, even of Socialist leanings, as a way to dismantle the traditional methods of the Church and the Fascist state, but they did so in opposition to Marxist pedagogy, accused of aiming to introduce ideological coercion (Bini 1971). In this context, Gramsci's pedagogical writings came under scrutiny. Dewey himself is only mentioned once by Gramsci (Ragazzini 1976), so most of Gramsci's criticism of progressive education pertains to its limited reception in Liberal Italy and news about experiments abroad. To Gramsci, these all pointed to a pedagogy that, by claiming to allow the child to develop in a 'natural' way, hid the influence of history, ideology and politics and perpetuated the status quo of society (Martinez 2014).

In the 1960s, Marxist pedagogist Dina Bertoni Jovine (1964) built on Gramsci to argue for a schooling that would bring forth a cultural renewal and a criticism of the

oppressive instances of Italian society. In polemics with the Italian acolytes of Dewey, whom she saw advocating a 'spontaneous' pedagogy, Bertoni Jovine saw in Gramsci a proponent of two distinguished phases of schooling, one that would impart the basic notions necessary to society and a second 'creative' phase in which the individual would contribute to the transformation of society. For Gramsci, she argued, the participation of the pupil cannot occur naturally but 'it develops gradually in relation to the capacity for autonomy that the youngster conquers with [self-] discipline' (Bertoni Jovine 1977, p. 409). The pupils' spontaneous exploration of their experiences in their environment is misleading when that environment is irrational, 'magic' and backwards, writes Bertoni Jovine, in reference to the Italian context at the time she was writing. She interpreted Gramsci as an advocate of a schooling that would correct a worldview imposed by the external environment (as in the letter to his brother Carlo quoted above). It is therefore necessary, wrote Bertoni Jovine (1977), to provide students with the tools that allow them to develop a critical conception of that world: science, as a method of attaining truth through experiments, and history, as knowledge of the gradual social transformation in which the student will act. Overall, Bertoni Jovine suggests an interpretation of Gramsci's pedagogy as anti-authoritarian and informed by a reciprocal fecundation between teacher and pupil. At the same time, for her Gramsci advocated an education that aims to be critical, and therefore transformative of the environment, not only of the pupil, and directed towards recognisable political goals. Thus, Bertoni Jovine (1977) embraced the concept of 'autonomy' as preferable to the one of 'freedom' or 'spontaneity'. The former, she wrote, is 'the result of a long process' that includes the discipline and effort so often praised by Gramsci' (p. 411). In reality, a more precise understanding of Dewey's pedagogy would have led to more convergences, but the legacy of Bertoni Jovine's (1977) work is an interpretation of Gramsci's pedagogy with a firm focus on the new social order that he intended to bring forth through education and cultural change. 'In the first place, culture must be a liberating activity; liberating the youngster from all the backward forms that constitute the environment in which he is embedded, and that Gramsci overall defines as folklore' (p. 409). With Bertoni Jovine, for the first time, it is clear the Gramsci's pedagogy is not only about the education of pupils but also about the education of society (Semeraro 1979).

1.1 Gramsci the Pedagogist: The Early Years

Interpreted in this way, Gramsci's concern with the problem of education, schooling and culture of the working class predated the more famous statements in the *Prison Notebooks* and *Prison letters* and are scattered in many articles written before his imprisonment. While, in that early stage, his educational thinking was not fully formed, one can see a thematic continuity between the Gramsci of the 1910s and 1920s and the one of the 1930s. It is not surprising that the root of his pedagogical and political ideas took shape as he devoured historical, philosophical and political

readings in his years as militant journalist involved in the political struggles of his days. The formation of Gramsci as an intellectual and activist is crucial to interpreting the foundations of his educational thought. His often tortuous schooling experience in provincial Sardinia, where he was born in 1891, made Gramsci reflective about Italian educational policies and their shortcomings, in particular related to children from the popular classes. As it has been pointed out, there is an intimate relation 'between autobiography and sociological reflection in Gramsci's thought' (Hoare and Smith 1971, p. 25). Though coming from the ranks of the lower middle class, his background in an impoverished small town and among a backward and illiterate peasantry, made the Italian thinker particularly concerned with the question of educating the children of the working classes. Furthermore, as someone who was able to complete his education thanks to hard won scholarships, Gramsci came to advocate the idea of creating the conditions for the individual to develop an autonomous capacity to learn, sustained by a willed effort. Thus, when, as an adult in Turin, he embraced Socialism, education and pedagogy, as well as culture, came to occupy a preponderant place in his agenda to transform politics. As a public intellectual, Gramsci would go on to question the school reform implemented by the Fascist state (Riforma Gentile), espousing the idea that a narrow vocational education would prevent the working class from acquiring the necessary intellectual self-sufficiency to challenge the political system. As a militant communist, he advocated institutions and organisations that would nurture a proletarian culture to transform state and society. Always an activist as well as a theorist, he saw the Factory Councils movement in Turin and the Workers' Educational circles that he initiated as opportunities for such form of pedagogy to develop, fully embedded in a political project.

As stated above, when Gramsci embraced socialism in the 1910s, he developed a conception of Marxism where education and culture were central to the revolutionary process. This was strengthened later on when, in the *Prison Notebooks*, he refined his conception of hegemony and its relation in the overthrow of the bourgeois state, famously stating that 'hegemony is a pedagogical relationship'. Even in his twenties, Gramsci's writings set forth pedagogy not only as a science of teaching, but also, and more importantly, as a political practice meant to change the values and culture of the masses and prepare them for a socialist revolution (Urbani 1969). In doing so, Gramsci challenged the educational practices and policies of his times, which, in his view, favoured the status quo. On the contrary, he advocated pedagogical methods, initiatives and reforms that could eventually encourage workers (the protagonists of the upcoming revolution) to discover themselves, question bourgeois authorities and brace themselves for the responsibilities that socialism would bestow to them. An alternative education would produce in the working classes a critical understanding of social reality—a necessary precondition for them to awaken and topple the capitalist ruling class. In Gramsci, however, critical pedagogy was not only an instrument to be used to challenge entrenched attitudes of submission, but a stimulus to awaken the hearts and minds of the majority of people to the reality of historical materialism and achieve a more fulfilling, just and equal human existence.

His emphasis on the education of the working masses to further the aims of socialism, placed Gramsci at odds with many of his contemporaries in Italian socialism and then communism, notably Amedeo Bordiga, his most formidable antagonist within the Italian Communist Party during the 1920s. Bordiga was one of the most prestigious leaders of the Italian Socialist Party when Gramsci entered the scene. When the differences within Italian socialism had become so irremediable as to require a schism, both Bordiga and Gramsci were the drivers of the foundation of the Italian Communist Party. In his twenties, as a party organiser and a contributor to many socialist publications, Bordiga subscribed to a rather 'deterministic' view of Marxism; the view that the relations of production under capitalism would evolve to a point in which workers would become conscious of their exploitation and, therefore, prone to rebel and change the system under the leadership of the Communist Party. Revolution was for Bordiga, as for Gramsci, at the core of Marxism, and it indeed required workers to be prepared. However, this preparation in his opinion had nothing to do with cultural change, but with organisational and operational steps led by a cadre of activists. Action was the best sort of socialist education and the question of a cultural understanding of socialism was best left to the individual.

> Socialism—he stated—is essentially preparation for a new social setting. Actually, it is the preparation of a part of the population to the *necessary* [emphasis in original] transformation of society, but it is absurd to reach that preparation through educational methods, its *action* [emphasis in original] the source of that education. (Bordiga 1912, 1919, p. 107)

Bordiga claimed to be faithful to Marx in stressing the importance of economic forces in changing workers' minds, and he remained consistent with this position throughout his political life, even stressing the need for *abstentionism*, withdrawal from electoral politics, in order not to contaminate socialism with the parliament, which he considered solely as a bourgeois institution. For Bordiga, participation in parliamentary elections only delayed revolution. This view pitted Bordiga against Lenin and the Third International and eventually caused him to fall out of favour with the Soviet Union leaders, causing his demise within Italian communism (Bordiga 1919; Drake 2003). On the contrary, even in his youth, Gramsci's reading of Marx was not doctrinaire, rejecting a strictly teleological view of Marxism for one informed by both thought and action.

> Marx did not write some neat little doctrine; he is not some Messiah who left us a string of parables laden with categorical imperatives and absolute, unchallengeable norms, lying outside the categories of time and space. His only categorical imperative, his only norm: 'Workers of the world, unite!' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 54)

Gramsci's original position in regard to culture and revolution (although one which would be defined with more precision during the prison years) stemmed both from the impact of the events of the Russian revolution and his own personal background. Lenin, the leader of the only successful socialist revolution at the time, had in many respects departed from the template laid out by Marx. In Russia, the Communist revolution had succeeded without honouring the evolutionary transition to capitalism envisaged by Marx. There, a predominantly peasant society in which bourgeois

liberalism was underdeveloped had taken up arms to build a dictatorship of the proletariat. In Russia, the revolution had shown that 'events have overtaken ideology'. From Gramsci, this amounted also to a 'revolution against Das Kapital' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 39), which demonstrated that 'the canons of historical materialism are not iron-clad' (PPW, p. 40). However, the Russian revolution confirmed the deeper truth of Marxism that men would come to a collective understanding of their economic situation and their position within it and would forge a collective will that will shape history (PPW, p. 41). The Russian revolution transformed Gramsci into a devout fan of Bolshevism and of Lenin, the man who had demonstrated flexibility on tactics but faithfulness in the basic tenets of Marxism. Italy too needed such a flexible approach.

Gramsci's own background in Sardinia had made him receptive to a more *voluntarist* (the maximalists' derogatory term for the rejection of a prophetic reading of Marx) approach. As it is known, Gramsci had suffered bouts of poverty in his childhood, which made him highly empathic to the condition of the deprived Sardinian peasants and miners. This was in contrast to the majority of socialist and communist leaders of his times, including Bordiga, Serrati, Togliatti and Mussolini (editor of the socialist *Avanti*! until the war) who had led a comfortable and even privileged life. The Gramscis themselves had enjoyed the comfort of a lower middle-class life until Gramsci's father, a local bureaucrat in Sorgogno, in a small Sardinian town, was imprisoned for 5 years for embezzlement and administrative irregularities. Gramsci was 5 years old at the time. Even though his mother tried to make ends meet for her and her seven children while her husband served his sentence, Antonio suffered the indignity of lacking basic provisions, clothes, even food, that the other pupils enjoyed. The family moved to a city, Ghilarza, home to her mother's family, but infested with malaria. They lived in a house lacking basic facilities, such as running water or a toilet (Cammett 1967). Even though a hunchback from his early years, the young Antonio had to work, sometimes 10 h a day, as a porter in a registry office to contribute to the meagre family income. There he was lifting heavy tomes and suffering excruciating pains at night (Gramsci 1994b, Letter to Tania, 3 October 1932, LFP2, p. 215). Antonio was particularly affected by the inequities bore by the Sardinian working class. The miners' strike of Bugerru in 1904 and the vast revolt of 1906 against the rise in bread prices, both harshly repressed by the army, would, in retrospect, reveal to Gramsci the extent of Southern Italy's submission to the capitalist machinery of the North as well as the limits of the spontaneous rebelliousness of the Italian popular classes, which he considered backward (Fiori 1971). It is perhaps to be expected that someone who understood through a hard-won schooling the social conditions of his surroundings would argue that education is essential to gain class consciousness. There is a consensus among scholars of Gramsci that many of the themes later developed in the *Prison Notebooks* linked back, unsurprisingly, to his Sardinian years (Adamson 1980; Davidson 1977; Fiori 1971). The effort to comprehend the causes of the plight of Sardinian peasants and miners would be his point of entry to Socialism as he enlarged his investigation and concerns beyond the island to the entirety of Italy.

With his deep familiarity, first with the rural peasantry of Sardinia and then with the industrial working class of Turin, and awareness of the transformative effect that education had wrought on himself, Gramsci conceived a more dynamic relation between the 'objective' structural conditions of the economy and the prospects for political change. Gramsci argued that in *Capital* Marx had never intended to posit a deterministic view of history. The advent of socialism was more an opportunity than a destiny. The structural conditions of the economy—industrial expansion, proletarianization, and diminishing margin of profit—were indeed necessary to foster a new historical phase, but they had to be accompanied by cultural change as well as political action. In the article 'Socialism and Culture' (1916), Gramsci writes that, 'it is through a critique of capitalist civilisation that a unified proletarian consciousness has formed and is in the process of formation. And a critique is something cultural; it does not arise through spontaneous evolution' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 11). One has to concur with historian Richard Drake (2003) who remarks that it was in the 1910s that Gramsci began to develop 'his distinctive vision of Marxism as a battle of proletarian ideas versus bourgeois ideas' (p. 168).

In these early writings, Gramsci embraced a definition of culture that matched his later insights on the 'organic intellectuals'. The organisation of culture is 'organic' to the dominant forces in society (Monasta 2002, p. 73) through the role of the intellectuals, who for Gramsci have a key political-pedagogical role, operating at the interface between the technical and the political. This link is perhaps best summed up in one passage: 'The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, [...] but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just simple orator' (Q12 §3, p. 1551; SPN, p. 10).

What should be the culture of the proletariat? What culture can foster socialism? A critique of capitalism needed new definitions of seemingly neutral terms such as 'culture', 'intellectual' or 'education'. Gramsci finds that the semantic terrain of culture has been long defined by the bourgeoisie and the traditional ruling class to the detriment of the working class. Erudition, 'encyclopaedic knowledge', 'intellectualism' (ibid, p. 9) are the hallmarks of what was, at the time Gramsci wrote, conceived as culture. Culture understood as a pedantic repetition of information, interjected, as Gramsci ironically notes, with a few Latin phrases, represents a barrier between the rulers and the ruled. This type of culture, had the schooling system not been class-biased, would be easily achievable by anyone, though it makes those who possess it arrogant and smug. Gramsci is not attacking the use of Latin per se or the idea of rigorous schooling, but rather the shallow caricature of erudition mimicked by those Italians who, in virtue of their middle-class background, could access classical subjects, but never become truly erudite or cultured. In an often quoted, and sometimes misunderstood passage of the *Quaderni*, Gramsci returned to the subject of the teaching of Latin praising it as a key element of the education in a traditional society, as it allowed for the learning of formal reasoning, but one that would be superseded by another subject with a similar function in the altered cultural landscape of the new society (Manacorda 2015, pp. 326–330). Or, in Gramsci's

words 'It will be necessary to replace Latin and Greek as the fulcrum of the formative school and they will be replaced' (Q12 §2; SPN, p. 39).

According to Gramsci true education—real 'culture'—is something quite different. 'It is the organization, the disciplining of one's inner self; the mastery of one's personality; the attainment of a higher awareness, through which we can come to understand our value and place in history, our proper function in life, our rights and duties' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, pp. 9–10). Here Gramsci is also throwing jabs at fellow Socialists who conceptualised culture as an intellectual endeavour and as something to impart to the mass in small doses or else as something totally extraneous to the revolutionary process (Manacorda 2015, p. 18). Gramsci is instead concerned with the organisation of culture *with* the masses. This higher form of culture, one that will pave the way for a socialist society, would spring from a knowledge of the self, both the individual and the collective self.

Gramsci draws on his own selective reading of the romantic polymath Novalis to expand on this point. Gramsci did not endorse the transcendental idealism that characterised Novalis, but his broad definition of the discovery of the self as the aim of culture struck a chord with him. This is a point that Novalis makes in several of his writings. 'We dream of traveling through the universe—but is not the universe within ourselves? The depths of our spirit are unknown to us—the mysterious way leads inwards. Eternity with its worlds—the past and future—is in ourselves or nowhere' (Novalis 1997, p. 25). It is likely that Gramsci had come across sentences such as this, which he then applied to his own view of the relation between the individual, culture and historical change. Novalis had talked about the relationship between the 'inward gaze' and the 'outward gaze', the necessary link between knowing oneself and knowing the world, as a precondition to become an artist. Gramsci makes the same point but as a precondition to become an actor of political change. It is necessary to master oneself with 'disciplined dedication' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 11), but this is impossible without knowing the others and the laws that govern nature and society. It is a delicate balance to achieve indeed: to uncover the veil that hides the true colours of the civilization in which we live, by a critical study of its history and culture, in order to replace it with a socialist one, and, at the same time, to find our own role in this process by asserting 'one's own identity' (ibid).

It is in the tension between individual choice and collective transformation that Gramsci finds a key role for education. According to the Marxist view to which Gramsci subscribed (one alien to Novalis), societies are the product of history based on the constant transformation of the relations of production. Only awareness of this history would bring proletarian class consciousness, but such awareness could be achieved only through a critique of 'culture', both in the sense of the corpus of knowledge that underlies the capitalist mode of production and of the 'common sense' that regulates people's self-awareness.

The piece 'Socialism and Culture' offers a window into Gramsci's understanding of how a critique of the dominant culture, and, therefore, of capitalism itself, would be brought about. Gramsci endorsed an elitist notion of social and cultural change, that is, he believed that a new awareness would be initiated and nurtured by a small group of people and then gradually spread to the rest of the population through

educational activities and other forms of dissemination. (Over time, as explained below, Gramsci underscored how this educational relationship between leaders and masses would always have to be dialogical, with a reciprocal cross-fertilization of perspectives). A society develops, Gramsci writes, this awareness 'through intelligent reflection, first on the part of a few, then of a whole class, on the reasons why certain situations exist and on the best means of transforming what have been opportunities for vassalage into triggers of rebellion' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 10). At about the same period, in the United States W.E.B. DuBois had advanced the similar notion of the 'Talented tenth' to describe the elite among the black minority that would educate and uplift the downtrodden majority (DuBois 1903). As educated intellectuals writing to instigate social change, it is plausible that both Gramsci and DuBois considered themselves as shouldering such a role within the subaltern groups that they tried to inspire. Gramsci, however, also had in mind the educational role that the party would have in this process of cultural transformation, 'raising people to a new level of civilisation' (Q14, §34; SPN, p. 155; see also Schwarzmantel 2009).

In any case, Gramsci saw organisation at the political and economic levels (in the party and on the shop floor) and at the cultural level as inevitably linked. Like in other instances, he drew this insight from his practical involvement in the socialist movement as well as from his theoretical analysis—the ever-present connection between theory and practice that is at the core of his 'philosophy of praxis'. In 1917, socialist activists promoted 'proletarian' association where workers would socialise, find entertainment and receive information and education. Gramsci (1994c) saw in these 'cultural associations' the opportunity to integrate cultural education with economic action towards political change. His response in the pages of the paper *Avanti*! in support of the initiative of the socialist comrades who planned to establish such associations touches upon the complex relationship between base, leadership and political education.

Gramsci conceptualises political education (of the kind that could be furthered by the existence of party cultural associations) as necessary both for the long-term goals of societal transformation and for the short-term process of decision-making within the party ranks. The process of democratic participation in party decisions is undermined, writes Gramsci, by 'the sense that not everyone who participates in the movement has grasped the precise nature of the issues at stake' (ibid., p. 36). Inevitably, the risks ensue that leaders are blindly followed by the ranks out of discipline and loyalty, rather than rational conviction. Here one can understand with more precision what role Gramsci envisaged for the party leadership, that is, people like himself. Leaders should educate the masses by providing the critical tools to unveil the real structure of exploitation and subordination that make up the fabric of capitalist society, but should not demand the kind of worship that might even lead to authoritarianism.

According to Gramsci, there is another practical disadvantage that derives from the lack of political education among the party ranks. Because action derives often from allegiance to leaders, rather than deep conviction, the consensus is often broken when there are disputes between leaders, causing splits and crises, and in

turn damaging the prospect for successful action. Much better to discuss policies before the urgency of the political situation leads to passionate debate in which the grassroots will be swayed by allegiance rather than conviction.

Gramsci believed that a ‘deep-rooted consensus’ (ibid, p. 37) could indeed be achieved at the party level with the right dialectical pedagogy (although its details are not systematically exposed). ‘Socialism is a whole vision of life: it has its own philosophy, its own faith and its own morality’ (ibid, p. 37). The *leitmotif* of Gramsci’s work is an attempt to understand how this unifying vision might be achieved, but it remains only implicit the reflection on the possibility that the configuration of socialism and the strategy to achieve it might remain contested. Gramsci challenges the reductive Marxist economic determinism by focusing on the role of culture but does not find any contradiction between his persuasion that a single political conviction can be achieved among party members and his promotion of genuine debate about policies and action. Gramsci embraces the humanistic ‘free inquiry’ as a foundation of gaining political awareness but believes that this is compatible with a unified political persuasion only through a process of democratic centralism—a free debate that informs disciplined unity and common action. One can see this present in the 1922 ‘Rome Theses’ presented at the Second Congress of the PCI. ‘The integration of all elemental thrusts into a unitary action occurs by virtue of two main factors: one of critical consciousness, from which the party draws its programme; the other of will, expressed in the instrument with which the party acts, its disciplined and centralized organization’ (Gramsci 1978, SPW-2, p. 93).

In a passage that anticipates by more than a decade his notion of the ‘organic intellectual’, Gramsci argued for the cultural association to be the natural arena where party intellectuals would leave their mark. Gramsci would later argue for the function of intellectuals to be inevitably associated to the social group in which they are embedded. This would be opposed to traditional understanding of intellectuals as a social strata standing apart. In 1917, at the time of the journalistic writings we are examining, he had not yet formed this notion fully. However, Gramsci did criticise this separation when he described the ‘intellectuals’ (his inverted commas) within the party as a ‘dead weight’, neither activist leaders, not militant workers, they were more often a useless appendix. He suggested that they would find in the pedagogic mission of the cultural association a ‘task suited to their capacities’. In other words, even intellectuals of a traditional formation would act as a transmission belt to convey the socialist worldview, fostering through activities and debate that would serve as a political glue when actions and decisions are demanded. A difficult task, no doubt, in which, Gramsci remarks ‘their real intellectual qualities would be put to a test’ (ibid, p. 37). This links back to the earlier warning of Gramsci that without a political purpose intellectual activity becomes empty erudition, not more than an ‘intellectualism’ (ibid, p. 37).

The socialist cultural associations would act as a counterpoint (or in Gramsci’s emphatic prose, ‘would deliver a death blow’) (ibid, p. 37) to the Catholic educational activities, of which the Jesuitical were the most effective in liberal Italy. (The Jesuitical model of education constituted a recurrent target of Gramsci’s criticism throughout his work). Not only would the socialist associations work for a more just

society, but they would do so through a method entirely different from the religious one, that is, through free debate and fostering man's natural 'desire to attain the truth by the purely human means offered by intelligence and reason' (ibid, p. 37). Here Gramsci has in mind the practice of egalitarian debate in the Fabian society and other similar reformist political and cultural clubs in Britain where members debated at a peer level and across social classes. In reality, in due course, all the mass parties, including the Fascist, would recognise that cultural work and entertainment would foster the political bond, but departed from Gramsci's vision of cultural associations as a site of critical enquiry and free debate.

Gramsci's remarks about the activity to be carried out by cultural associations found a short-lived implementation in the 'Clubs of Moral Life' which he helped establish between the end of 1917 (the time of the 'cultural association' article) and March 1918. Gramsci explained their functioning in a published letter to Giuseppe Lombardo Radice, the noted pedagogist and author of *The Concept of Education* (1911). In this letter, Gramsci linked education to the ethical dimension of the socialist project. Socialist civilization must necessarily be accompanied by 'principles and moral maxims', which would foster the internal transformation necessary for momentous historical change. The pedagogy of the Clubs of Moral Life would be centred on a collective debate stimulated by individual presentations on assigned readings. Gramsci cites as examples of pieces for debate Croce's *Culture and Moral Life*, Salvemini's *Social and Education Problems* or Marx's and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*. Each assigned presentation would be commented on by a respondent, presumably one of the 'intellectuals' in the branch, but the discussion should be open to the whole audience. 'In this way, a discussion opens up, which ideally continues until all those present have been enabled to understand and absorb the most important results of this collective work' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 52). In the Italian context, Gramsci envisaged this to be an experiment not only in furthering socialist ideas but as a pedagogical method to raise educational standards.

1.2 Political Education in the 'New Order'

In 1919, as industrial workers became more vocal in the factories of Turin—by that time already the metallurgic and automotive centre of Italy—demanding less hours, more pay and fairer working conditions, the question of the role of education in the establishment of socialism demanded new pedagogical solutions, more rooted in workers' activity at the point of production than in lofty debates about a Croce's essay. The Clubs of Moral Life were hence short-lived. Gramsci, together with fellow Turinese socialists Palmiro Togliatti, Angelo Tasca and Umberto Terracini, captured and fostered the new political reality by establishing in May 1919 the magazine *L'Ordine Nuovo*, later to become a daily. This proved a crucial step in the demise of a unified socialist front and in the birth of the Italian Communist Party, which would count Togliatti and Gramsci among its leaders.

The reason why a publication in Turin could become a game-changer in the destiny of the Italian Socialist Party was of course that the politics of the industrial working class in Turin were of great import to the nation as whole. The city had undergone fast industrial development since the late nineteenth century, with advances in the metallurgical, chemical and engineering industry which, combined, would sustain the development of the automobile industry. As a result, in the years preceding First World War the number of industrial workers had soared and the city was leading the nation both in terms of economic growth rate and industrial innovation (Berend 2013, p. 184; Cammett 1967, p. 19). This was due in large part to migration from the countryside spurred by the lure of well-paid factory jobs. Lacking a bureaucratic middle class, the city became quite polarised between a large industrial working class, mostly of recent peasant origins, and the class of capitalist entrepreneurs and bourgeois professionals that provided them services.

Already in this early period, workers in the automobile industry, especially at FIAT, came to be identified as a vanguard of political struggle and an 'aristocracy of labour'. The latter expression needs to be carefully circumscribed; it is meaningful only if applied relatively to the rest of the transient, unstable working class of the city, but in terms of material prosperity, automobile workers still needed to make end meets with supplementary incomes of other members of the family. Furthermore, even before mass production, workers on the auto shop floor were pushed towards a higher rate of productivity than in less technologically advanced sectors and required to observe complex, centralised timetabling of work tasks. However, in terms of professional status and recognition, automobile workers became the elite of the city's working class (Musso 1992, p. 224; Spriano 1972). Given their relative size and their prestige, when they struck en masse, they carried along the whole category of metalworkers and sent shockwaves in the still feeble and not confident Italian capitalism, also for the benefit of workers in more backward sectors of the economy. Furthermore, if Italy as a whole was characterised by a predominant rural economy, Turin came to concentrate communities of workers, both inside and outside the factory, who built a network of solidarity, a precondition for successful industrial action (Musso 1992, pp. 231–32).

The First World War, with its necessary reliance on mechanical and automotive industries, increased the weight of the city's working class even further, in the first place, by augmenting the percentage of industrial workers relatively to the population as a whole. As in other countries involved in the conflict, women joined for the first time the ranks of the core of industries, now needing increased capacity in front of a scarcity of manpower. The war established an enduring characteristic of the Italian geography of industrial conflict, that was to be concentrated for most of the Italian twentieth century in the country's north west, a 'triangle' of industrial cities of which Turin was the centre (ibid, p. 187).

Turinese workers agitated for a number of reasons during the war. They went on strike for wages and working conditions, in direct continuation of pre-war reformist goals of the Socialist Party and labour unions. However, industrial action took on an increasingly partisan connotation. Many socialist workers, the so-called intransigents endorsed a strong anti-war stance that resulted in militant demonstrations

against Italy's intervention in the war. The question of support of Italy's intervention in the war was a thorny one for the Socialist Party, which, at the national level, included both 'interventionists', as supporters of the war were called and 'moderates', who tried to struck a middle way. In Turin, however, the dominant position among Socialist sympathisers was what the mainstream media dubbed, in a derogatory way, as 'defeatism', that is, complete opposition to the war and allegiance to Lenin's conception of the war as an imperialist one. The end of the war magnified the themes and discontent that had characterised the industrial 'triangle', and Turin in particular, aggravating the economic and political tensions that set the stage for the factory councils and *L'Ordine Nuovo*, but also, soon afterwards, for the tragic advent of Fascism. With its legacy of disappointed expectations and frustrated efforts for the Italians, the Great War fomented opposed extremisms in the Peninsula. Italy had suffered great financial and human loss for little territorial gain and men returning from the front expected if not reward, change. The international political context encouraged this radical mood. The European empires had been crushed by the war. The Bolshevik revolution had succeeded in Russia and hit Hungary and Bavaria. The Spartacist uprising shook Berlin. Socialist Pietro Nenni wrote, 'All the extraordinary and clamorous events at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 fired the imagination and inspired the hope that the old world was about to collapse and that humanity was on the threshold of a new era and a new social order' (Cammett 1967, p. 66). In December 1918, the *Avanti*! had declared that the official aim of the party was the dictatorship of the proletariat, a bold step forward from the pre-war reformist programme. The end of the hostilities, however, had revealed more than ever that cleavage between revolutionaries (or 'maximalists') and reformists (also called 'gradualists') within the party.

It is in this context that the founding group of *L'Ordine Nuovo* hoped to make an impact, by sustaining the Socialist revolutionary project, but without falling into the deterministic fatalism of the Maximalists and of Bordiga, which they believed to be counterproductive to the actual prospects of revolution. Gramsci in particular envisaged *L'Ordine Nuovo* as a vehicle to support and shape the emerging factory councils in Turin, a form of working class organisation that resembled the Russian soviets. Gramsci (supported within the newspaper by Togliatti and Terracini, but not Tasca) argued for the necessity of an all-encompassing proletarian organisation based in the factories which would embrace even workers not members of trade unions. These bodies would develop a technical and managerial capacity to run the factories without the help of capitalist entrepreneurs. In fact, they would demonstrate that workers were producers, rather than simply wage earners. In turn, the economic and technical independence of the working class would lay the ground for its political takeover of the state.

L'Ordine Nuovo often cast the factory councils in explicit opposition to trade unions. In this view, trade unions had served their purpose, but there were institutions too much rooted in bourgeois capitalism, protecting workers on the basis of rules set up by the system in which they were established. Unions engaged in struggle over wages and working conditions, in other words, unions concerned themselves with safeguarding the price of labour within an essentially capitalist

logic but did not prepare workers to take over production and, eventually, become a ruling class. Factory councils were meant to provide more direct workers' representation and, according to Gramsci, were the nuclei of the new system heralded by the socialist revolution. Furthermore, unions were marred by a bureaucratic centralism ill-suited to a rank-and-file revolution. *L'Ordine Nuovo* suggested trade unions foster the new kind of workers' organisation, taking into consideration that they would be obsolete in a socialist society where workers would have gained control of the factories.

L'Ordine Nuovo, overcoming the resistance of Tasca, started to promote its vision of factory councils in June 1919, linking it to the recent developments in the Soviet Union. In many respects the factory councils aimed to emulate the Russian Soviets, not least in the hope that would become the building blocks of the revolution. This immediately resonated with the Turinese working class. In August 1919, the internal committee (an elected body of workers that bargained at the plant level) of Fiat Centro, the largest automobile factory in Turin, endorsed the idea of the council by calling for its election. By the autumn, more than 30 plants were organised, and the Chamber of Labour of Turin, representing union workers, issued a resolution in support of this new type of proletarian organisation. It was now the councils that represented trade union interests in the shops, as well as putting forward their plant-based agenda of proletarian control (Cammett 1967, pp. 76–77). Although, as we shall see, short-lived, the councils succeeded in encompassing, by February 1920, the majority of the working class of Turin, gaining followers in other plants across the Peninsula.

The workers' councils, as a form of socialist organisation, had two potential features that made them so attractive to Gramsci. First of all, they could incorporate all the workers, without divisions of roles and whether trade union members ('organised') or not; they could also be based on a neighbourhood (to include waiters, cab drivers, shop assistants), though the factory workshop would be the ideal location. In other words, '[they] should be an expression of *the whole of the working class* [emphasis in the original] living in that area' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 98), elected democratically, and interlinked across the nation under the aegis of the Party. In time, workers' council would replace capitalists in the very control of industrial production. But it is the second feature identified by Gramsci that is important for the focus of this chapter.

The system of workers' democracy implemented through the councils would not be the end result, but the instrument to further transform workers and peasants. It is worth noting here that in Gramsci's writings, there emerges sometimes a depressing view of workers' existing intellectual development, hence the imperative need of education. Knowing both the industrialised working class of Turin and the rural one of Sardinia, Gramsci inevitably saw the Italian working class as politically backwards and immature; the overall national, historical, and social context made it so. But it was also the nature of capitalism that made factory workers the prey of hegemonic control. Prone to mindlessly execute in the factory, the worker is disposed to follow blindly empty promises and delusions, member to a 'mass guided by a will alien to his own' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 191). Socialist education could awaken

the residual will and spiritual autonomy that had not been erased by the capitalist process and to which the Communist Party must leverage. This is the incredible challenge that the councils would face in the realm of political education. '[The council] would be a magnificent education in politics and administration, and it would involve the masses, down to the last man, schooling them in determination and perseverance, teaching them to see themselves as an army in the field, which must hold together if it is not destroyed or reduced to slavery' (Cammett 1967, p. 81).

One might see the link here between the self-discipline (a recurrent theme in Gramsci) required by workers to self-manage in a technical way a factory, to continue production without the capitalists' overview and the 'self-mastery' necessary to reach a higher level of political action, leading to class consciousness and systemic change. 'Determination and perseverance' are, for Gramsci, needed for both tasks.

During 1919 and 1920, the pages of *L'Ordine Nuovo* were teeming with reflections on the double moral (political) and technical (economic) role of the factory council in terms of education and its consequences for the socialist worker as an individual and as a class. While scholarship has usually focused on Gramsci's writings only (Forgacs 1988), his editorial choices in terms of education and moral change usually reinforces the ideas directly put forward in his own pieces. In the article 'Know Yourself', appeared in Italian translation in 1919, Communist novelist Henry Barbusse addressed the familiar Gramscian themes of the necessity of a wilful and determined self-examination in order to gain political consciousness. 'When you have achieved—bent inward, with your head between your hands—this work of reflection on facts, arguments, opinions, and systems, eliminating ruthlessly everything that seems doubtful and unfounded, you will reach the great simple things from which all the others ensue' (Barbusse 1919, p. 99). *L'Ordine Nuovo* even hosted anarchist Carlo Petri who, in his analysis of the Taylorist system (one that would find an echo in Gramsci's later 'Americanism and Fordism') stated that the scientific organisation of work invented by Taylor could be adopted by the communist society, if the humanity of workers would be respected. This, Petri claims, would be possible only by integrating the cultural and scientific advancements of workers to this system. In other words, education would humanise scientific production in a socialist society. As far as we can assume, Gramsci would have endorsed Petri's suggestions that 'a school must be integrated to the 'council of producers' to produce a schooling system that would '1) Educate the mind, 2) train qualified persons for their social function and 3) allow anybody who is able to attain higher culture' (Petri 1919, 209).

In summary, in Gramsci's view, the councils responded to the problem that he had other times addressed in his writings: how to undo the pervasive cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the other classes, one based on the political control of schooling and the media as well as on the ideological control of 'common sense'. The council system could have offered the possibility to build a widespread instrument embedded in the social life of the working class, in the workplace and later in the communities, bypassing the institutions controlled by the capitalists or those embedded in capitalism, such as the trade unions. While the party could not

assimilate 'unorganised' or politically uneducated elements without risking its cohesiveness, the councils would be more elastic loci of factory and community control but also a liaison between the politically educated party intellectuals and the masses. 'Through workshop meetings and a ceaseless work of propaganda and persuasion on the part of the most politically aware elements, it would be possible to bring about a radical transformation in worker psychology' (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 99).

The emphasis in *L'Ordine Nuovo* is often on the managerial control that the workers' councils would exert, bridging to the socialist future. The factory council, it is often said, would represent the autonomous workers' power to produce in industry and therefore the basis of a new type of economic development, in which, as producers take the lead, classes would cease to exist, 'it creates the conditions in which a society divided into classes is suppressed and any new division by class is rendered 'materially' impossible' (Gramsci 1920, p. 57; Williams 1975). However, a close reading of Gramsci always points to the equal importance of workers' ontological change, alternatively referred as 'psychology', 'consciousness' or 'personality'. Gramsci (1994c) writes, 'the full, concrete solution to the problems of socialist life can be provided only by communist practice: a collective, friendly debate, which modifies people's consciousness, uniting them and filling them with an overwhelming enthusiasm for action' (PPW, p. 99). He and the fellow *ordinovisti* understood the councils as the location and structural stimulus for such debates informed by communist political pedagogy; bodies where the political, the economic and the educational aspects of socialism would be conflated and assimilated by a mass of labourers not yet reached by the party.

From the vantage point of the summer 1920, the councils looked like a necessary evolutionary stage in the road to Socialism, 'Industrial development has produced in the masses a certain degree of mental autonomy and a certain spirit of positive historical initiative. It is necessary to give an organization and a form to these elements of proletarian revolution, to create the psychological conditions for their development and their generalization among all the labouring masses through the struggle for control of production' (Gramsci 1920, p. 57). The two elements—the technical, managerial, productive and the pedagogic, political and ontological—are eventually intertwined in the effort for revolutionary transformation. Through the councils, where both preparatory aspects would merge seamlessly:

> the masses would become better prepared and equipped for the exercise of power. An awareness would develop of the duties and rights of comrades and workers—an awareness which would be all the more concerted and effective because it would have been generated from living, historical experience. (Gramsci 1994c, PPW, p. 99).

Overall, the original contribution of Gramsci as a pedagogical thinker at this stage of his life was to elevate two themes that were at the core of the Soviet experience (the unity between theoretical and practical activity to foster the revolution and the importance of the autonomy of the working class) to central principles of his developing worldview, broadening their importance and establish them as basis to achieve an individual and collective self-knowledge and self-mastery. In his novel interpretation of ideas circulating among socialist and communist activists, Gramsci's

educational views were strongly emancipatory and democratic. Gramsci started to envisage a philosophy of praxis that informs a critical theory and practice necessary for a socialist transformation of the world. This emphasis in the early Gramsci sheds a different light on his insistence in his later writings on schooling, about the importance of rote learning and the weakness of Rousseauian methods, which have been saluted by conservatives as the real legacy of Gramsci the pedagogist. Yet, the early Gramsci was already *in nuce* a revolutionary pedagogist who embraced inner change through critical inquiry and practical activity.

1.3 The Prison Years: Education as a Relationship of Hegemony

Gramsci's writings during the prison years make clear that the nexus between politics and education stands at the core of this thought, including the notion most often associated with the Italian thinker, 'hegemony'. Gramsci illustrated this link in an oft-quoted paragraph of the *Quaderni* where he wrote:

> The educational relationship should not be restricted to the field of strictly 'scholastic' relationships [...]. This form of relationship exists throughout society as a whole and for every individual relative to other individuals. It exists between the intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between the rulers and the ruled, élites and their followers, leaders [*dirigenti*] and led and the vanguard and the body of the army. Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilization (Q10, §44; SPN, pp. 350).

This passage is at the core of any interpretation of Gramsci the pedagogist beyond his musings directly impinging on pedagogy and schooling. It is also a crucial starting point for investigating how a broader educational relationship sheds light upon the workings of hegemony—a core concept of Gramsci's political philosophy. Embedded in the passage above is a theory about the function of state, which, exercising a domination based on consent as well as coercion, assumes the role of educator and instrument of civilization. There is also a reference to the 'organisation of culture' necessary to introduce the ethical and intellectual reform necessary to a Communist society, an aspect that Gramsci develops in full force in his discussion on the function of the intellectuals (Torres 1992, p. 41).

The 1970s proved a turning point in bringing forth this aspect Gramsci's scholarship, in which, as Broccoli (1972) argued, any distinction between Gramsci as political educator and Gramsci as pedagogical thinker fell apart. Writing in 1969, Giovanni Urbani had prefigured this different and wider interpretative paradigm. It has its roots in one of the core themes of the *Quaderni*: Gramsci's attempt to come to grips with the defeat of the working class movement following the ascent of Fascism. He became persuaded, Urbani (1969) argued, that the roots of that defeat were to be identified in the lack of maturity and political leadership of the working

class, due to a scarce political awareness of its historical role. In this reading, Gramsci established a firm link between hegemony and the educational function of the state, via the Party. The state is an educational apparatus, of which the school is only but a cog. The state, through its hegemonic role, can 'conform' (Gramsci's word) the masses to 'a new human ideal correspondent to a superior type of civilization' (Urbani's words) (Urbani 1969, p. 61). This is a 'conscious and organised action aimed at lifting the masses, through the whole of state activities, and transforming them into self-directed elements, that is, able to reach a level of self-consciousness where the new values are finally felt as one's own' (ibid). Building on Marx, Gramsci envisaged human progress as the gradual development of workers' active and self-conscious participation to history. Given that the preconditions of this progress were determined in the realm of production, workers' voluntary choice to adhere to this societal project could occur only through a hegemonic action, 'The relationship between those who direct and those who are directed, in the different situations in which it takes place, always occurs with the specific features of an educational relationship', writes Urbani (ibid., p. 68). As Pietro Maltese (2010) has remarked, in Gramsci the relationship between teacher and pupil closely resembles the higher one between the party and the masses (p. 128).

This interpretation was a call to read Gramsci's pedagogical notes in strict connection with his underlying political vision. At the same time, it expanded the purview of Gramsci's pedagogical writing to comprise the most original contribution of the Italian thinker, his notion of hegemony. In the past 50 years, the (scant) literature on Gramsci the pedagogist has taken both routes, without reaching a consensus. Angelo Broccoli and Mario Manacorda, both writing in the 1970s, have provided perceptive explorations of both hypotheses.

Angelo Broccoli argued forcefully against a separation between the two souls of Gramsci, one as political thinker and agitator and one as pedagogist. He argued for an analysis of his notebooks that today we would call holistic. This was to prove easier after Valentino Gerratana's critical chronologic edition of the *Quaderni* in 1975 (not available to Broccoli), which superseded a previous edition in which the notes were assembled in topics chosen by a curator. The pedagogical notes of the *Quaderni*, Broccoli argues, are not only about a pedagogical principle, but reflect his political and cultural framework. For Gramsci, he writes, 'the pedagogical problem is either the problem of a whole social structure [...] or else is the sterile exercise of experts, trained in some technique or another, but unable to promote the effective development of the collectivity of individuals' (Broccoli 1972, p. 9). Establishing his argument on this wider base, Broccoli is particularly interested in overcoming the debate on spontaneity and coercion, which had been quite narrowly framed as a pedagogical issue up to that point. Taking hegemony as a central category of the teacher-pupil relation, one which reverberates at several levels of society, spontaneity and hegemonic direction are not opposite, but complementary. 'Stimulating popular or individual spontaneity, argues Broccoli, is always the result of a hegemonic intervention, legitimised by the particular conditions of the mass or the individual' (idem, p. 144). Thus, Gramsci linked spontaneity and direction inextricably. It can also be inferred from Broccoli's argument that the study of Gramsci's

pedagogy reveals the concept of hegemony as central to understand all of Gramsci's work, which Broccoli sees as comprising, without divisions, both the pre-prison and prison years.

In conclusion, Broccoli highlighted the dynamic and dialectical modes of the pedagogical relationship that Gramsci put forward. The relationship between pupil, teacher and environment (and therefore between masses, party and historical circumstances) is ever-changing as the pupil becomes self-aware and transforms her vision of the world and therefore the existing environment. In turn, this transformation affects the teacher who will respond to this higher level of consciousness and is 'enriched' by the process. 'To create, writes Broccoli, the groundwork for the overcoming of the existing society, through the knowledge of its actual contradictions and the attainment of an historical awareness, seems to be the goal of education' (ibid, p. 155).

The work of Broccoli is to be seen in a critical dialogue with that of his contemporary Gramscian scholar Mario Manacorda (2015). Whereas Broccoli analysed Gramsci's pedagogy within the framework of the concepts of hegemony and historical bloc, Manacorda leaned towards the first of the two approaches mentioned above, that is, to interpret Gramsci's pedagogy in the light of his overall political vision, and as necessary to understand that vision. If the educational relationship 'exists throughout society', Gramsci then posits a continuum between the pedagogical and the political. Gramsci's pedagogical research, wrote Manacorda (2015), 'is made not in the design of a specific didactic or organisational framework, but in the comprehension of the complexity of the pedagogical problems in the context of the cultural and political ones inherent to human society' (p. 19). Following this, Manacorda expanded the amount of material to be amenable to a pedagogical reading. In particular, one important novelty of Manacorda was to have given a prominent place to the notes on Americanism and Fordism, which he interpreted as underpinning Gramsci's understanding of human and societal development in the industrial age. According to Manacorda, Gramsci drew profound parallels between Fordism and its equivalent in the Soviet Union, which he cryptically called 'Americanism of a non-American brand', to avoid the prison censors. Obviously, though naively, Gramsci regarded the Soviet factory regime as heralding the liberation of workers, not so in American Fordism. In both cases, however, the pedagogical principle underlying the formation of workers in this new production and political regime required that the dialectics between spontaneity and discipline, an undercurrent in all the *Quaderni*, be resolved in favour of a 'conformity' principle, which moulds people, with their consent, to inform a 'new' society, a socialist one. Manacorda argued that one can interpret the *Quaderni* and the *Prison letters* as Gramsci's attempt to gradually develop a political/pedagogical methodology to shape the men (women are not often mentioned by Gramsci) who will build and inhabit that society, one informed by factories and Fordist-like industrialization, but devoid of the exploitative aims of capitalism. Manacorda did not question the possible shortcomings of this interpretation, which suggests that Gramsci considered industrial machinery as 'objective' tools of production, disjoining the development of technology from that of capitalism itself. In fact, Fordism and Taylorism, as

methods of production, enjoyed a certain success in the Soviet Union in interwar years (see Link 2012). This contradiction was still scarcely debated among the left when Gramsci was writing but had been criticised by the time Manacorda prepared his manuscript, most notably, in Italy, by Raniero Panzieri (1980).

Manacorda interpreted Gramsci's concern for the education of workers in the age of Fordism as underpinning his proposal of school reform. Gramsci was writing in the aftermath of the *Riforma Gentile*, the fascist law which reformed school for the first time since Italian national unification was achieved. Gramsci correctly interpreted the bifurcation between classical and vocational schools mandated by Gentile as deepening class inequality (see Pagano's essay in this volume). While it allowed the children of the working class to become more skilled workers, it perpetuated their subordinated position to the ruling class. For Gramsci, school would need to prepare students for a new, industrial and socialist society, in which they can govern as well as work. 'One needs [...] to create a single type of formative school (primary-secondary) which would take the child up to the threshold of his choice of job, forming him during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling – or controlling those who rule' (Q12 §2; SPN, p. 40). Gramsci's solution, inspired by similar experiments in the Soviet Union, was the establishment of a 'unitary' or 'common' school that would introduce all pupils to both a humanistic formation and a practical activity, acquiring 'the fundamental power to think' (Q12 §2; SPN, p. 34) until they would proceed to specialised schools at the age of 16, when they would have acquired the maturity to recognise their talents. This form of organisation of education resonates with the idea of the intellectual as a 'technician' who, by being embedded in the productive forces, also achieves a 'historical-humanistic conception' (Q12; §3; SPN, p. 10). According to Gramsci, through this system the 'brute coercion' (Q22, §10; SPN, p. 298) by which men have usually been adapted to a production system in other economic regimes could be avoided. The coercive aspect that is necessary, which Manacorda calls throughout his work 'conformity', is the 'psycho-physic' training crucial for the pupil to be able to learn. 'It is a process of adaptation; a habit acquired with effort, pain, and tedium' (Q4 §55, PN2, p. 230). This definition of the individual process is then echoed in Gramsci's position on the premises of collective action, 'This unity of 'spontaneity' and 'conscious leadership', or 'discipline', is precisely the real political action of the subaltern classes' (Q3, §48; PN2, p. 51, SPN, p. 198), which Manacorda identifies as the key motive of Gramsci's pedagogical ethos.

Dario Ragazzini, writing in the shadow of Manacorda, remarked that in the notes on Americanism and Fordism, there is an implicit link between industrialism and socialism: they both point to 'conforming' intervention, but in the case of socialism this is linked to a 'self-direction of the class'—not dictated by external intervention—aware of the need to interpret critically the society and historical moment to which it belongs (Ragazzini 1976, pp. 48–49). In this respect, Gramsci wondered, 'how should everyone choose and combine the elements for the constitution of such an autonomous conscience? Will each element imposed have to be repudiated a priori? It will be repudiated inasmuch as it is imposed, but not in itself; that is to say that it will be necessary to give a new form which is specific to the given group'

(Q16, §12). The aims of this collective consciousness, wrote Ragazzini, cannot be 'voluntaristic' or 'utopian' but are provided by the historical necessity interpreted in a critical way (Ragazzini 1976, p. 49). In sum, this was a middle way, between a voluntaristic and, on the other hand, mechanistic vision of the relationship between school and society.

These themes were influential also in the reception of Gramsci's pedagogical ideas in the Anglo-Saxon literature. At times, Gramsci's writings on schooling have had problematic connotations for progressives (Giroux 2002, p. 47), but only if dissociated from the larger political project in which those writings were embedded. Gramsci's criticism of Rousseauian pedagogy, and his endorsement of discipline, rigour and rote teaching techniques were central to a debate about Gramsci's possible conservative views on the school curriculum and pedagogy (Giroux et al. 1980). In this view, best articulated by Harold Entwistle (1979) Gramsci advocated for a traditional pedagogy, predicated on the authority of teacher and the passivity of the pupil, and a focus on a mainstream curriculum, epistemologically positivist, while advocating (in Entwistle's view) a critical pedagogy and a radical politics in sites of adult education, such as trade unions. This hypothesis has been regularly rediscovered by conservative educators, more recently the American E. D. Hirsch, and, on a political level, the former British Minister of Education, Michael Gove.[1]

The literature has amply demonstrated how these conclusions were reached through a selective reading of Gramsci's view of schooling (Giroux 2002). For instance, as we have seen, in his youth Gramsci argued forcefully against instilling the working class with encyclopaedic knowledge, which created the illusion of cultured individuals, by treating the student as a 'mere container in which to pour and conserve empirical data or brute disconnected facts' (Giroux 2002, p. 49). In fact, Gramsci envisioned the use of rigorous techniques only for the early years of schooling, in which a rather 'dogmatic' approach necessary to learn basic skills would be mitigated by an approach the would be 'formative' as well as 'instructive' (Q12, §1; SPN, pp. 30–33). Entwistle's reading of Gramsci, based on the latter's support for rote learning, should be tempered by another strand of Gramsci's pedagogy, based on the noted remark that 'the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil is a teacher' (Q10II, §44; SPN, p. 350). Giroux (2002) traces this to the idea expressed in Marx's *Thesis on Feuerbach* that the educator must be educated. 'The concept of the teacher as a learner suggests that teachers must help students to appropriate their own histories' (p. 53) and challenged any reading of Gramsci as a supporter of sterile memorization of information and standardised testing.

As stated above, Gramsci perceptively remarked that studying is a physical as well as an intellectual activity. It requires a conditioning of the body to sit still for long hours that children of the ruling class have often acquired before joining public school and which places them in distinct advantage to succeed. However, it would be misleading to think of physical discipline as an end in itself, rather, it serves to

[1] Peter Walker, 'Michael Gove reveals the surprising inspirations behind his reforms', *The Guardian*, 5 February 2013.

develop the self-mastery crucial to reach self-awareness and therefore self-liberation. It is also highly problematic to analyse Gramsci's view of school-level education outside of the wider context of his views on political education, of which schooling is a part. Attributing, as Hirsch (1996) does, to Gramsci, the idea that children must command a series of 'facts' and the traditional culture, i.e., the dominant one, for purposes other than subverting it is to miss a central concern of the Gramsci's pedagogical thought. In sum, 'the interconnections between discipline and critical thinking in Gramsci's view of schooling only lend support to a conservative notion of pedagogy if the concept of physical discipline and self-control is abstracted from his emphasis on the importance of developing a counterhegemony' (Giroux et al. 1980, p. 310).

1.4 Gramsci's Legacy to Critical Pedagogy and Radical Adult Education

We have already seen how critical educationalists pushed passed Entwistle's (1979) argument that Gramsci advocated for a conservative schooling. Gramsci's work has also been influential and foundational in other key debates within critical pedagogy. What came to be known as critical pedagogy emerged in no small part from US and UK scholarship on the sociology of education in the 1970s and 1980s. Central to this debate was the reproductive role of schooling as a social institution. Those such as Giroux and Apple who challenged Entwistle's characterization of Gramsci's pedagogy, also saw in Gramsci a path away from and beyond what they considered overly deterministic and abstract analyses of schooling as simply a social institution which reproduced class and other social inequalities. While the scholars in the emerging field of critical pedagogy also drew on the works of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), Bernstein (1977), Young (1971) and Wallis (1977), it was Gramsci—particularly his conceptualizations of state, hegemony and intellectuals—who would come to be one of the standout '"classical" theorists who influenced the intellectual development of critical pedagogy' (Darder et al. 2009, p. 6).

In Apple's (2004) book *Ideology and Curriculum*, originally published in 1979, he argued that economists and sociologists who researched schooling tended to treat schools as 'black boxes'. They measured inputs and outputs of schools as social institutions but really paid little attention to what actually occurred in schools. Moreover, they also generally glossed over the outliers and contradictions (Carnoy 2007) which ran counter to the macrolevel claims that children generally attend schools which correspond to their social location and then land jobs which also correspond to their social location. While the reproductive nature of schooling as a social institution could not be denied, the then contemporary scholarship could not really explain exactly how this happened, nor explain the cases when this did not happen. It was Bowles and Gintis' (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America* which, rightly or wrongly, came under particular scrutiny for what early critical pedago-

gists considered to be its overly deterministic analysis of schooling and class reproduction. What Giroux (Aronowitz and Giroux 1993) would label the 'hegemonic-state reproductive model' was a theoretical framework enabling scholars to look deeply into the 'black box' of schools from a Gramscian standpoint and understand the inner workings of schools, pedagogical practices and curricular materials to show the interrelatedness of microlevel practices and relations and the macrolevel outcomes of schooling. Engaging in this form of research would also expose the fact that schools were sites of significant contradictions on the way to reproducing social inequalities. In other words, schools, like all institutions of Gramsci's civil society, are sites of contestation over hegemony.

The study of Gramsci opened up whole new avenues of research in what would come to be called critical pedagogy. As Giroux (1981) succinctly stated it, 'Gramsci's notion that hegemony represents a pedagogical relationship through which the legitimacy of meaning and practice is struggled over makes it imperative that a theory of radical pedagogy take as its central task an analysis of how both hegemony functions in schools and how various forms of resistance and opposition either challenge or help to sustain it' (p. 26). By drawing on Gramsci's analysis of the state and his interrelated analysis of hegemony, critical pedagogists had at their disposal a number of key theoretical insights for developing a much richer understanding of schooling. Armed with a Gramscian notion of the state and hegemony, critical pedagogists could move beyond Althusser's (1971) ideological state apparatus notion (Sotiris 2016) and base/superstructure approaches which saw the cultural as merely reflective of the economic (Apple 2004). Critical pedagogists were able to pose culture as a dynamic and lived reality contested in and through institutions of civil society such as schools (Giroux 1981). Schools have a relative autonomy (Apple 2003) from the dominant economic relations and groups in society, and the goal of critical pedagogists was to understand the ever-changing limits and nature of this autonomy while also understanding that it was always relative. The insight that schools are sites of dominant hegemony, and thereby play a reproductive role, has to simultaneously consider that hegemony is something that must be constantly built and rebuilt (Apple 2003).

Gramsci's analysis of the state and hegemony allowed critical pedagogists to reframe the macrolevel nature of schools while at the same time, Gramsci's analysis of intellectuals—the major social agents involved in the construction of hegemony and its contestation—allowed critical pedagogists new ways of framing the relational aspects of what goes on in the black box of schools. In this vein, Apple (1985) argued that intellectuals within institutions, not the institutions themselves, elaborate dominant ideologies. Therefore, teachers are intellectuals in the sense that they are key actors within the institution of schooling involved in the elaboration of ideologies. Since schools as state institutions have relative autonomy, they can be sites of alternative ideas and contestation. Drawing on Gramsci, Aronowitz and Giroux(1993) developed the idea of transformative intellectuals to describe teachers and other cultural workers who work inside and outside state institutions to challenge dominant hegemony. Smyth et al. (2000) took the idea of teachers as intellectuals as a framing concept for their political economic analysis of teacher work

and teacher training. The training of teachers, including the teaching of dispositions and 'best' practices, is a terrain for the battle of ideological control over teachers. This training can inculcate dominant notions but can also be an arena for contestation over what constitutes appropriate knowledge, skills and dispositions. Teachers, then, can be seen, and can be taught to see themselves, as pedagogical/political agents, conscious of their role in civil society and the battle over common sense and hegemony.

The study of Gramsci has also allowed critical pedagogists to consider curricular matters within schools as physical manifestations of the battle over hegemony (Au 2012). Again, since from a Gramscian standpoint, hegemony must be constantly built, curriculum in schools becomes a highly contested terrain precisely since it does not always reflect dominant, commonsensical ideas. As Apple (1988) argued, it is a flash point for what Gramsci referred to as the contradictions between good sense and common sense. Moreover, case study analysis of battles over curriculum (Apple and Oliver 2003) demonstrate how transformative teachers (Aronowitz and Giroux 1993) who create counter-hegemonic curriculum can, nevertheless, also unwittingly push people under the 'hegemonic umbrella' of dominant groups with whom they would otherwise share very little in common.

As much as Gramsci ideas provided critical pedagogists with new ways of framing research into the nuanced ways in which schools, teachers, teacher training and curriculum are related to the nature of hegemony in civil society, his ideas have also provided new ways of considering and developing alternative and counter-hegemonic forms of instructional strategies and teacher practice. As Apple (1985) argued, 'hegemony is constituted by our very day to day practices' (p. 40). Critical pedagogists have, therefore, put considerable energy into developing alternative educational practices. In a text which comes close to naming for the first time 'critical pedagogy' and which draws directly on Gramsci, Giroux (1981) states that it is essential that radical pedagogues have a very in-depth understanding of students' lived realities and that pedagogies are developed which allow for students to come to a full understanding of their own socio-political economic realities in order to understand their own subjectivities in relation to dominant modes of thinking and being. Giroux argues that this is not a student-centred pedagogy which takes as a natural given the way students are, but rather a pedagogy which puts the way students are under critical interrogation, a critical education. A critical education of this nature, or a critical pedagogy, must operate on the fertile, yet tricky ground of consciousness which is, from a Gramscian perspective, a mix of common and good sense (Giroux 2001). Basing alternative, critical pedagogic practices on the lived realities of students opened up critical pedagogy to consider the realities of race, sexuality and gender as areas to create counter-hegemonic pedagogical practices. Moreover, the work of Paulo Freire became a frequent reference for the development of alternative pedagogical practices within the field of critical pedagogy (Mayo 1999).

At about the same time that critical pedagogy was emerging as a field of practice and finding theoretical inspiration in the work of Gramsci, the marker Radical Adult Education (e.g., Lovett 1988; Thomas 1982; Thompson 1980a) was gaining promi-

nence as a way to refer to the re-emergence of left-wing working class-based community and labour adult education practices in the UK. Just as critical pedagogists found utility in Gramsci's concepts of state and hegemony to better understand and research the nature of schooling, radical adult educators drew on these same concepts to understand the nature of adult education and, in particular, to address the difficult question of where educational practices could be implemented to create the greatest amount of social change. So, while Gramsci's concept of the state, helped critical pedagogists consider schooling as a place of both dominant hegemony and contestation, it helped radical adult educators address the question of to what extent state provided and funded adult education could be a site for radical educational practices among adults. In more recent years, this issue of understanding spaces for radical adult education from a Gramscian perspective has been extended to (new) social movements and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., Youngman 2000; Hall 2000; Holford 1995; Holst 2002; Crowther et al. 2005; Mayo 2005; Choudry 2015). Moreover, the idea of seeking sites for radical adult education has been at the heart of the major texts on Gramsci in adult education: Coben (1998) refers to this as the 'politics of adult education', Mayo (1999) poses this as 'possibilities for transformative action' and Hill (2007) focuses on Gramsci as a challenge to post-Marxist conceptualizations of radical democracy. In addition, Gramsci has been used in the development of theories of adult learning (e.g., Allman 1999, 2001; Baptist and Rehmann 2011; Brookfield 2005; Mezirow 1991) and in the expansion of the concepts of adult informal and nonformal learning to cultural spaces (e.g., Jubas et al. 2015).

As with critical pedagogists, it has been Gramsci's interrelated concepts of state and hegemony which have been of greatest utility for radical adult educators in considering sites for radical adult education. Since Gramsci's concept of hegemony informs us that education cannot be neutral (Thompson 1980b) and that it is a process of ideological control and contestation (Westwood 1980), Gramsci's concepts have particular relevance for adult education, in no small part, since he, himself engaged in it. As Westwood argued, Gramsci 'gave to education a very important role in challenging bourgeois hegemony. He was particularly concerned with the role of adult education which he saw as political education' (p. 43). In terms of sites for radical adult education, Gramsci's conceptualization of civil society has been the key focal point for understanding strategic locations for radical adult education. The use of Gramsci's concept of civil society has not, however, been without debates within the field. The contested aspect of hegemony within the institutions of civil society has allowed radical adult educators to consider the idea of working 'in and against the system' (Mayo 1999, p. 136) with 'well thought out counter-hegemonic strategies' (Collins 1991, p. 54). Radical adult educators have also drawn on Gramsci's ideas of a war of position (e.g., Ledwith 2010) and alliances (e.g., Collins 1998) to highlight the long-term process of countering prevailing hegemony and the need for this work to happen across social locations and institutions. A key Gramscian insight generally not fully considered in this literature is the importance Gramsci placed on developing spaces or institutions which 'serve the independent interests of the working class' (Greene 2015, p. 142).

The general failure to fully consider the importance Gramsci gave to independent working class institutions and more broadly the political independence of the working class is part of adult education scholars mixing in along with Gramsci's concept of civil society, parallel terms such as Habermas' system and lifeworld in the quest to understand sites for radical adult education (e.g., Cunningham 1998; Welton 1993, 2013). Newman (2005) tries to reconcile these terms by arguing that Habermas' system and lifeworld and other theorists' notions of civil society can be foundational for various forms of popular or radical education. He highlights the fact that Gramsci provides a 'harder' definition of civil society in that it describes civil society as the 'ramparts shoring up the state, promoting and reinforcing its hegemonic control' (p. 25). This stands in contrast to literature on adult education, NGOs and new social movements which defends the notion of building or expanding civil society (e.g., Hall 1997). Newman's idea of differing forms of radical education based on differing definitions may be a way passed these debates, but it is a challenge when Gramsci's conceptualization of civil society is drawn upon in the literature on education in new social movements and nongovernmental organizations as a part of building or expanding civil society.

Beyond the debates over conceptualizations of civil society and sites for radical adult education, Gramsci's ideas on hegemony and the state have proven useful for understanding public policy and adult education and social change. Particularly, from a political economic perspective, Youngman (1996a) has challenged adult educators to not romanticise social movements, NGOs or civil society since they 'do not stand apart from the conflicts arising out of class and other social divisions' (p. 18). Any approach to adult education must carefully consider the organisational site's 'place in the struggle for hegemony' (Youngman 1996b, p. 214). When considering adult education policy formation and implementation, Youngman (2000) urges adult educators to consider the framework developed by Torres (1990) in which he identifies four major Gramscian hypotheses on the formation of state adult education policy: (1) relations of hegemony are educational, (2) hegemony is organised by intellectuals, (3) education is the process of the formation of social conformism, (4) the state as educator has the task of creating a new civilizational type or level. Drawing on Torres, Youngman (2000) argues that adult education policy must be seen within the state's role of maintaining and legitimating the political domination of the capitalist class while also 'adjusting in various ways to pressures exerted by the subordinate classes and other groups in civil society' (p. 45). Therefore, adult education policy and practice can serve dominant interests but can also promote alternatives. At the level of international adult education policy, Rubenson (2011) draws on Gramsci's concept of hegemony to detail the ascendancy of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) neoliberal framework of lifelong learning over UNESCO's liberal humanist framework of lifelong education. The OECD's neoliberal agenda associated with the term lifelong learning became the dominant and hegemonic paradigm and, thereby, the framework for setting international, and thereby, regional and national adult education policy around the world.

Like critical pedagogists, adult educators have also drawn on Gramsci for developing critical theories of learning and teaching. The fact that Gramsci himself was an educator of adults has facilitated this process and has perhaps also allowed adult educators to generally not fully engage with Gramsci's writings on schooling that were 'tainted' by Entwistle's argument that they were conservative. As with critical pedagogy, efforts to develop theories of adult learning and teaching based in Gramsci often refer to the work of Paulo Freire for comparison. This is even more prevalent in adult education literature since Freire was familiar with Gramsci and because of the inherent affinities between Gramsci the 'pedagogue of revolution' and Freire the 'revolutionary pedagogue' (Freire, in Freire and Macedo 1987). In fact, the most seminal English language adult education texts on Gramsci (Coben 1998; Mayo 1999), and those with extensive analysis of Gramsci (Allman 1999), all make lengthy comparisons between Gramsci and Freire (see Hill 2007, for an exception). In general terms, it is the concept of hegemony, often described as the leitmotif of his work, (Borg et al. 2002) which adult educators draw upon for theories of learning and teaching.

The dominant theory of learning in English language adult education scholarship is that of transformative learning developed by Jack Mezirow. In his first major work on transformative learning, Mezirow (1991) draws on Gramsci's concept of hegemony to outline what he calls sociolinguistic premise distortions. For Mezirow, sociolinguistic premise distortions 'include all the mechanisms by which society and language arbitrarily shape and limit our perception and understanding' (pp. 130–131). Mezirow draws on Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explain the 'taken-for-grantedness' of what are socially constructed premises based on dominant ways of life which are accepted as 'natural, good and just' (p. 131), when in fact they are generally not. The learning process, through which people become aware of the distorting nature of sociolinguistic premises can 'provide leverage for reflective analysis and ultimately transformation' (p. 132). Brookfield (2005), drawing on Gramsci, defines hegemony as 'the process by which we learn to embrace enthusiastically a system of beliefs and practices that end up harming us and working to support the interests of others who have power over us' (p. 93). Based on this, he presents three main reasons why Gramsci's concept of hegemony is important for adult educators: (1) Gramsci understands hegemony as an educational relationship. It is not imposed, but rather learned. So, a hallmark of adulthood is learning hegemony; (2) Gramsci develops a theory of learning in terms of identifying and opposing hegemony which is central to the notion of critical consciousness; and (3) Gramsci's theory of learning or confronting hegemony highlights the role of organic intellectuals as adult educators. Foley (1999), in his case studies of informal adult learning in social movements, also highlights hegemony and the fact that it is 'continually contested' (p. 15) as a central aspect in understanding the learning that takes place in social movements as they contest dominant ideologies. Finally, beyond obvious politically charged learning in social movements, adult educators have also drawn on hegemony to understand the learning inherent in pop culture such as novels, movies, television and theatre. Jubas (2015) uses Gramsci's idea of hegemony as contested to articulate a framework for understanding learning through

television shows. 'Pop culture and cultural assumption function dialectically…, as they echo hegemonic ideas and interests *and* open up potential different stances, turning them into deliberate critical pedagogues for audience members, whether in the theatre, the living room or the classroom' (p. 87).

As much as critical pedagogists and radical adult educators have drawn on major Gramscian concepts for understanding the nature of schooling, educational policy and practice and learning in institutions of civil society and in social movements, there are limitations in this scholarship which we believe this current volume helps address. One of the most understudied areas of political pedagogy is in the institutions in which Gramsci engaged in his own pedagogical practice, namely, revolutionary political parties. With a few exceptions (e.g., Allman and Wallis 1995; Holst 2004; Morgan 1987), most critical pedagogy and radical adult education literature has followed the ebb and flow of social movements themselves and focused on new social movements which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. As these movements have been overtaken by movements among new social subjects such as low wage and landless workers, the poor, the dispossessed and other social subjects reflecting the precariousness of growing sectors of humanity across the planet, we believe the time is perhaps right for an international reassessment of Gramsci's revolutionary pedagogy.

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Part I
Understanding Gramsci and Education

Chapter 2
Gramsci, Hegemony and Educational Politics

Peter Mayo

2.1 Introduction: Italy's Contribution to Critical Education *Praxis*

Antonio Gramsci is arguably Italy's most cited author in the literature concerning the politics of education. In this regard, one notices a tendency for him to eclipse other potential great Italian contributors to the international debate on critical education.[1] Gramsci's contribution, however, remains immense, as I will attempt to show in this chapter.

[1] These contributors would include don Lorenzo Milani, Alberto Manzi, Danilo Dolci, Aldo Capitini and Mario Lodi who all deserve greater recognition in the non-Italian firmament than is the case at present. I will not enter debates on the respective merits of these figures. Milani, with his emphasis on older learners teaching younger ones, the class politics of public schooling and reading history against the grain, invites parallels with Gramsci and so does Dolci with his frequent references to and treatment of the 'questione meridionale' (Southern Question). Others like Lodi, and I would add once more Milani, would offer contrasts with Gramsci with respect to writing with their 'collective cooperative writing' approach. All these aspects deserve wider treatment beyond the scope of this essay. The focus of the discussions, in this volume, however, is Gramsci. I simply want to acknowledge, at the very outset, the view that there is more to Italy and critical education, or critical pedagogy for that matter, than simply Gramsci. This is not to diminish in any way Gramsci's contribution that is great but to place on record the names of others, from the same country, who have contributed to critical educational thought. May more volumes like this one be dedicated to the work of each.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_2

2.2 Reading Gramsci Holistically

It is immense in the sense that, in order to do justice to his thinking on education, one cannot simply restrict oneself to his concerns about schooling. These concerns are mainly found in the much cited tracts on the 'Unitarian School' (Borg and Mayo 2002; Mayo 2015) in *Quaderni* IV and XII (Gramsci 1975), the latter being a revision of the former. And there is the danger that, given this is his most systematically laid out argument on education, one can fall into the trap of confining oneself to a discussion of just these tracts. It is something I seek to avoid here. Happily, book-length single studies on Gramsci and education (Broccoli 1972; Entwistle 1979; de Robbio Anziano 1987; Monasta 1993; Mayo 2015) have avoided this, providing very thorough discussions. Neither can one restrict oneself to the dispersed reflections on adult, including workers' and prison, education. These remain important contributions offering rewarding insights for those seeking inspiration in the educational field. No piece on Gramsci's views on education would be sufficient without any engaged reference to these writings, some mere jottings and others being elaborate notes (especially those on the 'Unitarian School') that take the form of systematically and cogently argued essays. I still think, however, that these writings make sense in the context of Gramsci's overarching view of hegemony since I have contended, together with close colleagues (see Borg et al. 2002) that education, viewed in its broadest sense, is central to the workings of hegemony itself.

Hegemony is the term borrowed from ancient Greek but which was used by political leaders such as Lenin (*gegemoniya*) and Plekhanov, as well as in the linguistic debates in which Gramsci was immersed as a philology student at the University of Turin (Ives 2004a). The term was adopted and elaborated by Gramsci, albeit not in a systematic manner, to describe a particular set of power relations that exist within a society with a refined and well-developed complex of ideological and repressive institutions. The former constitute what he calls 'civil society', a term which is given different interpretations by different authors, Gramsci being no exception. Gramsci had in mind the situation that prevailed in the Western European society of which his native Italy formed part. Gramsci used it to refer to a situation when most social arrangements are *conditioned* by and tend to support the interests of a particular class or social grouping. I use the word 'conditioning' to avoid giving hegemony a deterministic weight, since, according to Gramsci's conception, this process is said to comprise not only the means of consolidating a group's power but simultaneously also possibilities for this power to be challenged and transformed by subaltern groups. The social arrangements that keep a certain class or social grouping in power are constantly open to renegotiation. In this regard, there is fluidity about the hegemony concept which renders it more dynamic and therefore imbued with a sense of agency than would be the case with 'ideology critique' which one associates with some major exponents of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. There has been a debate in Germany around this polarisation, pitting hegemony theory against 'ideology critique'. Authors/activists exploring spaces within power structures for change seem to have found greater purchase in Gramsci's concept of

hegemony. Hegemony is, for Gramsci, an ensemble of relations which are conceived as pedagogical relations:

> Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations. (Q10II, §44; SPN, p. 350)

This quotation from the *Quaderni del Carcere* (the Prison Notebooks) serves to emphasise the crucial educational element (education once again conceived of in its widest context and not limited to formal institutions) embedded in relations of hegemony. Education is the central core of hegemony and therefore constitutes a crucial aspect of Gramsci's conception of power and the quest for social and political transformation. People attempting to understand Gramsci's political theory avoid this educational dimension at their peril.

And yet, Gramsci's own nonsystematic elaboration of the concept is not shorn of ambiguities. Gramsci was not preparing a text for publication but simply toying with ideas in a prison cell. Concepts were adopted, experimented with and revised over and over again in predominantly cryptic writings, hence the inconsistencies. Alas, these inconsistencies have given rise to different uses of this term by different writers and commentators. In Gramsci's writings, hegemony is often said to refer to either one of the heads or both twin heads of Machiavelli's centaur (see *Il Principe*, The Prince). The heads are those of consent and coercion. At times, therefore, hegemony stands for force (coercion) and consent combined. At other times it stands for simply consent. I personally favour the more comprehensive conception of hegemony, i.e. consent + coercion, since it is very much in keeping with Gramsci's notion of the 'integral state' (Q10II, §44; SPN, p. 239). The integral state, as Peter D Thomas (2009) explains, is an all-encompassing state in which aspects of consent and repression are intertwined.

Different countries are at different levels in terms of the relationship between state, political and civil society. The idea, therefore, that a frontal attack (war of manoeuvre) suffices in a country like Czar-ruled Russia while a longer drawn-out process involving a 'war of position', entailing advances and retreats, applies to the West, because of its civil society that encircles the state, is correct only to a limited extent. The idea of a long 'labour of criticism' (Gramsci 1977, SPW-1, p. 12) and consensus building applies to East and West, North and South. (Thomas 2009) While some countries may be well advanced in the transformation of civil society prior to the conquest of the state, others still have to build and transform most of civil society following the state's conquest. In short the frontal attack of the Bolshevik revolution had, according to Gramsci, to lead to the building of civil society itself, rooting the bases of consent for this revolution in popular consciousness, otherwise it would be just a form of 'passive revolution',[2] that is, a revolution from above. I would add, to

[2] One comes across two meanings regarding 'passive revolution', originally used by the nineteenth-century Neapolitan writer, Vincenzo Cuoco. Adam D. Morton (2011) argues that the term is used 'First, with reference to a revolution without mass participation, or a "revolution from above", involving elite-engineered social and political reform that draws on foreign capital and associated

this statement, the rider that the revolution is unlikely to hold out for a lengthy period of time (the collapse of the Soviet system in the latter years of the twentieth century tends to confirm this view).

One ought to note that Gramsci posits the separation between consent and coercion for strictly heuristic purposes. In reality, one cannot separate them; a 100% repressive apparatus and a 100% ideological apparatus are hardly ever encountered (see Althusser 1971). Schools can be ideological and repressive at the same time, even though we immediately tend to associate them with the 'ideological' sectors, especially following a whole corpus of writings in the sociology of education emphasising their role in inculcating the bourgeois ideology, often disregarding Louis Althusser's (1971) nuanced conception of the 'ideological state apparatus'. The degree of repression in schools varies from state to state, e.g. flunking, state-slapped fines for absenteeism, reprisals against protesting students and striking teachers (Mayo 2014) and heavy-handed security guard measures in schools (Giroux 2009).

2.3 Education and the Integral State

My reference to the notion of the integral state indicates the larger context in which Gramsci's broad view of education needs to be seen. I have just argued that the separations between the state and civil society, and between the ideological/consensual and the repressive, serve a heuristic purpose. The same applies to the separation between civil and political society (that is between the consensual and repressive domains of power). The areas are much more integrated than such a heuristic separation would have us believe, captured in Gramsci's reference to the integral state.

Education and cultural formation are at the heart of the ideological work prefiguring the transformed state. They are key vehicles for renegotiating the relations of hegemony; the transformation of which, Gramsci warns, can only be completed when a group aspiring to power finally exerts control over the state apparatus and therefore over such processes as that of exchange. Gramsci argues that one cannot completely change class consciousness until this class's way of life is transformed, that is, unless the proletariat becomes the ruling class (Larrain 1983, p. 82). The proletariat would become the *classe dirigente* (ruling class) through, in Gramsci's words, 'possession of the apparatus of production and exchange and state power' (my translation from Gramsci's tract, 'Necessitàdi una preparazione ideologica di massa',[3] Gramsci 1997, p. 161).

ideas while lacking a national-popular base' (p. 38). Arguably the other more important use of the term is 'to capture how a revolutionary form of political transformation is pressed into a conservative project of restoration. In this second sense, passive revolution is linked to insurrectionary mass mobilisation from below while such class demands are restricted so that "changes in the world of production are accommodated within the current social formation"' (Ibid.)

[3] Necessity for the ideological preparation of the masses.

The state is alive, has a material presence and, as always, is constituted by social relations, even if it now, in this present day, has the function of developing and activating the infrastructure for the mobility of capital, training the potential labour force (the so-called human resources) and also engaging in economic activity. It sustains the private sector with a series of incentives and enters the commercial terrain, blurring the boundaries between public and private as in the case of higher education. In addition, it also assumes the character of what Giroux and others have called the carceral state or what Giorgio Agamben (2005) would call the 'state of exception', ostensibly 'for the public good'. It adopts repressive measures in public spaces like schools in the USA and imprisons. It disciplines those who suffer and fall by the wayside as a result of neoliberal policies (the imprisonment of a substantial number of Afro-American and Hispanic youth in the USA). In addition, in certain countries, including frontier European islands in the Mediterranean (e.g. Malta and Lampedusa), it incarcerates, in detention centres, numerous immigrants who flee from poverty and misery in their colonially and neocolonially ransacked home countries and continents. These are all manifestations of the carceral state.

It is against this backdrop and the nature of relations between state and civil society, force and consent, in the Gramscian sense, that education in its various manifestations needs to be seen. But there is one aspect of hegemony and the state that is given prominence in Gramsci's writings, including writings that focus on one aspect of educational provision: the *relational* aspect. This is underlined in the earlier quote from Gramsci that every relation of hegemony is a pedagogical relation. Hence the struggle for hegemony partly involves transforming the social relations of capitalist production that, when transformed into a less hierarchical and more democratic set of relations, would also signify a change in the mode of production itself. This brings us to one aspect of Gramsci's writings on the Factory Councils that concerns a specific aspect of education, namely, workers' education for industrial democracy. The writings in question span over two phases: the pre-revolutionary phase (Gramsci 1964, 1977), that is, before the workers' occupation of the factories in the latter part of the twentieth century's second decade, known as the *biennio rosso*,[4] and the immediate aftermath to the 'revolution that failed'. (Clark 1977). It involved Gramsci's conceiving of the Factory Councils as alternatives to the reformist trade unions and later, following a serious rethink, as complementary organisations to these trade unions (Gramsci 1978). The unions needed to be assisted to transcend their thinking and action beyond simply bargaining within the given framework of industrial relations to changing the framework itself. In short the Factory Councils were conceived as vehicles to enable unions to transcend capitalist-wage relations and usher in a new mode of production governed by democratic principles which would then lie at the heart of the workers' state. Inspired by the soviet model, these writings by Gramsci conceived of the Factory Councils' role as being partly educational, involving learning of different tasks, not just one limited repetitive task, and also administrative skills. All this was intended to usher in a new

[4] The Red 2 years.

conception of workers' control at the workplace. The concern was with education for industrial democracy in its broadest sense:

> The Socialist State already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited working class. To link these institutions, coordinating and ordering them into a highly centralized hierarchy of competences and powers, while respecting the necessary autonomy and articulation of each, is to create a genuine workers' democracy here and now. (Gramsci 1977, SPW-1, p. 66)

It is the 'relational' aspect of that construct called 'the state' that is being underlined by Gramsci. The state is here conceived of as an ensemble of legitimised social relations. It is the legitimised hierarchal relations, constituting the state, that are the target of Gramsci's strategy as the effort involved in fashioning a democratic socialist state carries with it a struggle to confront the legitimacy of such relations as manifest in different sites of practice. The workplace constitutes one essential site of practice. The struggle would, for instance, involve confronting and seeking to transform the hierarchical separation between conception and execution of work, the challenge posed by Gramsci for the Factory Councils. This entails a democratic effort at workers acquiring overall knowledge of the production process, to heighten their powers of conception, and being involved in strategy formulation. This stands in contrast to the then contemporary situation of workers serving as a partial operation in the system, the basis of Marx's critique of what he calls 'estranged labour' or 'alienation'. An education to democratise the social relations of production was considered by Gramsci to be key to transforming the state via its constitutive social relations.

Gramsci, however, conceived of education as being wider in scope. The organisation at the heart of a class or group aspiring to become a *classe dirigente* had to furnish educational experiences in different areas involving different sites of practice. Journalism played an important role, and Gramsci was a direct contributor to the widespread effort involved in socialist cultural and educational renewal through his writings for *Avanti*! when he served as cultural and theatre critic elaborating on themes by say Ibsen and Pirandello to question assumptions concerning bourgeois life. Issues were raised regarding relativism and its pitfalls (Pirandello) or the role of women in society (Ibsen), with Gramsci adopting, in the latter case, what would later be regarded as a Shavian (i.e. Bernard Shaw's type) interpretation of *A Doll's House*. Gramsci also contributed to *Il Grido del Popolo*, *Sotto la Mole*, *l'Ordine Nuovo* (perhaps the best known periodical of politics and culture associated with him, Umberto Terracini and Palmiro Togliatti) and later, following the founding of the Italian Communist Party, *l'Unità*, the title he himself chose for this broadsheet which continues to reproduce his name, as the paper's founder, beneath the masthead. Writing in periodicals with a broad national reach complemented his work as an indefatigable organiser which also involved his being engaged, at a young age, in workers education circles, the cultural Club Vita Morale, the Institute of Proletarian Culture which he set up, the Communist Party's correspondence school and, when, on the open prison island of Ustica, awaiting his summoning to court, the *scuola dei confinati* (prison school). Some of these had an ephemeral existence, while others

extended beyond his actual involvement with them: the Ustica prison school which is said to have had a lasting effect on the island's education as local inhabitants were invited to attend (Gramsci 1996). Gramsci combines the roles of specific and public organic intellectual, specific in the Foucauldian sense of being engaged in such specific localities and sites as Ustica, and therefore within a limited geographical range, and public in the sense of having established himself as one of the leading Italian socialist spokespersons of the first part of the twentieth century. His style of writing in newspapers/periodicals in an idiom that reaches a wider and mixed readership contrasts with the more restrained and measured, yet still clear and accessible, writing in the *Quaderni*. He is exemplary in terms of his appeal as one of the leading Italian public intellectuals of the age. This brings to mind the role of public intellectuals as people who contribute to not only fashioning the cultural climate of an age but also the educational milieu that emerges within this climate. In more recent times, Henry Giroux, a leading figure in critical pedagogy (Giroux 2011) and himself a public intellectual, writing regularly for the Canadian press and such outlets as *Counterpunch* and *Truthout*, has been highlighting the educational role of public intellectuals, often lamenting the demise of the academic public intellectual gated and gagged as a result of a variety of corporate and security interests which have come to bear on university life. In Gramsci, he has the classic example of the kind of intellectual he has in mind, a thinker who, as evident from the *Quaderni*, did not allow his party interests to restrict the range of his intellectual curiosity, enquiry and articulation of public concerns. He did so to the point that he did not embrace the very Marxism, to which he contributed with his 'open' formulations, as some kind of 'ideological church'. It is probably this aspect of his writings which would have rendered the contents of his *Prison Notebooks* anathema to Stalin[5] and yet keeps the brand of leftist thinking contained therein open enough to help stimulate a revitalised version of the Marxist tradition among intellectuals in the Western world and elsewhere, notably the New Left in Europe and the Americas.

2.4 Broad Range of Educators

The role of public intellectuals is given a lot of prominence in contemporary debates concerning what is fashionable to be called the democratic public sphere, though talking of such a democratic sphere in Gramsci's time sounds ludicrous given the fascist 'state of exception', of which he became, together with others (e.g. the brothers Carlo and Nello Rosselli, Piero Gobetti, Giovanni Amendola and Giacomo Matteotti), an illustrious victim (in Enrico Berlinguer's words, killed 'scientifically'). The 'public intellectuals' theme does give rise to an important question: who can be an educator from a Gramscian perspective?

[5] For all the hardships and painful estrangement it caused, imprisonment kept Gramsci away from the clutches of Stalin and the stultifying effects these could have had on the Sardinian's theoretical formulations.

Gramsci makes reference to professional school teachers in his letters, including those who taught him in his schools (see Borg et al., p. 4). In a particular negative portrayal of teachers, he holds some of those who taught him at the *liceo* responsible, through their mediocre teaching, for making him stray from the 'exact sciences' and Mathematics, despite his liking for the subject when very young. In fact, he eventually opted for Greek over Maths when offered a choice. (Ibid.) I mentioned how he himself was educator and student in various non-formal learning settings, including stressful settings such as the prison island where he and other political detainees mixed with 600 hardened criminals (*recidivi*) as well as local inhabitants (Gramsci 1996, p. 8). He gave lessons on certain topics and attended others. This style of getting people to prepare and present was typical of the kind of education in which Gramsci was involved as political activist even in his earlier days in Turin. In the latter case, classes were organised along these lines. Ordinary people were given a task to prepare and deliver a class with a view to stimulating a debate. This is in keeping with the best progressive traditions of popular education, taken up, incidentally, in other famous prison schools such as the one involving contemporary Palestinian inmates in Ansar III in the Naqab/Negev desert (Sacco 2002) or among Cuban inmates after the collapse of the attack on the Moncada barracks in the 1950s (Galloway 2006). Gramsci often exalted the stamina of the workers involved in these educational settings in Turin stating that they would attend and participate regularly despite having completed a full day's work and that he was impressed by their intelligence. He also praised their attitude in learning for the collective good and not for some form of individual social mobility, the latter being identified by Gramsci as the hallmark of bourgeois education (Gramsci 1967, p. 290).

His conception of the educator is broad enough to comprise a variety of practitioners, some of whom might not prima facie see themselves as performing such a role. This includes party activists engaged in workers' education, foremen or supervisors in the factories, people with different technical and cultural accomplishments invited as speakers to the *Ordine Nuovo* group or who collaborated at the Club Vita Morale. It can also include any person carrying out an 'intellectual function'. Intellectuals are designated as such not because of some innate qualities or specific tasks (e.g. the traditional academic) but because of the function they carry out. They include a whole range of people who serve as opinion leaders and promoters of particular conceptions of the world through their affirmations, strictures and actions, hence, for instance, the shop steward or the marketing manager. They become part of Gramsci's broad *ceti* (strata) of organic intellectuals. They are organic in the sense that (1) they either support the existing situation and historical bloc (a deeply ingrained/rooted bloc of mutual support, not simply an alliance which, in the long run, might or might not develop into a bloc), (2) challenge or renegotiate the hegemonic relations or ideas, thus contributing long term to a change in these very same relations and ideas and therefore hegemony.

Gramsci's conception of the educator also includes so-called traditional intellectuals. These are intellectuals, some immediately recognised as such, whose organic purpose seems over. They are a throwback to an earlier and possibly outdated hegemonic set of arrangements. And yet this is not immediately evident, often

requiring rigorous systematic historical enquiry to expose their previous social moorings. They therefore assume the appearance of a 'neutral' ('free floating', in Karl Mannheim's sense) category, identified by their immanent features. Through the guise of neutrality, they can appear most effective in maintaining and legitimising the given state of affairs. Gramsci also accused some of these intellectuals, notably grand intellectuals such as Benedetto Croce and Giustino Fortunato, of being reactionary for endowing potentially progressive intellectuals with a status and language that renders them alien to the context from which they emerged and which they can serve organically (see Ives 2004a regarding intellectuals and language development). These intellectuals are said to absolutise their activity. People with potential to provide intellectual direction to the subaltern classes were being coopted by the dominant classes. This occurred partly because of their having been equipped with a normative grammar (various forms of standard language, including esoteric language) alien to the popular classes. Potential organic intellectuals were thus severed from these classes.

2.5 The Question of Content

The discussion thus far has centred on the issue of social relations and roles of educators. What about content? One needs to answer the question in the context of Gramsci's all-embracing conception of hegemony. It is this aspect of Gramsci's writings which has stirred controversy among progressives because of his perceived, at least in the view of the recently deceased Harold Entwistle (1979), advocacy of a conservative education for a radical politics.

In Notebooks IV and XII (Gramsci 1975), as I had occasion to remark, Gramsci focused on the issue of schooling as a direct polemic against the reforms being introduced by the fascist minister of Public Instruction, Giovanni Gentile. He saw in these reforms a bifurcated educational system which provides a 'professional education' (strictly vocational) for the majority of students and an academic, classical education for others. As someone who benefited from a classical education, Gramsci, in the words of Mario Alighiero Manacorda (1970, in Gramsci 1972), provides what seems like an 'epitaph' for a school that was but that cannot be any longer since the society which this school was meant to serve has changed. He however sees the bifurcated Gentile reform (*la Riforma Gentile*) as representing a backward step rather than a step which takes us forward for a more relevant education responsive to the challenges of the age in which he lived. He targets, in his writings on the 'Unitarian School', the then emerging trendy 'progressivist' form of pedagogy. He perceived the latter to be a dilution of the 'Rousseau legacy', one likely to provide working class students with a watered-down curriculum.[6] He saw signs of this

[6] In the notes on the 'Unitarian School', in Notebooks 4 and 12 (Gramsci 1975), Gramsci states that he would rather prefer a 'mediocre' teacher who dwells on facts to someone who engages in a kind of laissez-faire pedagogy that is detrimental to those students who lack the 'cultural capital to learn

underlying the Gentile reforms and as likely to have a bearing on the 'working/peasant class' majority of pupils. Gramsci stated that the 'romantic school', with its Rousseau echoes, needed to enter the classical phase, that is to say, a period marked by some balance between what is innovative and what can be regarded as traditional. The latter must have been deemed necessary by Gramsci because it provided the kind of 'powerful knowledge' that can enable one to handle effectively and negotiate the intricacies of power.

It is presumably the kind of 'power' which Gramsci believed to have derived from his own education at the different *licei* (lyceums) that he attended when young before proceeding, via a scholarship for poor students from the Kingdom of Sardinia, to that still venerable institution of learning that is the University of Turin. Gramsci emphasises that one must learn the different forms of powerful knowledge that has emerged in a particular context to be able to operate effectively and successfully within the power structures of society in order to contribute towards changing these structures. He focuses as an example on the psychophysical habits that one obtains from long hours of study, within the classical education environment, to develop the kind of personal rigour, intellectual resilience and self-discipline which he held important for those aspiring to become members of a class that governs. He even outlines the benefits emerging from studying such subjects as Latin and Greek, the subjects he chose over Mathematics, for the personal rigour and mental discipline they provide. He is, however, the first to recognise that these subjects will eventually have to be replaced since they served a school which in turn served a specific society which no longer exists. He goes on to declare that it will take a quite a formidable subject to replace them. It would have to provide the same kind of rigour and discipline offered by the two 'moribund' languages, the study of which entailed bringing a dead corpse to life.

> It will be necessary to replace Latin and Greek as the fulcrum of the formative school, and they will be replaced. But it will not be easy to deploy the new subject or subjects in a didactic form which gives equivalent results in terms of education and general formation, from early childhood to the threshold of adult choices of career. (Q12, §2; SPN, pp. 39, 40)

The impression one gathers is that he is at a loss to identify the sort of contemporary subject/s that would provide similar results, although he does not rule out the emergence of this subject some time down the road. Language, a key theme in Gramsci (Lo Piparo 1979, 2014; De Mauro 1979; Ives 2004a, b, 2010; Ives and Lacorte 2010; Carlucci 2013), himself a former student of philology and of Matteo Bartoli in Turin, constitutes a very important form of 'powerful knowledge', to use Michael Young's (2013) term. The choice of language to be studied is very much conditioned by the context in which one is living, and any language selected for national-popular purposes must be rooted in popular consciousness (see Marx and Engels

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what is powerful from other sources' ('invisible pedagogies' to use a recent term): 'In reality a *mediocre* teacher may manage to see to it that his pupils become more *informed*, although he *will not succeed in making them better educated*; he can devote a scrupulous and bureaucratic conscientiousness to the mechanical part of teaching'[sic] (Gramsci 1971, p. 36). (My emphasis in italics.)

1970, on this in *The German Ideology*), hence Gramsci's dismissal of an artificial language such as Esperanto (Gramsci 1985, SCW, pp. 26–31). In some contexts, the choice is quite complex, especially in small postcolonial states where there is often the felt political need to indigenise the curriculum (use the 'national-popular' language, if any – Freire 1978) and at the same time capitalise on the presence of the more international colonial language for wider political and economic currency (e.g. English and French in former colonies). In Gramsci's Italy, the language question was key. He was confronted by a situation when large swathes of the country spoke a specific dialect as opposed to the imposed ('passive revolution' style) Tuscan dialect. The Tuscan dialect, which became the country's standard language and therefore the language of politics, government and economics, was undeniably a powerful form of knowledge. In denying learners this 'powerful knowledge', Gramsci would argue, one would be selling them short. Knowledge of this language would prevent learners from remaining on the periphery of political life. And yet I would add, drawing from Gramsci's recurring notion of the need to critically appropriate the dominant language, that one should expose this knowledge's ideological basis, indicating the manner in which 'ideology resides in language'. This is one of the means whereby one starts to engage in the lengthy process of renegotiating some of the social relations of hegemony. Referring as an example once again to former colonies, where language issues tend to be quite complex, one would emphasise the colonial and social class basis (standard and colonial languages are a noticeable means of social differentiation) of the predominance of the colonial language. One would here accord rightful importance to the 'national-popular' language even at school, while being careful to do so without denying people from all classes of the colonised society access to the colonial language of international currency. Biculturalism becomes an important means of existence. It provides due recognition to popular forms of communication, rendering them also an important means of access to further education and knowledge. At the same time, it renders the standard language a means of critical appropriation based on a recognition of its class basis and its importance in preventing those who access it from remaining politically marginalised.

2.6 Conclusion

There is much grist for the mill in Gramsci especially in the availability of signposts for a critically engaged pedagogy. Viewing education as central to the workings of hegemony is crucial from a Gramscian perspective. Education can contribute to cementing, disrupting and/or renegotiating hegemony through the kind of knowledge and situations it promotes. And yet those engaging in a critical education would do well to avoid, as Gramsci warns us, throwing out the knowledge baby with the ideological bathwater. Young's (2013) issue of 'powerful knowledge', that echoes Gramsci's oeuvre in terms of his advocacy of a critical appropriation of the accumulated fund of knowledge, including language, needs to be dealt with

seriously if one is not to shortchange students from subaltern groups. In short, any attempt at a critical education must entail critical educators teaching thoroughly and correctly that knowledge which can provide access to power. It is the type of education that provides learners with the consciousness, skills, knowledge and attitudes to function effectively in the system with a view to collectively transforming it. 'Powerful knowledge' should not be transmitted simply in a 'technical-rational' manner. It should, to the contrary, be taught in a manner that also raises awareness among learners of its ideological basis and 'cultural arbitrary'. What renders the approach emancipatory is the way this knowledge is transmitted in the best traditions of critical and Freirean pedagogy (see Freire 1970; Mayo 1999, 2004, 2008, 2013). It is an approach that eschews an 'authoritarian' mode of communication but which centres on a competent teacher's 'authority' (as pedagogue and as someone who has mastered the content). It is the sort of pedagogy that is predicated on the conception of the knowledge it generates as a public and communal good rather than an object of personal possession or consumption 'positional good'. Education as a public good was the hallmark of that pedagogical experience Gramsci himself lauded with respect to workers attending learning settings after a hard day's work in the industrial heartland of Turin during its revolutionary years (Gramsci 1964, 1967, p. 290), the years during which a great part of Gramsci's revolutionary politics, including pedagogical politics, was forged.

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Chapter 3
Culture, Education and Political Leadership in Gramsci's Thought

Riccardo Pagano

It is well known that Gramsci paid significant attention to the interrelated content and meaning of the concepts of culture, education and politics. They appear in Gramsci's work in all their breadth and complexity, without slipping into generic considerations. Gramsci explores and deploys these concepts in depth in several different contexts.

If we recall Gramsci's definitions of culture, education and politics, we realize that the three terms find their perfect synthesis in the revised Marxist tradition of hegemony, intellectual and moral reform, new humanism and secular religion. Culture is defined as the 'expression of society' (Q9, §57); education is seen as 'the struggle to adapt to the environment but also and especially to dominate it and not let it crush you' (Gramsci 1996, p. 351, LFP1, p. 347); finally, Gramsci defined politics in a multifaceted way. According to him, it is not easy to identify the idea of politics on a theoretical level, as it needs to be continually historicized, 'therefore, the concrete content…of political science must be conceived as a historically developing organism' (Q4, §8; PN2, p. 150). In this conceptual framework, education plays a central role because it is a vehicle for a new culture and, at the same time, it promotes a political orientation towards an intellectual reform of the human being along the lines of the 'new humanism' that Gramsci outlined.

Education is nourished by and within culture, and, in turn, it transforms culture into the engine for political leadership. It is, in short, the transmission belt of all institutional and relational social systems. In the following pages, focusing on the centrality of education in and for human life, I will show how Gramsci privileges education within the above-mentioned framework that integrates culture and politics. For Gramsci, this integration is not limited to mere conceptualization but is also a practice rooted in human action understood in its complexity and totality as determining a vision of the world, a real *Weltanschauung*.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_3

3.1 Culture as a ‘Worldview’

In order to understand the innovative and revolutionary meaning that Gramsci places on culture, we must also refer to the value his contemporaries assigned to it (Giasi 2008). Here we should recall Gramsci’s discussion of ‘high culture’, as a programme concerning moral and intellectual reform and as a cultural revolution to be accomplished by intellectuals who represented a ‘lay culture’ and ‘a modern ‘humanism’ able to reach right to the simplest and most uneducated classes’ (a task at which Italian traditional intellectuals have failed). (Q21, §5; SCW, p. 211). According to Gramsci, culture is important because it is an element of ‘cultural hegemony’ and a ‘conception of life and man’, a kind of secular religion which generates ‘an ethic, a life-style and an individual and civil pattern of behaviour’ (Q23, §1; SCW, p. 92).

In Q3, §119, *Past and Present. Agitation and Propaganda*, Gramsci identified the weaknesses of the unified Italian State as resulting from what he calls the ‘dictatorships’ of Italian Prime Ministers Depretis, Crispi and Giolitti who, through ‘transformism’—the corrupt political practice of creating shifting majorities that overcome the distinction between Left and Right—had created ‘a force of non-partisans who are attached to the government by paternalistic bonds of a Bonapartist-Caesarist type’ (ibid; PN2, p.106). Gramsci wrote that this lack of real political leadership was also due to the ‘impoverishment of cultural life and the petty narrow-mindedness of high culture: sterile erudition in place of political history, superstition instead of religion, the daily newspapers and the scandal sheet instead of books and great periodicals’ (ibid) which was the type of culture expressed by statesmen and the government officials within the political liquidity of transformism.

According to Gramsci, in Italy, this ‘impoverishment of cultural life’ had significant consequences beyond the formation of a particular political leadership. The blames fall, without a doubt, upon the post-unification Italian education system and, in particular, upon universities. ‘The universities,’ Gramsci wrote, ‘and all the institutions that developed intellectual and technical skills were impervious to the life of the parties and the living reality of national life, and they created apolitical national cadres with a purely rhetorical and non-national mental formation. Thus the bureaucracy estranged itself from the people, and through its administrative positions it became a true political party, the worst of all, because the bureaucratic hierarchy replaced the intellectual and political hierarchy: the bureaucracy became precisely the State-Bonapartist party’ (ibid).

Gramsci’s attacks are not limited to higher education; even the *Accademia della Crusca*, the literary society for the study and promotion of the Italian language, was the target of his scathing criticism, especially when compared with similar institutions in other countries, such as the *Académie Française des Immortels*, Gramsci wrote, ‘One can compare Italian and French cultures through a comparison of the *Accademia della Crusca* and the *Académie Française*. They are both rooted in the study of language; the Crusca, however, has the point of view of a nit-picking grammarian, of someone who is always watching how he speaks. The French point of

view is that of 'language' as a conception of the world, as the basic foundation—popular-national—of the unity of French culture' (Q3, §145; PN2, p.119).

Therefore, according to Gramsci, universities and other high cultural institutions failed to make high culture into a cohesive national element. This led to a vacuous rhetorical Italian culture, riddled with bureaucracy, which tended to drift into forms of 'Jesuitism', a term that Gramsci used in a derogatory way to characterize a pedantic, rhetorical and hypocritical approach (see, e.g. Q3, §119; PN2, p. 106).

Even worse, this 'poor' and 'miserable' culture was reflected in the weakness of the parties and, eventually, in the political leadership of the State. Not to mention the formation of intellectuals still tied to a Renaissance elitist culture and not to culture as a democratic expression of knowledge. According to Gramsci, however, 'the great intellectual…must take the plunge into practical life and become an organizer of the practical aspects of culture' (Q6, §10; PN3, p. 7). Here there are two elements to consider within the context of Gramsci's work: intellectual and practical life. Both of them, if well analysed, help us to understand what the Sardinian thinker meant by culture as 'worldview', as a real Kantian *Weltanschauung*.

Gramsci's criticism of 'reactionary' intellectuals such as Giustino Fortunato and Benedetto Croce as 'traditional intellectuals' is well known (Vacca 1977, pp. 439–480). He believed them to be the 'most industrious reactionaries of the whole peninsula' (Gramsci 1971, p. 155; SPW2, p. 459) because they were part of the group of intellectuals who supported or even strengthened the agrarian block, especially in the South. However, he held Piero Gobetti, a liberal, in high consideration, especially for his ability as a cultural organizer. As for the 'reactionary' intellectuals, we can understand Gramsci's negative evaluation of them if we focus our attention on Gramsci's analysis of the 'historical process of formation of the different categories of intellectuals' (Q4, §49; PN2, p. 199). And indeed, this process allows one to answer Gramsci's question, 'Are intellectuals an autonomous social group, or does every social group have its own category of intellectuals?' (ibid). His answer does not leave any room for misunderstandings, 'every social group, coming into existence on the primal basis of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, a rank or several ranks of intellectuals who give it homogeneity and a consciousness of its own function in the economic sphere' (ibid). Intellectuals are not a distinct social group, but they are always organic to certain functions and organizations of the social groups to which they belong. This clarification is preliminary to another important category: organic intellectuals—a much debated one that revolves around the crucial aspect of their organizational and cultural skills, which represent the hallmark of the organic intellectuals compared to the 'reactionary' intellectuals.

Organizational functions have a central role in the process of producing hegemony. Gramsci argued that 'the relationship between the intellectuals and production is not direct, as in the case of the fundamental social groups, but mediated, and it is mediated by two types of social organization: a) by civil society…; b) by the State' (ibid; PN2, p. 200). It is important to highlight that the mediation of organic intellectuals, and their organizational skills, is functional to hegemony. For Gramsci:

> The intellectuals have a function in the 'hegemony' that is exercised throughout society by the dominant group and in the 'domination' over society that is embodied by the state, and this function is precisely 'organizational' or connective. The intellectuals have the function of organizing the social hegemony of a group and that group's domination of the state; in other words, they have the function of organizing the consent that comes from the prestige attached to the function in the world of production and the apparatus of coercion for those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively or for those moments of crisis of command and leadership when spontaneous consent undergoes a crisis. (ibid; PN2, pp. 200–201)

Thus, and Gramsci himself emphasized this, the concept of intellectual is broad: the philosopher, the scholar, the scientist, but also the administrator and popularizer. The modern world has expanded the audience of intellectuals, and to this list Gramsci added the distinction between urban and rural intellectuals (ibid). Despite this articulate figure of the intellectual, according to Gramsci, 'the crux of the issue, however, remains the distinction between intellectuals as an organic category of every social group and intellectuals as a traditional category' (ibid; PN2, p. 202). And this is, in fact, the core of the problem from which Gramsci derives a whole series of reflections of remarkable historical and theoretical importance. We know that Gramsci related his argument about intellectuals to the party, a very important matter to him because of the organizational aspects of social life in political parties. The party, for Gramsci, had among its tasks, to be the agent 'of general activities that are national and international in character' (ibid; PN2, p. 203), performing this task with its 'organic' intellectuals, i.e. with those 'organizers of all functions intrinsic to the organic development of an integral civil and political society' (ibid; PN2, p. 202).

The role of the intellectual is, therefore, multiple, broad and full of political responsibility, but it is, above all, a cultural role and organizational role for the dissemination of culture. In order to define the figure and function of the intellectual, Gramsci analysed culture, in its broadest sense, as 'worldview', that is, as mentioned above, meaning 'an expression of society' (Q9, §57) and far from any forms of empty rhetoric and aestheticism.

From this perspective, Gramsci strived for the creation of 'a new culture on a new social basis' (Q1, §153; PN1, p. 233), and this new culture, whose contents and contours I will outline below, was oriented mainly towards the construction of hegemony, the central theme of Gramsci's thought. Hegemony is in fact 'cultural and moral leadership' (Q10, §7; FS, p. 345). To understand the significance of culture as a 'worldview', one must refer to the meaning that Gramsci gave to culture. It is multifaceted: there is 'culture' in its general and in its strong sense, which is associated with hegemony; but there is a specific culture, in the sense of particular areas of learning and knowledge. The latter, however, remains limited and does not aim to achieve the broad outlook of a new world. It is not an expression of a cultural revolution and of a new humanism.

In Gramsci's opinion, if culture must be a 'worldview', one needs first to overcome the distinction between high and low culture and look to a superior culture that embraces everything. As a popular culture, even *folklore* is an expression of a

conception of the world and it helps in the creation of a superior cultural expression of the 'modern form of traditional secularism that is the basis of the new type of state' (Q3, §31; PN2, p. 31).

Not even Benedetto Croce had been able to deal with and to explain this type of superior culture, of which Gramsci felt Italy was in extreme need. Croce 'has not gone "to the people", he has not become a "national" element…, because he has not been able to create a group of disciples who could have made his philosophy "popular", so that it could become an educational factor' (Q7, §1; PN3, p. 154). The 'popular' and 'educational' features of culture are a recurrent concern of Gramsci. His criticism of Croce is part of his critique of idealism that he considered the main cause of intellectuals' estrangement from people. Idealists, such as Croce or Giovanni Gentile, believed that 'high culture' cannot be taught and transmitted to the people because they could not understand it. This axiom was rejected by Gramsci, who uses the notion of translatability, or the theory-practice relationship, to argue that a 'new culture' can be transmitted to anyone, even the common people (Q4, §3; PN2, pp. 140–144; Q4, §46; PN2, pp. 196–197; Q7; PN3, pp. 153–228).

In the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci noted on several occasions that even those who opposed the philosophy of praxis embraced it in some respects, either on a speculative level (such as Croce or Gentile) or in its political dimension. None of them, however, searched for a new culture that would give a new lease of life to Italy and its people, a task to which Gramsci relentlessly dedicated himself. This path of research led him to reflect on the historical events in Italy or, rather, on those which belong to the history of Italian culture—a rich, great and important one for all humankind. It is not by chance that Gramsci delves into the key features of the Renaissance, namely, the 'Great Cultural Revolution'. It was not 'great' because it rediscovered human beings and placed them at the centre of the universe, but, rather, since the Renaissance a new form of culture has begun, which has a universal character and which 'initiated…a new effort to create a new type of man [sic] in the dominant classes' (Q17, §1; SCW, p. 217), an intellectual one, with a key role in the creation of the modern State. With the modern intellectual, the task of cultural change becomes directed towards a practical purpose: as intellectuals become moral and political reformers, they use their culture to adapt it to a 'practical…function' (Q11, §16; SPN, p. 453). Therefore, Gramsci's understanding of culture and its social and existential scope is quite clear: the Cultural Revolution is a moral one, but it has an intellectual nature. It is a struggle for hegemony. Culture is political in the sense that it must provide a vision of the world, an idea of the world, full of learning, knowledge and practical life to form an integral human being, who is true, practical, realistic and able to seize knowledge and to recognize the needs of the times. This individual must be a secular and modern humanist (Q21, §5; SCW, pp. 206–212).

The theme of secular culture is very important in Gramsci's thought because it captures other fundamental issues. Gramsci's criticism that Italian intellectuals were not a driving and emancipatory force because they had not been able to create a national cultural purpose, imbued with modern humanism, was based on the paucity of secular intellectuals. Intellectuals had always been at the service of the potentates,

especially the Catholic Church, and in spite of that, they had not succeeded in making people fully religious. Lay intellectuals too, with their bourgeois rhetoric and conservative culture, had widened the gap between culture and people. In the *Prison Notebooks* the secular sense of culture is primarily expressed in the ability of the individual to have a vision of the world, free from prejudice, from dogma and from any form of coercion. For this reason, there is a constant reference to the Renaissance and its great emancipatory and liberating ability to create a humanist and modern society. However, as a secular, free, self-expression of the individual, culture needs to be fed, nurtured and cultivated. In this sense, perhaps, education is more important than instruction. According to Gramsci, education must not let culture, knowledge and learning be superfluous and ornamental, but it must make them acquire an existential *status* which is structured on a personalized worldview and which, as we will see, must have a political impact, that is, it must be directed not towards contemplation but towards theory in action and towards *praxis*.

3.2 Education: A Synthesis of Knowledge, Historical Consciousness and Practice

Gramsci's profound observations on education, which can be found throughout his work, led him to a conceptualization of education as a synthesis of instruction and training, that is, as the activity which links the technical component of knowledge with the practical one of action, an ideal moment in which individuals perceive themselves in their integrity and unity as a mix of thought and action, mind and body, ideals and reality.

Gramsci was averse to 'spontaneity as a pedagogical approach'. His inclination was for a rigorous and demanding one (without falling into nativistic and generationistic temptations common to the pedagogical thinking of the early twentieth century) even though he was not opposed to pedagogical activism, whose principles he broadly accepted (Manacorda 1972, p. xxvii). In fact, Peter Mayo (2008) characterizes Gramsci's pedagogy as directive (oriented towards a political goal), striking a balance between spontaneity and conscious direction—both 'spontaneity' and 'conscious leadership'.

The Sardinian thinker was well aware of the essential role of schooling for training and education. Public school is an achievement of modern times; it is a bulwark of civilization. From direct experience, as a young man with no financial means, Gramsci understood well the importance of study in order to be fulfilled both professionally and as a human being, as a subject aware of one's own thoughts, one's own sense of history, one's own cultural background and one's own intellectual practice (Pagano 2014, pp. 11–46).

Gramsci's aversion to Gentile's educational reform (1923), based on a sharp distinction between academic and vocational education, is well known. Ironically, Gramsci speaks more favourably of the previous system, based on the Casati Act of

1859,[1] adopted by the Italian State upon unification, because, although it was conservative in its didactic purpose, at least it was based on unique educational principles capable of uniting the instructional aspect with the educational one, the cultural aspect with the manual/operative one. Gentile's reform denied the subaltern classes the opportunity to emancipate themselves. It created one school for the future ruling classes and another for workers and technicians. Gramsci envisaged a democratic education for the citizens who must, at the same time, be able to rule as well as be ruled, and, as such, they must be prepared to know how to process thoughts in a critical and personal way, as well as to work manually.

The distinction imposed by Gentile's idealistic pedagogy between the 'mind' and the 'hand' also implied a sharp distinction between instruction and education. Gramsci rejected this, 'For instruction to be wholly distinct from education, the pupil would have to be pure passivity, a 'mechanical receiver' of abstract notions—which is absurd and is anyway 'abstractly' denied by the supporters of pure educativity precisely in their opposition to mere mechanistic instruction' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 35).

Gramsci claimed that Gentile thought of work as instructive but not educational. Schooling in an idealistic educational system risks becoming 'rhetorical schools… because the material solidity of what is "certain" will be missing, and what is "true" will be a truth only of words: that is to say, precisely, rhetoric' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 36).

Even the teacher's intellect, or intellectualism for Gentile, is not acceptable to Gramsci as he does not see the teacher as a philosopher or an aesthetician whose task is to fill the minds of students with formulas and difficult, soon forgotten, words. The excess of instruction and superficial knowledge of the school overshadowed its educational aspect, whereby, according to Gramsci, 'a mediocre teacher may manage to see to it that his pupils become more *informed*, although he will not succeed in making them better educated' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 36).

Even though Gentile emphasized the collaborative role of the learner with the teacher, Gramsci believed that Gentile's school programmes fostered the learner's passivity because they were far from the actual concerns of the working class (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 37). Schooling after Gentile's reform fills the mind of the student with a baggage of unnecessary, rhetorical and redundant metaphysical notions. Gramsci's criticism of Gentile's reform is specific and not only because it enters into the merits of individual programmes (Grammar, Latin, etc.) with the great skill of a refined educator but also because his stance is clearly in favour of a school which is really educational, or a school that does not have to possess any kinds of immediate, practical purpose and a school that must be concerned with an understanding of real life

[1] Manacorda highlights that, while considering Casati's school 'rational', i.e. in line with the social order, Gramsci thought it was no longer acceptable because it was inadequate and detached from real life. Gramsci preferred Casati's school to Gentile's, because the latter claimed to be based on idealistic spontaneity and education, almost detached from instruction. In Gramsci's opinion, however, neither Casati's nor Gentile's schools responded to the training needs of a society that was progressing towards industrialization, in need of skilled technicians.

and must be totally in line with the country's cultural tradition. According to Gramsci, Gentile's reform was an expression of fascism, i.e. a historical phenomenon which, as claimed by Croce, rejected the liberal-bourgeois tradition of the Risorgimento as a 'moral disease' (see Croce 1944) and, therefore, not fully inserted in the Italian cultural tradition. According to Gramsci:

> In the present school [Gentile's one], the profound crisis in the cultural tradition and its concept of life and of man [sic], has resulted in a progressive degeneration. Schools of vocational type, i.e. those designed to satisfy immediate, practical interests, are beginning to predominate over the formative school, which is not immediately 'interested'. The most paradoxical aspect of it all is that this new type of school appears and is advocated as being democratic, while in fact is destined not merely to perpetuate social differences but to crystallize them in Chinese complexities. (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 40)

It is for these reasons that Gramsci provided a more favourable account of the educational system under the Casati Act. That system was, of course, 'oligarchic, because it was intended for the new generation of the ruling class…, but it was not oligarchic in its mode of teaching' (ibid). It was shaped more by an educational perspective than by an instructional one and fostered the ability to understand the features of Italian traditional culture. This is an interesting passage to understand Gramsci's reflections on the nature of school, which deserves special attention:

> It is not…the fact that it tends to produce gifted men [sic], which gives a particular type of school its social character. This social character is determined by the fact that each social group has its own type of school, intended to perpetuate a specific traditional function, ruling or subordinate. If one wishes to break this pattern one needs…to create a single type of formative school (primary-secondary) which would take the child up to the threshold of his choice of job, forming him [sic] during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling—or controlling those who rule. (ibid)

Gentile's reform, for Gramsci, had strengthened oligarchic education, through the sharp differentiation between vocational and technical schooling, which did nothing but reinforce social inequalities. Gentile's reform with its premature choice of pathways (high school or technical-vocational school) tended inevitably towards an undemocratic stratification of social classes.

Gramsci's analysis identified the democratic shortcomings of Gentile's school in what was supposed to be one of its strengths: the teaching of philosophy. In Gramsci's opinion, the history of philosophy, as it was laid out in the national programme, was a sum of delirious thoughts. Philosophy was presented as descriptive, not as a process and reflective, and so it became abstract and far from the real context of young people's lives.

Gramsci's overall judgement of Gentile's school was, therefore, negative. It broke the link between training and education that in Gramsci's opinion should have been restored. In Gramsci's opinion, a unitary or 'common' school was necessary in which there would be unity between intellectual and manual labour. Such a unity should have been further extended to the whole of society and social life. Hence, you can create the new human being and a new humanism (Pagano 2014, pp. 47–66), through an individual who can develop her mental faculties in order to 'Taylorize intellectual work' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 29). This phrase means that thinking is crucial

in any activity, even in manual work. 'In any physical work', Gramsci wrote, 'no matter how mechanical and degraded, there is a minimum of technical skill, that is, a minimum of creative intellectual activity' (Q4, §49; PN2, p. 200).

Conversely, according to Gramsci, studying is a physical as well as a mental effort. 'Many people have to be persuaded that studying too is a job, and a very tiring one, with its own particular apprenticeship—involving muscles and nerves as well as intellect. It is a process of adaptation, a habit acquired with effort, tedium and even suffering' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 42). Only by following the path of hard study in a Unitarian school for a unitary training would it be possible to create a new generation of intellectuals. The difficulty of this project, which he defined as 'unprecedented', was certainly not unknown to Gramsci.

The educational purpose of Gramsci's school was thus the formation of a new generation of intellectuals, particularly in light of the need for technical education in the age he was writing, which was inextricably linked to factory work. Every human being can and must be an intellectual, however, provided that they change their mode of being that:

> Can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator (but superior at the same time to the abstract mathematical spirit); from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception of history, without which one remains 'specialised' and does not become 'directive' (specialised and political). (Q12 §3; SPN, p 10)

Thus, Gramsci envisaged a school with a high educational purpose, one that required a considerable effort in studying, with teachers trained, not only in their own subject but also in pedagogy. Above all, this school would convey values as well as knowledge in order to assume the role of culture in the Gramscian sense, i.e. a conception of the world. Through this education, the student must be able to articulate a vision for society and its political leadership.

As one can see, there is an inseparable link between education and culture, and vice versa. It could not be otherwise, because education is also a vision of the world, a way of being, an ethics and a civic behaviour. Culture and education exist in a continuum, blending into and feeding each other. Culture and education are bearing structures (or, as Marx says, superstructures), cornerstones of our society that need to be supported and diffused by intellectuals and the school.

In Gramsci's opinion, culture is not something abstract; on the contrary, it is practical because it intervenes in the organizational aspects of society, a task intellectuals are responsible for, being the organizers of culture. Culture is practical also in the sense that it influences people's way of being and, therefore, their education. To create a new culture means to create a new education and to aspire to a cultural/educational hegemony. Hegemony is not primarily economic but mainly cultural and educational. Both schooling and education are fully included in Gramsci's theory of hegemony and culture.

Gramsci's new humanism is linked to a cultural education that synergistically establishes interrelationships between theory and practice. The philosophy of praxis and the resulting education convey a new culture in which different disciplines and

different spheres of the social world interact, all, however, subject to the political sphere and, as we will see, to political leadership.

Culture for Gramsci is neither high nor low; it cannot be characterized with such adjectives. Popular culture has equal dignity to the one of the élites. For educational purposes, this universal value of culture is decisive. Through education, it is possible to ignite a cultural revolution and a moral and intellectual reform. Gramsci's modern humanism is interwoven with secular culture, or an education that is able to understand the needs of human beings in the modern world, where there is the need to overcome individualism and selfishness.

The strength of Gramsci's notion of education lies in the culture of praxis. Education is established in action rather than in theory. The foundation of this praxis is the individual's freedom to refuse the educational and moral coercion exercised by the bourgeois establishment. Culture is also education of individual freedom against efforts of forced rationalization of the individual's life. The reference to Enlightenment principles is quite clear. Thus, if the culture of praxis is the final goal of Gramsci's political project, a culture of acting not as a prerogative of the *élite*, but of all the people, is the task to which education must contribute. And it is here that education finds its truest and most intrinsic rationale. It is from this standpoint that one should read Gramsci's critique of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture with its many educational consequences.

In *Notebook* 3, where the term of 'high' culture appears for the first time, there are interesting notes in which Gramsci describes the 'impoverishment' of Italian 'cultural life and the petty narrow-mindedness of high culture', lacking in quality magazines and books but also struggling to become truly 'national' while being elaborated by intellectuals not in touch with the reality of the country (Q3, §119; PN1, p. 106). Exemplary, as I said above, of this for Gramsci was the case of *Accademia della Crusca*. Italian 'high' culture, because of its rhetoricism, bureaucratism and 'Jesuitism', was neither national nor educational. Indeed, it was far from the people; it did not uphold 'high' values of literature and art, which were 'reserved' for the few, the inner circle of the intellectual *élite*. For Gramsci, instead, cultural education must be made popular through a praxis that combines the 'high' and the 'low', two distinct, yet related, cultural moments that confront each other dialectically.

This dialectical relationship, however, can only occur if there is a culture of education for all, managed in the first place by the State and its institutions: the school and the university. Gramsci suggests that one could assess the character of a government from its cultural and educational policies. If it builds its cultural policy from the bottom to the top, then the government is progressive because it aims to raise the cultural development of the common people, and to form intellectuals, not by drawing on the privileged only but on an extensive and widespread basis. To the contrary, if the direction of the cultural policy is from the top to the bottom, the government is repressive (Q6, §170; PN3, pp. 126–127). For Gramsci, cultural education must take place through a democratic process, a process concerning the democratization of knowledge; therefore, schooling must be extended both for compulsory education and for the rest of secondary education. Through education, culture must

broaden the intellectual basis of society. This means that intellectuals should become more enmeshed in the functioning of society: 'the great intellectual, too, must take the plunge into practical life and become an organizer of the practical aspects of culture....Renaissance man is no longer possible in the modern world, at a time when increasingly large masses of humans are participating actively and directly in history' (Q6, §10; PN3, p. 7). This phrase points to the centrality, for Gramsci, of the relationship between humans and history, including the education of humans and their historicity, their historicism. (ibid)

Here I will not focus on Gramsci's subtle analysis of history as 'freedom and truth' (Gramsci 1984b) or as the dialectic of class struggle (Gramsci 1980a; SPW-1, pp. 6–9; and 1984a; SPW-1, pp. 38–47), but rather I will limit my analysis to the relationship between individuality and historical development in order to validate Gramsci's notion of education understood as the link between the individual and history (Gramsci 1982).

Gramsci believed that history was not subject to general laws but to individual wills. In the historical act, the identity of history and the spirit coincide; there exists an identification of will and reality. This conception of history is, above all, outlined in the *Notebooks* where, in the most general theory of the philosophy of praxis, Gramsci places the criterion of 'testability' or the determination, with some precision, of when quantitative development becomes qualitative; i.e. when the past becomes the present, when history becomes politics, when theory becomes practice.

It is important for the field of education to consider the numerous passages in the *Prison Notebooks* where Gramsci highlights the proximity, if not the identity, between history and politics (Q10II, §33; FS, pp. 428–430; Q6, §97; PN3, pp. 81–83; Q8, §61; PN3, pp. 271–272; Q8, §84; PN3, pp. 283–284; Q11, §33; SPN, p. 431).

Individuals certainly live in the present, but they are the product of the past. In order to become actors in decisive historical development, they must have a dual education: able to recognize the past but also able to live in the present. Rejecting the sacrifice of individuals on the altar of the general laws of history, Gramsci assigned great importance to individuals' development. Hence the need for an education and a school not reserved for the *élite* but for everyone because everyone can be a protagonist in the construction of history, the political dimension of coexistence. Thus, the formation of the subject must be through historical and political education. The education of the individual and the masses should include a political outcome and a political formation; it should tend towards the formation of social individuals who take very seriously past experience transmitted by teaching that make it relevant to their historical time.

Gramsci found in Croce a great cultural interlocutor. He had absorbed a lot of Crocean theories, but he did not hold back his critique of them. Gramsci argued that Croce did not consider the possibility of the subject being the protagonist of history. Croce's denial of the role of the subject was, for Gramsci, a kind of irrationalism because, while Croce negated, on the one hand, the general laws of history, on the

other hand, he did not find in the individual the protagonist of the present and future history. Who is the subject of history, and what role does education play in the formation of historical individuals? Croce did not provide any answers to these questions, which made, according to Gramsci, Croce's historicism purely speculative and ideological. In fact, it could not predict the fundamental role of the masses and the 'class struggle' in the same way as historical materialism did, because, for Croce, the State, as an ideological entity, is History's only true protagonist.

Croce's irrationalism, according to Gramsci, arose from his philosophy of distinct concepts, which, in fact, separated history and politics (Q10II, §2; FS, pp. 382–383). The individual's education could not be merely historical or purely political; both are necessary. Historical knowledge must, in fact, tend towards a political vision. This is the highest goal of education that a democratic pedagogy must achieve.

From this perspective, in 1933 Gramsci asked himself, 'How to study history?' And answers, 'so far we have been interested in the history of Europe, we have called world history the European one with its not-European dependencies. As history interests us for political reasons, not for objective ones' (Q14, §63). Gramsci does not view history in a speculative or philosophical way, as Croce did, but from its pedagogical function and not in the sense of Cicero's *magistra vitae* but as a fundamental component of the individual's historicity and, hence, necessary for his or her appreciation of historicism.

An analysis of the genesis of historicism in Gramsci goes beyond the scope of this chapter; however, because of the importance it has in Gramsci's thought, I cannot avoid touching on some of its elements, which are of fundamental importance for an understanding of the relationship between individuals, education and history. In Gramsci's thought, historicism is approached from different angles. In *Notebook* I, Gramsci spoke of historicism in relation to the crisis of the West and the paideutical vision of Christianity which was identified with it. According to Gramsci, the onset of capitalism changed Western culture, until then linked to Christianity and to the values of humanism, pushing it towards the formation of individuals to be industrialized and integrated into the assembly line. In this new social and cultural configuration, historicism went into crisis together with the conception of the human being in the grip of sentiment/passion and critical consciousness (QI, §76; PN1, pp. 180–182). In Gramsci's view, historicism would have to assume a key role as a consequence of the spreading of Marxism, which, in some ways, has been contaminated with several other schools of thought. In Gramsci's opinion, historicism would become the foundation on which to build modern life because, as we will see, it is part of the philosophy of praxis that he advocated. The philosophy of praxis becomes an instrument for the criticism of historicism, not to eliminate its foundational necessity but rather to enhance it as key to establishing a modern society. The philosophy of praxis, Gramsci wrote:

> Is the crowning point of this entire movement of intellectual and moral reformation, made dialectical in the contrast between popular culture and high culture. It corresponds to the nexus Protestant Reformation plus French Revolution: it is a philosophy which is also politics, and a politics which is also a philosophy….The philosophy of praxis has itself become

> 'prejudice' and 'superstition'. As it stands, it is the popular aspect of modern historicism, but it contains in itself the principle through which this historicism can be superseded. (Q16, §9; SPN, pp. 395–396)

Thus, Gramsci's conception of historicism is innovative compared to the conservative one that was typical of anti-democratic and antirevolutionary historicism of the bourgeois ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The education of the modern masses must be shaped by historicism but a modern one, i.e. one aimed at overcoming the mechanistic and economistic assumptions of dogmatic historicism. Historicist education rejects any speculation on the historical dimension of human life; it does not support a philosophy of education as a philosophy of human history, but it does work to make individuals aware of their responsibilities of living in historical circumstances.

Gramsci's education of praxis is historicist to the extent that it makes people aware of the concept of 'historical necessity' as the concreteness of their historical condition. Individual will is crucial to influence historical events. For this reason, Gramsci referred constantly to a real and historicist education. Gramsci's idea of education was far from the idealism found in Croce and Gentile; it was an education oriented towards human beings and their will to be historical subjects and protagonists of history. The individual's education has neither a preconceived linearity nor a philosophy of his or her life story, but it is a constant exercise of historicizing, of a critique rooted in reality and of reality. Education is not mechanistic, it exists in the dialectic between rationality and irrationality, between will and necessity and between weakness and strength; it exists in its contradictions. The experience of the human world is too different to be defined unilaterally; there is no teaching or philosophy that can capture it in full. The pedagogy of praxis is 'absolute historicism'; it is a realistic humanism void of rhetoric and archaism; it does not have nostalgia for the past; it exists in the present and for the present. It does not justify anything in the light of the past, it makes individuals responsible in the present, it is free of any kind of ideology, and it is meant to help them build a new world (Q16 §9; SPN, pp. 388–399).

3.3 Political Leadership as an Educational Activity

Politics, like education, is a theme present throughout Gramsci's work because he presented education and politics as a theory of action and practice. If education is concerned with the transition of the individual from being to having to be, politics approaches the being-having relation as a dialectical relationship with the community. Politics, Gramsci wrote, is the 'phase in which previously germinated ideologies come into contact and confrontation with one another, until only one of them—or, at least, a single combination of them—tends to prevail...bringing about, in addition to economic and political unity, intellectual and moral unity, not on a corporate but on a universal level: the hegemony of a fundamental social group over the subordinate groups' (Q4, §38; PN2, p. 180).

In this quote, the inseparable link between education, hegemony, political leadership and the role of the intellectuals is evident. Gramsci provides us with a clear understanding of the delicate relationship between the individual and the political leadership—one that must concern the whole community. Gramsci, as we will see, sharply distinguished between individualism, to be rejected, and individuality, to be embraced. It is through this distinction that Gramsci intensely developed his civil pedagogy, characterized by a deep political sense, oriented towards the formation of individuals who have a social and historical consciousness and who aspire to be a part of the government of society. According to Gramsci, the political party, which he defines as a 'Modern Prince', has a pedagogical role, but to understand the reasons for this pedagogical aspect of the party, or parties, one must consider this distinction between individualism and individuality.

In order to understand the meaning of Gramsci's characterization of the party as a 'Modern Prince', it is necessary to delve into the above distinction between individualism and individuality. Gramsci pondered, 'It remains to be seen how much is justified and how much [is] wrong or dangerous in the tendency against individualism' (Q9, §23; FS, pp. 269–270). The frequent reference to this theme concedes nothing to the obvious and reveals how much he needed to clarify for himself these concepts, which, in a broad sense, were pertinent to pedagogy. Gramsci's thought is always pedagogical; he considers every aspect of human behaviour as a matter of education. His education is an all-rounded one because humans are never one-dimensional. Cultural and educational reality should always mediate the relationship between people. It is in such mediation that individualism should be fought, but not all individualism, only the economic one. Individuality, as opposed to individualism, matures if there is an effort to create critical consciousness: the only kind of consciousness that can fight conformism. One cannot destroy individualism by denying individuality but rather by presenting it as a social value; this is where hegemony plays a very strong role.

In Gramsci's *Notebooks*, hegemony is a recurring word: it has a much broader meaning than what could be attributed to synonyms, such as pre-eminence or supremacy. According to Gramsci, one can speak about hegemony in many contexts, from the political to the economic, from the cultural to the religious. It is, however, the link between education and politics that best explains the significance of hegemony. In this way, hegemony takes on a cultural dimension that encompasses all the others. Even the formation of the ruling classes is a factor of cultural hegemony.

In his 'philosophy of praxis', Gramsci, more than others, introduced the idea of hegemony as real political hegemony,[2] when implemented in human relations (see Q10II, §6; SPN, pp. 366–367, FS, pp. 306, 402–403) as a form of leadership rather than domination. It must be said that the distinction between leadership (or direction) and domination in Gramsci's thought is not very clear. In fact, Gramsci affirms that a ruling class is dominant when it rules political allies and dominates its

[2] On the question of 'hegemony', there is a substantial secondary literature see: Anderson (1978), Davidson (1990), Francioni (1984), and Hardt and Negri (2000).

opponents (Q1, §44; PN1, pp. 136–151). But Gramsci clarified that political hegemony can have a double meaning: it concerned direction when there is a system of parliamentary democracy; it concerned domination when the parliamentary power crumbled and dictatorial forms were established. Based on this basic distinction, the Sardinian thinker analysed hegemony, as a dialectic relationship, within the whole complex of civil society. Gramsci divided the hegemonic relationship into three phases: the first concerned the structure of hegemony and civil society, the second the 'relation of political forces', and the third the 'relation of military forces'. Clearly, for the purposes of this chapter, I am more interested in the second type of hegemony, i.e. the most political one but which, at the same time, included the question of the role of the intellectual. As mentioned above, for Gramsci, the concept of intellectual no longer applied only to teachers, professionals, scientists, etc., but rather to everyone, with the caveat, however, that if it is true that 'all men [sic] are intellectuals', it is also true that 'not all men have in society the function of intellectuals' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 9). This understanding of intellectuals allowed him to reconsider the role of the school as an institution dedicated to instruction and education. Gramsci famously wrote that every relationship of hegemony, like the 'teacher-pupil' one, 'is necessarily a pedagogical relationship', but this relationship, which we could include more in 'direction' that in 'domination', changes according to the ruling class holding State power.

Thus, Gramsci considers the pedagogical connotations of hegemony. The 'teacher-pupil' relationship, based on direction (*alias* hegemony), is the paradigm of all pedagogical relationships in society. What occurs in the school should be used to understand the whole of society, in the relationship between individuals, between different social classes, as well as between rulers and ruled. Gramsci was deeply convinced that the pedagogical exchange fostered mutual growth. Not only are hegemony and pedagogy not to be seen as opposed to each other, but they can be seen as complementary. The intellectual provides the link between hegemony and pedagogy. Intellectuals have the task of constructing a hegemony that is democratic. They should create interplay between the environment and the individuals who work in it, and they should do it expressing freely their thoughts without, however, ignoring the environment and the context in which their thoughts are located. When the thinker, Gramsci wrote:

> Is content with his [sic] own thought, when he is 'subjectively', that is abstractly, free, that is when he nowadays becomes a joke. The unity of science and life is precisely an active unity, in which alone liberty of thought can be realized; it is a master-pupil relationship, one between the philosopher and the cultural environment in which he has to work and from which he can draw the necessary problems for formulation and resolution. In other words, it is the relationship between philosophy and history. (Q10II, §44; SPN, pp. 350–351)

Political leadership emerges out of the relationship pedagogy/hegemony-democracy, and it is in this close relationship that education constantly rediscovers its mission, which encompasses ethics and politics. Political leadership, understood in its broadest sense, is deeply democratic if it comes from civil society and if it is based on consent.

To explain consent, Gramsci focused on the battles for universal suffrage extended to women as well as on the October Revolution. The conquest of universal suffrage was the exemplary way to govern with the consent of the governed, all the governed, even women who had at that point been excluded from the enjoyment of civil and political rights (Gramsci 1984c, p. 137). Several times in the *Notebooks*, Gramsci highlighted the Hegelian doctrine of the State and considered it as a natural evolution of the path opened by the French Revolution which achieved a constitutionalism that is 'government by consent of the governed, but an organized consent, not the vague and generic kind which is declared at the time of elections' (Q1, §47; PN1, p. 153).

In the organization of consent, Gramsci's pedagogical vision emerges in all its versatility and depth. Consent should be organized spontaneously by individuals associated in parties or unions because, according to Gramsci, recalling Hegel, 'the state has and demands consent, but it also "educates" this consent through political and trade-union associations, which, however, are private organisms, left to the private initiative of the ruling class' (ibid). In this pedagogical vision of the State, according to Gramsci, Hegel went beyond 'pure constitutionalism and theorizes the parliamentary state with its regime of parties' (ibid). Gramsci was mindful of the unfortunate fact that the spontaneous expressions of association through the Jacobin clubs and the secret conspiracies of 1848 ended in bloodshed and in the Restoration. They did, however, go beyond association intended only for economic purposes, and Gramsci saw in the associationism which is 'educated' by the State, a milestone for the building of a parliamentary and democratic State. The educational dimension, thus, creates the consent of the governed, and every citizen, of any social class, can become a 'ruler'. Pedagogy thus becomes an instrument of democracy, promoting civic awareness in individuals. Through the educational role of the (parliamentary and democratic) State, citizens are educated to become leaders. Pedagogy is harnessed to build consent and to ensure a link between governors and governed.

The State, therefore, is not only an economic entity but also, and perhaps to a greater extent, a civil and educational entity. Education is a democratic tool, a dialectical moment between rulers and ruled. Pedagogy is not State pedagogy; it educates through spontaneous associations (parties, in the first place) which create public opinion and generate democratic consent. Pedagogical consent is active and responsible; it needs to be created, and this task is entrusted to intellectuals among whom Gramsci also includes teachers. Therefore, it is important to understand that Gramsci's notion of education tasks the school system with responsibility as a part of the 'hegemonic apparatus' of the State. Beyond the established curriculum, Gramsci's school pedagogy is primarily ideological. That is, aimed at building consent for a new world outlook. Thus, Gramsci's pedagogy has an ambitious task: it is not aimed only at training, not purely informative; it is not bent on a spiritualistic and priggish ethics, but it is focused on concrete action and must strive to transform social, civil and political reality. From this highest goal of political leadership, of hegemony as a synthesis of consent, there is a need to outline a pedagogy that, as a theory of praxis, points to an educational act aimed at the construction of a new humanism.

Gramsci's philosophy of praxis and his pedagogy of praxis found roots in Italian Marxist Antonio Labriola whose theoretical bases were free of the forms of populism which until then had been prevalent and positivistic and the materialistic tendencies that characterized teaching of the early twentieth century. In the wake of Labriola, Gramsci engaged extensively with pedagogy because he was interested in the world of praxis, which does not have an a priori dogmatic truth but offers paths and processes to build a better society *in itinere.*

In the process of Gramsci's revision of Marxism, pedagogy had a central role because, through it, he expressed a vision of the world, an organization of the education of the masses and individuals that was total, complete, organic and integral. Gramsci's pedagogy takes on the characteristics of action—a science of human beings and of human relationships. The human subject is not an entity that has value in itself, but it is a historical product of education. Pedagogy, for Gramsci, should create a close relationship between the subject of individuals, their objectivity and the values which inspire education.

The pedagogy of *praxis* is a philosophy of education because it is an educational *Weltanschauung* aimed at identifying what the theoretical and practical principles of the new society should be and what should guide the action of the individual in human relations. In the act of education there should be a constant and dialectical relationship with history and historical significance, and for this reason teaching does not pose any abstract educational values, but it actually implements them in a historical context. Hence, the hegemonic, anthropological and neo-humanist nature of Gramsci's pedagogy are clear: a constant historicizing education, a construction of the human being and for the human being, but which is always revisable and changeable because it is concretely implemented.

The subject of education is a historical subject that lives its own historicity that, at the same time, ideally wants to overcome it because it has high goals and targets to be achieved. In this process of growth, the teaching of praxis must be constantly seeking moments of synthesis in which the contradictions of the trained subject find a momentary resolution. Past and present exist dialectically within the individual, and they can never be completely cancelled or overcome, if anything, they are 'preserved'.

In the pedagogy of *praxis*, the negativity of individuals and their concerns related to the developmental stages (childhood, adolescence, etc.) are not a burden, but rather, they are the basis to create a positive dynamic of growth. The individual's historicity is, in fact, a resource.

Gramsci's pedagogy is both a realistic and idealistic one, because it considers the development of individuals in relation to the subject matter but also determined by their will and the support of the educator. In turn, the latter is educated by the State. In the educational act, therefore, the political leadership of the State has a strong influence; it must 'educate the educator, the social milieu in general' (Q7, §18; PN3, p. 170). Teachers and intellectuals are, therefore, in Gramsci's opinion, an expression of the political leadership of the State.

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Chapter 4
The Pedagogy of Praxis and the Role of Education in the *Prison Notebooks*

Diego Fusaro

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the relation between the philosophy of praxis and pedagogy in the framework of the *Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci 1975), in an attempt to show how, on the one hand, the theme of education occupies a highly central role in Gramsci's notebooks, and on the other, how this should be read in terms of a symbiotic relationship within his theoretical framework concerning the question of praxis.

As I have discussed elsewhere (Fusaro 2015), the philosophy of praxis, more so than the question of the intellectuals, which has been identified by various authors (e.g., Garin 1969–1970; Vacca 1979) as the true theoretical essence of Gramsci's work, may be legitimately regarded as the underlying basis of his prison writings and furthermore as the founding theme on which all other concepts and issues [*quistioni*] were developed by Gramsci (Frosini 2003).

Indeed, it is from this very foundation that the pedagogy of the *Prison Notebooks* takes its essential form, following an approach which has attracted the attention of many critics. Out of the many texts dealing with the theme of education in Gramsci's writings, I would like to highlight the work of Scuderi Sanfilippo (1985) and Manacorda (1976), true cornerstones of the research related to this aspect of the Sardinian intellectual's work. I would also like to mention the recent work undertaken by Maltese (2008, 2010) and Pagano (2013). The question of education in

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Translated by Steven Cenci

Modern man should be a synthesis of those traits that are…presumed as national characteristics: the American engineer, the German philosopher, the French politician, recreating, so to speak, the Italian man of the Renaissance, a modern type of Leonardo da Vinci who has become a mass-man or collective man while nevertheless maintaining his strong personality and originality as an individual. (Letter to his wife, August 1, 1932, Gramsci, LFP2, pp. 194–195)

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_4

Gramsci's writings has also attracted international interest, as demonstrated by the number of studies which have been carried out on this theme (e.g., Hill 2007; Borg et al. 2002). Critical works have also appeared on this subject (e.g., Nguyen 1980). All of these writings proved helpful in the preparation of the following pages.

By attempting to highlight the centrality of pedagogy in its interconnectedness with praxis, I will first attempt to show how the theme of education is the necessary consequence of a perspective which is centred on possibility and politics and, therefore, revolves around the nucleus of education and organisation of the masses. Second, I will highlight the concrete vision of education outlined by Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*, as the direct derivation of his practical conception of human existence.

4.2 A Pedagogical Obsession

As suggested by Vacca (2012), following his experience with *L'Ordine Nuovo* in Turin, and during his prison period, Gramsci developed what may be defined in all respects as a 'pedagogical obsession' (p. 103). Throughout his life, both in his pre-prison and prison phases, the Sardinian intellectual was motivated by a will to educate and raise awareness in those around him. Such pedagogical obsession originated from the firm and unconditional will to educate others, the working class as well as his children, his mother as well as his wife and his comrades as well as the Italian people in general. This reached such a level that, as I will try to show, the very philosophy of praxis may be legitimately regarded as a pedagogy of praxis, aimed at reawakening others' sense of conscious action and organisation.

After all, we know that at the time of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, Gramsci already enjoyed spending long hours with factory workers: he longed to know about their world and suffering and, at the same time, to instruct them and urge them to take revolutionary action (D'Orsi 2014, p. 166; Spriano 1971), in the belief—and this is an important aspect of his entire reflection—that the revolution, far from being a necessary consequence of historical progress and of objective economic contradictions, was the outcome of a 'molecular' process of instructing the working class, which, self-conscious and conscious of its objectives (in Hegelian terms, 'in-itself and for-itself'), could then finally act in view of the foundation of the future city's new order.

The *Prison Notebooks* also effortlessly present themselves as a magnificent pedagogical composition aimed at educating the Italian people, preparing them to leave the spiritual animal kingdom of capitalism and to achieve that 'intellectual and moral refinement' which alone can lead them into adulthood (Manacorda 1976, p. 112 et seq.). Indeed, the pages written during the prison years may also be legitimately read and interpreted as the outcome of an educational effort, the final aim of which is twofold, namely, the formation of working-class consciousness and the organisation of social praxis.

While in prison, Gramsci's pedagogical thought was not limited to his 'theoretical' writings, which were destined to be published posthumously under the title of *Prison Notebooks*. It also extended to the letters sent to his family. As we know, following his conviction and his imprisonment at Turi, the Sardinian intellectual assiduously tried to reassure his family, unilaterally insisting on the themes of responsibility, of the brave acceptance of his commitment and of his prison sentence not being the outcome of destiny, but rather the result of a free choice, rationally accepted with all its possible consequences. In the small confinement of his cell, Gramsci conceives the utopian greatness of the future city and of the notion of a 'regulated society' (Q6, §12; PN3, p. 11), and, at the same time, he continuously offers teachings to his children, to his wife and mother, exercising a constant pedagogical practice with them.

As suggested by Angelo d'Orsi (2014), Gramsci's letters are full of 'emotional perorations dedicated to the sense of responsibility and to the defence of dignity' (p. 169) but also of insistent appeals to the value of the ideal and to the necessary bravery for their loyalty towards him. Even within prison walls, the Marx of Italy never ceased to educate his children: through his letters, he wrote fables to his children Delio and Giuliano. For this reason, as we know, the first pages written by Gramsci in prison were fables and translations of fables by the Grimm brothers, personally revised by him. Furthermore, during this time, he exhorted his wife to take care of his children: 'I want you to feel', he wrote to Giulia on July 27, 1931, 'that I am close to you and our children during the days when they are reminded that they are a year older, that they are less and less children and more and more men' (LFP2, p. 50).

He wrote his famous moving letter to his mother from prison, while waiting for his sentence, on May 10, 1928. The letter does not simply testify, even if in the most splendid way, as advanced by several authors, the power of coherence and the courage of resistance to which Gramsci would always be tenaciously bound for the rest of his life, but again it provides more evidence of the Sardinian intellectual's eminently pedagogical vocation:

> In order to be completely tranquil, I would like you not to be too frightened or too perturbed by whatever sentence they are about to give me. I would like you to understand completely, also emotionally, that I'm a political detainee and will be a political prisoner, that I have nothing now or in the future to be ashamed of in this situation. (LFP1, p. 206)

Battista Santhià (1987), a factory worker for FIAT and member of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, recalls how Gramsci could help even the most timid workers to speak in public, encouraging them into dialogue with Socratic motivation. Gramsci presented himself, as Santhià recalls (pp. 105–106), as an intellectual who could shatter the divisive barrier between the intellectual class and ordinary people; he passionately kept himself informed of factory life, and when in dialogue with factory workers—a Socrates among them—he learnt as much as he taught.

This pedagogical perspective also helps to best understand the polemic against Amadeo Bordiga, attacked for being the advocate of materialistic fatalism which was the source of 'political passivity' (*Lyons Theses*, SPW-2, p. 360), and to which

Gramsci would always be in opposition. After all, the *Prison Notebooks*, and the philosophy of praxis as their founding theoretical core, may be legitimately conceived as a re-reading of Marxism in an anti-dogmatic and anti-fatalistic perspective, in opposition to Bordiga himself and to Bukharin, to Luxemburg and to the theories of Achille Loria (Frosini 2003, pp. 52–57). Gramsci's polemic was also the result of his willingness to oppose Bordiga's propensity, regarded by him as ill fated, of denying the working class a cultural formation, which at the time was viewed as a bourgeois deception.

In Gramsci's view—and this emerges as a constant theme throughout his work, both in his pre-prison phase and during the period of the *Prison Notebooks*—culture is the foundation for establishing the revolutionary subject, and the path that this subject must follow to become, 'in-itself and for-itself', self-conscious and conscious of its historical task. Gramsci's reading of Marxism largely leans on Hegelianism and, in particular, on the theme of the mediated acquisition of self-consciousness through struggle and education.

As 'discipline in striving for an ideal' (Gramsci, SPW-1, p. 13), culture is, according to Gramsci, the decisive factor for working-class organisation. It allows the self-revelation of the proletariat, which acquires consciousness of its own social position and tasks. In this sense, as suggested by Alberto Burgio (2014), culture is a Socratic maieutic, a 'know thyself' directed at the working class (p. 14), so that it would be able—in agreement with the Hegelianism that permeated Gramsci's thought—to acquire the qualities of in-itself-ness and for-itself-ness.

From this emerges the absolute centrality pedagogy occupied in the mobile structure of the *Prison Notebooks*; a centrality which is rooted in Gramsci's vision of Marxism as praxis, or as the struggle for hegemony, and, therefore, as the effort directed at organising the dominated class, removing its subaltern condition and allowing it to direct its struggle by consciously realising the premises as well as the objectives (Burgio 2014, pp. 16–19).

The Hegelian-Marxian theme of the acquisition of self-consciousness *in dem Kampf*, 'in the struggle', is developed in terms of the acquisition of culture. For this reason, in the *Prison Notebooks*, Marxism as an ideology that reveals, and not that conceals, contradictions, is labelled as the expression of the classes 'who have an interest in knowing all truths' (Q10II, §41xii; FS, p. 396).

As I mentioned earlier, even while in prison, Gramsci did not stop exercising his pedagogical practice. His letters are valuable proof of this. For example, on December 15, 1930, he wrote to Tania, not understanding 'why the fact that I'm in prison has been hidden from Delio, without considering that he might find out about it indirectly' (LFP1, p. 369): no situation exists in which the truth should not be told, because truth is always revolutionary, as Gramsci always loved to reiterate. In this sense, education can only coincide with the complete unveiling of truth, with the unmasking of every lie and of all the ideologies that prevent the dominated from freeing themselves of their subaltern condition and from acquiring a clear consciousness of the real relations of power.

4.3 Praxis and Pedagogy

In the *Prison Notebooks*, one of the most pertinent sections for understanding the inextricable connection linking praxis with pedagogy resides in the passages dedicated to 'common sense' (Iacono 1979). According to Gramsci, the philosophy of praxis, among its other tasks, also serves for the purification of common sense. It must be aimed at the creation of the historical self-consciousness of the subaltern—so that they can establish themselves, in Marxian terms, as a class 'in-itself and for-itself'—who can then switch to the condition of a historical unitary subject, conscious and active, struggling for its self-affirmation and for overturning the condition that has hitherto kept it subdued (Gruppi 1972; Lo Piparo 1979).

For these reasons, even at the risk of becoming dogmatic, the philosophy of praxis must turn itself into common sense, purifying the existing one and reshaping it from within: thus, it must 'stir the great multitudes out of passivity' (Q7, §6; PN3, p. 159), following a theme which is already present in the *Lyons Theses* where, in the forty-second thesis, the theme of 'wrench[ing] the masses away from their passivity' (SPW-2, p. 373) is expressly discussed.

In Gramsci's view, historical change, and the transitions from one historical phase to the next, are not the result of the efforts of individual heroes (following what Gramsci refers to as 'fetishistic history': Q9, §5, p. 1980), but of the 'widest and most articulated national-popular efforts' (Q9, §96, p. 1160), or in other words, they are the result of educated and organised conscious subjects, who proceed as if they were a unitary subject.

Therefore, the philosophy of praxis must be rooted in a ubiquitously pervasive vision of the people, which must transform into a 'mass conception, a mass culture, that of a mass which operates in a unitary fashion, i.e. one that has norms of conduct that are not only universal in idea but 'generalised' in social reality' (Q10II, §31i; FS, p. 385). In other words, the philosophy of praxis must constitute itself as a pedagogy of the masses, educating them and enabling their exodus from the condition of passivity to which they have so far been condemned.

Only by following this path can the philosophy of praxis favour the establishment of a hegemony that acts as an alternative to the dominant one; a hegemony which, by giving rise to a national-popular common sense, can generate 'an intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups' (Q11, §12; SPN, pp. 332–333). Hegemony cannot be achieved without a pedagogy of the masses.

The above discussion clearly demonstrates one of the most central themes running through the *Prison Notebooks*: the need to create a 'national-popular' culture able to raise the moral and intellectual level of the masses, thus leading them to the exodus from the condition of passivity imposed by the dominant class (Baratta and Catone 1995). In Gramsci's view, the communist party would comprise the active essence of this process in the form of the collective intellectual. It would act as the 'promoter of a moral and intellectual reform' (Q8, §21; PN3, p. 248), establishing

itself as the educator of the masses, as their ‘categorical imperative’, as a moral and political guide.

By also considering the role of the intellectual class, the *Prison Notebooks* highlight the central relation between the philosophy of praxis and politics, as well as the inevitability of the revolutionary subject’s moment of organisation, a concept which already emerged at the time of *L’Ordine Nuovo* and which was subsequently refined and developed in the prison writings.

Culture and consciousness stably continue to form the basis for the initiation of the revolutionary process, even if Gramsci—as well as Marx for that matter—was extremely vague when depicting the society of the future or when outlining the concrete forms of the transition. The party is required to direct this dialectical process, favouring the transition from the masses to the class in-itself and for-itself and, at the same time, to actively promote the establishment of a counter-hegemony which is symmetrical with respect to the dominant one.

Intellectual and moral reform become questions of organisation and of the forms through which the political autonomy of the proletariat can express itself, actively mediated by the intellectuals (Burgio 2014, pp. 51–57). Furthermore, intellectuals enable the creation of that ‘emotional connection’ between the ruling class and the social mass and the reciprocal education which, in Gramsci’s view (held since his time at *L’Ordine Nuovo*), constitutes the foundation of a true democratic-immanent union, on which, beginning with the party, the communist ‘new civilisation’ (Q3, § 31; PN2, p. 31) would be established.

This is what Gramsci refers to in the *Prison Notebooks* as the ‘living philology’ (Q11, §25; SPN, p. 429) or the political hermeneutics with which the party—overcoming the division between the rulers and the ruled—reveals the true will of the masses, in the same way that a text must be interpreted in order to educate and instruct. This gives rise to what could be described as a reciprocal pedagogy through which, on one hand, the party shapes and educates the masses, leading, as discussed earlier, to their exodus from the condition of passivity; on the other, the party itself allows the masses to ‘educate it’ on how to educate them and to teach it what it must teach them, favouring their interpretation. Therefore, the party must listen to the masses if it is to understand their needs, their weaknesses and their concrete level of historical and political consciousness. In this way, Gramsci thinks that even political activity acquires genuine pedagogical significance. The question of education is revealed to be of great importance, because it represents the expression and at the same time the historical need, for the political, social and cultural development of the working class (Filippini 2009).

Following the deconstruction of fatalistic and mechanical conceptions, the possible transition to communist society wholly depends on the political capacity to organise the masses, and to lead them, so that they can act in view of this objective. Indeed, historical tendencies may be translated into action through praxis, but ‘there is no guarantee that these tendencies will necessarily reach their fulfilment’ (Q7, §24; PN3, p. 174), a position that is the antithesis to claims originating from the mutually incompatible variants of deterministic Marxism, which presumes to deduce the inevitable necessity of the fall of the capitalistic mode of production.

Therefore, politics and the party are required to guide this cultural formation and transition, avoiding the deterministic view which believes that the contradiction can be spontaneously overcome: 'the economic contradiction becomes a political contradiction and is resolved politically by an overthrowing praxis' (Q10II, §33; FS, p. 430). In the absence of praxis and of political activity, the contradiction—which is of a structural-economic origin—is destined to persist. Once more, antithetical to fatalistic and economistic Marxist conceptions, it is the duty of political praxis, aided by the cultural organisation of the masses, led by the intellectuals, to act in a concerted way in view of the overturning of capitalistic power relations.

In line with what I defined elsewhere as the hallmark of the Gramscian movement of de-fatalisation of the present through the subjectivisation of the objective (Fusaro 2015, p. 75 et seq.), the rationalisation of the present is not consigned to history's objective laws, but to the responsible activity of the human subject which was characteristic of the idealistic movement: 'idealistic theories constitute the greatest effort for intellectual and moral reform' (Q8, §215; PN3, p. 365). This constitutes both the core of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, and also—what I will be mostly dealing with here—of its connection with pedagogy as the collective mobilisation of praxis, which is directed towards enabling the masses to leave the condition of passivity that has historically defined them.

According to what Perry Anderson describes as one of the salient features of 'western Marxism' (Anderson 1976, p. 121 et seq.), Gramsci studied and relied on Marx for the elaboration, under his own name, of a new philosophical vision, directed at rescuing Marxism from *dead-end* economism, and for the elaboration of a new world vision able to transform the essence of idealism (the view of the present as a subjectively defined outcome) into the foundation of a revolutionary and practical-transformative vision of reality. By combining, through a new world vision, his previously formulated notion of struggle against the 'dead weight' of indifference, with a reading of Marx as a philosopher of praxis, Gramsci's philosophy of praxis refutes deterministic economism, and proceeds on the supposition that crises and transitions should not be mechanically conceived as the result of the structural foundation's internal dialectic. On the contrary, they are generated by political conflict, which is also established on the grounds of the economic structure and which is indeed affected, but not determined in a rigorous way, by it. The socio-economic structure affects, without rigorously determining it, free historical praxis: Marx's *Preface to a Critique of Political Economy* is therefore reread through the categorical system of Marx's eleven *Theses on Feuerbach* (Frosini 2003, p. 24 et seq.).

From this, as we know, follows the central importance of politics, and with it, the need—crucial to the philosophy of praxis—to create a collective imagination that, translated into hegemony, is able to unify the experiences of suffering and exploitation, conceiving their end and their universal emancipation as the *telos* of thought and action (Frosini 2009, p. 114). The education of the masses, even in this case, plays a role of primary importance.

In this respect, a well-known passage of the *Prison Notebooks* deserves to be mentioned and then briefly analysed. It encapsulates the Gramscian vision of education in its widest sense, thus as the effort to transform the philosophy of praxis into

common sense, into an ideology of mobilisation of the masses, while at the same time keeping a safe distance from the dogmatic erring which views history as proceeding of its own accord, endowed with an immanent and necessitating legality. As Gramsci writes:

> Instead, history is a continuous struggle of individuals and groups to change what exists in every given moment, but in order for the struggle to be efficient these individuals and groups must feel superior to the present, as educators of society, etc. Thus, the environment does not justify the behaviour of individuals, but merely 'explains' it. (Q16, §12, pp. 1877–1878)

The deep sense of meaning evoked by this passage may be ascribed to different reasons. First, it reiterates the ontological vision inherent to the philosophy of praxis, for which the present is always a subjectively defined outcome of praxis, which historically unfolds: for this reason, as Gramsci points out elsewhere, 'an extra-historical and extra-human objectivity' could never exist (Q11, §17; SPN, p. 445). The present always constitutes itself as a mediation of praxis, as the outcome of a subjectivity which unfolds in the historical dimension and which has, therefore, no definitive or necessary outcome. Secondly, in Gramsci's view, and in agreement with the points raised above, history does not correspond to a hypostatised autonomous subject or to a process which proceeds automatically of its own accord. Instead, history is conflict, dynamic tension, the inexhaustible product of human struggle. In other words, history is the practical-concrete objectification of praxis and of class conflict; individuals and groups do certainly become conditioned in their being and thinking by the concrete historical world in which they are situated, but this happens without them being mechanically determined (Burgio 2000). Thus, free praxis is tasked with the operative transformation of the present, so that reason can affirm itself in increasingly refined and conscious forms, interacting with the not yet rational real (Buttigieg 2011).

However, in order for praxis to become operative and, therefore, to acquire the status of organised political power—comprising the third point on which I would like to focus—education is required, or in other words, there is a need for a pedagogy of the masses: by alluding to the third *Theses on Feuerbach*, Gramsci explains that, in order for praxis to operate concretely, individuals must not conceive themselves as merely determined by the environment, but instead as 'educators of society', able to propagate the philosophy of praxis in the form of common sense and, following this line, to educate the masses for engaging in practical-transformative political activity (Tosel 1983, 1984).

4.4 The Educational Model

As discussed above, in the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci assigns the pedagogical task to intellectuals and to the 'modern Prince', presented as a 'collective educator'. Through its pedagogical effort, the Prince is called to follow the principle of

conformism, organising culture so that every citizen can take part in it, and intellectual and moral reform can take place 'molecularly', as a necessary condition for the practical-revolutionary overcoming of the capitalistic mode of production (Thomas 2009a, b). Therefore, the party and the intellectuals, acting as its agents, are tasked with educating the masses in two ways: first, they must make them conscious of their condition and of their objectives (therefore, paraphrasing Gramsci, Marxism appears to be the only ideology which does not hide reality but instead unveils it completely and unpretentiously), and second, they must shape them in conformity with the politico-cultural project of the 'modern Prince', so that they are able to assimilate its structure and its rules.

In Gramsci's view, cultural hegemony, as the essential determination of hegemony, is built through the school and other institutions. It is on this basis that in the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci develops ideas which are more specifically related to the question of pedagogy and education, also taking a stance in the heated debate of the time, in particular by outlining the limits of idealism and of its understanding (Pagano 2013, p. 25 et seq.). While Gramsci was developing his ideas on education, the Italian education system was regulated by the old Casati reform. It was based on a distinct fracture between disciplines and, in particular, between classical-humanistic, techno-scientific and practical-vocational studies. Giovanni Gentile's education reform (1923) subsequently accentuated this division even further, reaffirming the absolute centrality of classical studies compared to science and vocational studies. Furthermore, Gentile's reform—welcomed by Mussolini as the 'most fascist' of reforms—permanently stabilised this fracture by creating different levels of education (primary, lower and higher secondary, University).

The school model formulated by Casati and Gentile—notwithstanding the considerable differences between these two figures—could be, according to Gramsci, strongly criticised for many reasons. First, because it was established on an embittered classism, which *de facto* favoured the ruling class, distancing it from the masses, which are forced to work and produce. This paved the way for the reaffirmation of what in the *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci identified as the atavistic Italian habit, in cultural matters, of hermetically separating the intellectual 'caste', which keeps to itself, from the masses, which are abandoned to their destiny (Liguori 1998).

Another aspect of the fascist school model which Gramsci thought must be criticised unreservedly was its conception of the student reduced to a passive listener, a mere receptacle for the mechanical learning of notions. Even though Gentile, in the two volumes of his *Compendium of Pedagogy as a Philosophical Science* (1913–1914), theorised the educational process as an ongoing-activity, in which the pupil and the teacher comprise an active unity, and in which, in coherence with the principles of actualism, every form of passivity must be banned, in Gramsci's view, the fascist school model resulted in an asymmetrical relationship in favour of the teacher and in the reduction of the pupil to a purely passive 'vessel' (Maltese 2008, pp. 10–20).

If school constitutes a decisive moment for the creation of hegemony, and also of a humanism which signals the overturning of capitalism (Pagano 2013, p. 52

et seq.), it must be freed from the passivity and sterile erudition which undisputedly dominate it. In general terms, Gramsci conceives a school model which, on the one hand is able to replace the subaltern condition of pupils with a process of dynamic interaction between teachers and students, and on the other, it is able to teach praxis as well as theory (avoiding the separation between knowledge and everyday life), so that the student is not reduced to 'pure passivity, a 'mechanical receiver' of abstract notions' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 35).

This aspect clearly emerges when considering school activity, on which Gramsci writes:

> The contact between teachers and students is not organized. The professor lectures to the mass of listeners from the podium, that is, he [sic] delivers his lesson and leaves. Only at the time of writing his [sic] dissertation does the student approach the professor, ask for a topic and for specific advice on how to carry out scholarly research. To the mass of students courses are nothing but a series of lectures, heard more or less attentively, wholly or only in part. (Q1, §15; PN1, p. 106)

Gramsci expressly acknowledges the importance of nurturing, starting at the lyceum, the pupil's free activity, following a first period of study which aims, through dogmatic learning, to provide the basic rudiments of education: 'the lycée must already be a fundamental part of creative—and not just receptive—studies' (Q4, §50; PN2, p. 212).

Existing schools and universities—mere 'cemeteries of culture' (ibid p. 214)—turn the student into a 'trained gorilla' of the factories, as described by Gramsci in the pages dedicated to Americanism and Fordism. Furthermore, they produce a divide between the simple and those who feel superior for having memorised data, concepts and quotes. They reinforce classism and exasperate the distinction between the caste of intellectuals and the masses comprising the simple and the working class (Maltese 2008, pp. 30–34).

In contrast to this highly criticisable model, Gramsci thinks that the 'future school' will enable the spread of a culture which, by closely linking theory with praxis, will constitute an organisation and a discipline of the self, and the conquering of a superior state of consciousness, but will also constitute an understanding of the present, of one's rights and duties, making the non-negotiable dignity of humans of central importance (Manacorda 1976, p. 78 et seq.).

Rather than perpetuating class division through a type of specialism which only serves its own purpose, the new school must educate human beings in a complete sense, guaranteeing an education for everyone:

> In order to break this pattern, then, one must not multiply and promote vocational types of school but rather create a unified type of preparatory (elementary-secondary) school that would guide the youngster to the threshold of choosing a career and, in the process, form him as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling—or controlling those who rule. (Q4, §55; PN2, p. 229)

Consequently, Gramsci adopts a firm position against the vocational school model, because it prevents pupils from growing, from developing their creative abilities, since it precociously prepares them for a manual and mechanical type of labour. In

this way, vocational schools compromise the future of pupils and, in particular, those of the working class, who alienate themselves and their labour for the benefit of others.

In opposition to this model, the *Prison Notebooks* envisage a preparatory school which is the same for everyone and which is established on a new educational paradigm, fruitfully harmonising intellectual activity and a rediscovery of classical sources, without the exclusion of a practical dimension, so that the pupil may be stimulated to develop in the direction of a work ethic (Manacorda 1976, p. 132 et seq.). This type of school develops pupils starting from solid foundations which are equal for everyone, aiming for an educational model which is as complete as possible, and which may only be accomplished, in Gramsci's view, through the teaching of philosophy from lower secondary school onwards (see Q4, §55; PN2, p. 230). From the *Prison Notebooks*:

> The common school, or school of humanistic formation (taking the term 'humanism' in a broad sense rather than simply in the traditional one) or general culture, should aim to insert young men and women into social activity after bringing them to a certain level of maturity, of capacity for intellectual and practical creativity, and of autonomy of orientation and initiative. (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 29)

The type of school envisaged by Gramsci and chosen by him as the paradigm of the 'future city', must be culturally oriented and not a polytechnic, so as to combine the strictly theoretical-cultural aspect with the practical-transformative one and to highlight the centrality of human beings in their multifaceted, rather than one-dimensional, development; in this way, the tendency to 'Taylorize intellectual work' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 29) could be overturned. Furthermore, the teacher would be required to stimulate and control the pupils, softly and not in a compulsive manner, allowing them to develop autonomously through effort and discipline: in Gramsci's words, this is the model for a 'school in which 'reception' occurs through the student's spontaneous and independent effort and in which the teacher functions primarily as an overseer and friendly guide' (Q4, §50; PN2 p. 213); the school is thus able to promote a reciprocal relationship, in which—following an intuition which was also at the heart of Gentile's pedagogy—pupil and teacher constitute the active parts of educational activity.

By proposing a single type of secondary school, compulsory up to the age of 14, Gramsci searched for a unity between school and life, between instruction and education and between instruction and work. 'The common—intellectual and manual—school has the additional advantage of putting the child simultaneously in touch with human history and the history of 'things' under the control of the teacher' (Q1, §123; PN1, p. 211). Far from favouring a separation between knowledge and the world of everyday life, instruction must take place at the concrete level of the historical world, within life and its experiences: therefore, it must not constitute itself as a mere individual accumulation of abstract notions and of information, but rather as the formation and education of human beings in a complete sense. Therefore, instruction must also be able to stimulate the practical dimension of individuals, preparing them for work understood in the wider sense of a transformative

activity, in agreement with the Hegelian view that work serves as the means through which consciousness develops to reach its highest level of awareness.

This new type of unitary school, established on the ideal of forming accomplished men and women, who are able to articulate both theoretical and practical abilities, and to link knowledge to the world of everyday life, must be guaranteed, in Gramsci's view, by the State to all its citizens, against every form of classism and class division. For this reason, schools must not be private and must include all members of the younger generation without exclusions; they must also be established with the necessary expansion of the teaching body and infrastructure, resulting in the creation of the appropriate spaces and an adequate relationship between pupils and teachers. As Gramsci explains:

> The common school necessitates the State being able to take care of the cost of tuition, which presently falls upon the family; in other words, it transforms the budget of the national department from top to bottom, expanding it to an unprecedented extent and making it more complex. The entire function of educating and forming the new generations ceases to be private and becomes public; for only thus can it involve them in their entirety, without divisions of group or caste. But this transformation of scholastic activity requires an unprecedented expansion of the practical organization of the school, i.e. of buildings, scientific material, of the teaching body, etc. The teaching body in particular would have to be increased, since the efficiency of the school is greater as the ratio between teachers and pupils increases. (Q12, §1; SPN, pp. 29–30)

By being unitary, the new school overcomes the classism which still infects schools under the capitalistic mode of production and simultaneously overcomes the gap which separates the countryside from the city, a problem which Gramsci focuses his attention on in a passage of the *Prison Notebooks* (Q4, §50; PN2, p. 211), showing how the citizen is able to learn more quickly if stimulated by a number of incentives which are absent in rural life.

This explains why Gramsci, when discussing the work by Cardinal Newman *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects*, asserts that 'University discipline must be considered as a type of discipline for intellectual training capable of bearing fruit in institutions that are not 'university' ones in the official sense' (Q15, §46; FS, p. 152). Indeed, culture must also be able to connect externally, in the practical world, by extending beyond the narrow confines of academic spaces (Maltese 2008, pp. 51–64).

Consequently, the academic process must be disinterested and at the same time rich in concrete concepts, able to guide the pupil's practical activity; it must be active and creative but never lead to spontaneism. It is also for these reasons that Gramsci provides a rigorous critique of the spontaneism displayed by Rousseau's *Emile*, according to which humans are good by nature, and therefore their condition would be improved by simply allowing for their spontaneous natural development (Manacorda 1976, p. 150 et seq.).

In opposition to Rousseau—an exponent of that Swiss tradition that, with Pestalozzi, offered a long-lasting contribution to pedagogy—Gramsci continuously insists on the fact that human beings must be educated, formed, instructed towards a willingness to make sacrifices, to dedicate themselves to work, gradually, through

inner as well as external discipline: the educational process, which is directed at the development of the pupils, inducing their physical and intellectual self-discipline, revolves around the centrality of effort (Scuderi Sanfilippo 1985, p. 82 et seq.).

Gramsci refutes the Rousseauian theory of educational spontaneity by using the analogy of 'unwinding a ball of thread':

> 'Spontaneity' is one of these involutions: one almost imagines that a child's brain is like a ball of thread which the teacher helps to unwind. In reality, every generation educates, that is, it forms the new generation, and education is a struggle against instincts linked to rudimentary biological functions, a struggle against nature, to dominate it and to create the man [sic] who is 'in touch' with his times. (Q1, §123; PN1, p. 211)

In other words, the educational relationship does not involve the Socratic 'extraction' of truth, which the pupil is somehow laden with. Instead, education takes place as a result of the pedagogical effort which aims to shape the pupil, who is not conceived as an inert material, such as a piece of marble out of which a statue may be carved; instead, education must comprise an activity which must be steered and channelled correctly, so that it can yield the most fruitful outcomes (Hill 2007, p. 121 et seq.). The result of this is the Gramscian conception of education as an effort and a discipline and as praxis which equally involves both teacher and pupil.

Moreover, the seemingly positive aspect of educational spontaneity, namely, the pupils' guaranteed freedom, turns out to be a great injustice done to their formation: indeed, in this way, children are abandoned to themselves and to their environment, which is usually provincial and unsavoury. Therefore, spontaneous education leads to the unexpected production of an education which discriminates between social classes, so that the environment will determine the type of development depending on where one is born (Hill 2007, p. 126 et seq.). In opposition to this perspective, Gramsci advances the idea of a unitary school able to shape the personalities of the children, guiding them, even dogmatically if necessary, during the acquisition of a few undeniable rudiments, which will subsequently serve as the grounds for the development of their personalities:

> The elementary grades should last three to four years; they should teach dogmatically (relatively speaking, of course) the basic elements of the new conception of the world, in opposition to the conception of the world conveyed by the traditional environment (folklore in its full scope), in addition to [imparting], obviously, the fundamental instruments of culture: reading, writing, arithmetic, elements of geography, history, rights and duties (that is, the first notions of the state and society). (Q4, §50; PN2, p. 211)

By mediating between school and life, teachers are, therefore, tasked with shaping the pupils, forming and developing their free activity towards predefined outcomes which are, at least during the first few years, equal for everyone (Manacorda 1976, p. 150 et seq.). Teachers must instruct pupils and develop their culture, so that the abstract notions can fruitfully rest on a wider and more dynamic cultural foundation: even 'a mediocre teacher may succeed in making his [sic] students become better *informed*; he will never be able to make them better educated' (Q4, §55; PN2, p. 226) or better formed and accomplished as men and women in a complete sense.

Gramsci firmly rejects the idea of separating instruction from education and, with it, the idea that schools should instruct and not educate: in his view, such a perspective is to be rejected because it leads to the conception of the pupil as a merely passive, simple 'recipient' to be filled with abstract notions, preventing the attainment of a complete formation; instead, this can only result from an active relationship between pupil and teacher which is able to speed up the formative process by placing it under the tutor's friendly guidance. This is what Gramsci writes:

> Instruction is quite different from education only if one assumes that the learner is merely passive, which is not only absurd in itself but also denied by the very same fervent supporters of pure education who oppose mere mechanical instruction. The truth is that the instruction-education nexus is enacted by the living work of the teacher, insofar as schooling is the acceleration and disciplining of the child's formation. If the teaching corps is inept, its work would be all the more inept if it were forced to provide education: it will create a superficial, rhetorical school. (ibid)

Since education is to be conceived as a formative effort rather than as a spontaneous development of the child's abilities, then, in Gramsci's view, study comprises a strenuous task, centred on an exercise which is not merely intellectual but also physical and mental. Therefore, in order for schools to oppose the classism that still affects them, they must be formative and demanding and able to reward authentic merit independently of class status. This calls for a school which is accessible to everyone and which stays connected to the world of everyday life, a school which, as he wrote in 1916, 'does not mortgage the child's future, a school that does not force the child's will, his intelligence and growing awareness to run along tracks to a predetermined station' (Gramsci 1958, p. 59; SPW-1, p. 26).

Thus, the Gramscian ideal is that of a humanistic school, in the same way that the classical or the Renaissance ones were, able to develop creative thinking and moral autonomy, and that chooses as its referential subject not the sector worker, but the complete and multifaceted human being. Here, Gramsci is explicitly and paradigmatically referring to a specific anthropological type, namely, that of a new Leonardo da Vinci (Manacorda 1976, p. 142 et seq.), as confirmed by a well-known letter addressed to his wife Giulia on August 1 1932:

> Modern man should be a synthesis of those traits that are…presumed as national characteristics: the American engineer, the German philosopher, the French politician, recreating, so to speak, the Italian man of the Renaissance, a modern type of Leonardo da Vinci who has become a mass-man or collective man while nevertheless maintaining his strong personality and originality as an individual. (LFP2, pp. 194–195)

Through the pedagogical journey, pupils are freed of all material, moral and cultural 'slavery' to achieve a multifaceted education, able to relate to humans in their multifaceted existence, and resulting in social freedom and equality, thus establishing, through perspective, and not without a certain utopian inspiration, a society which is composed of multiple Leonardo da Vincis. In the same way, communism, which is largely depicted in the *Prison Notebooks* as the 'new Renaissance', also finds confirmation in the educational model of the complete human, represented by Leonardo da Vinci.

Against every form of exasperated specialism, Gramsci evokes Quintilian's principle of integral education, so as to avert any possibility of it acquiring a sectorial status, instead centring it on classical studies. The particular attention which Gramsci dedicates to classical studies, could be easily misinterpreted if one were to ignore the fact that, as has already been mentioned, the practical and active dimension forms a central part of his analysis with respect to the world of everyday life (Maltese 2008, p. 88 et seq.).

In this sense, Gramsci's radical humanism is able to reconcile human's historical values with the aspirations of modern industrialism, by quashing classism as the foundation of capitalistic society and of its alienated forms of pedagogy. As already highlighted, in the Sardinian intellectual's view, school should reflect life and the concrete world, while simultaneously achieving people's development in their integrity, in their complete humanity, against the sectorial mutilations operated by capitalism and by that extreme form known as Fordism.

4.5 By Way of Conclusion

A further chapter couldbe specifically dedicated to a critique, written in a Gramscian perspective, of the tendencies displayed by the current educational and formative process. After all, even in pedagogical matters, the only way to bring forward Gramsci's legacy would be to continue from where his project was interrupted, from the vast work addressing the concepts of self-consciousness, culture, and transformative praxis, but then also from the critique of the present and of the contradictions which symmetrically infect it.

In general terms, it is legitimate to assert that in recent years, we have been witnessing the increasingly evident capitalistic destruction of the formative and educational system in Europe (e.g., Standing 2011). The continuous cutbacks in spending on culture and education—cutbacks aligned with the neoliberal paradigm and with the current acceptance of the economy as the only source of meaning (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999)—are the result of the ongoing political programme of annihilation of education as a process of ethical formation, conveniently hidden behind the anonymous mask of the laws of the economy (Habermas 2013).

The nihilistic power of finance and capital aims to decapitate every thinking head, and to replace it with that 'economic cretinism' (Q7, §13; PN3, p. 166) typical of the calculating heads organic to the new neoliberal rationality. Capital will not accept the existence of thinking heads, as formed subjects, as bearers of a cultural identity and of a critical depth, conscious of their roots and of the falsity of present times: instead, capital aspires to make everyone identical, thus reducing everyone to consuming automatons lacking an identity and a culture, only able to speak the dull language which is characteristic of the market and of finance (Fusaro 2012, 2014).

Consequently, during the last couple of decades, schooling has undergone a radical corporatisation process in Europe, which has led to the rapid reconfiguration of its foundations: from the initial function of forming, in a complete sense, human beings who are conscious of their historical world and of their history, schooling has been transformed into an enterprise, producer of abilities and competencies which are indistinguishably linked to the utilitarian dogma of 'serving-a-purpose'.

From the classical notion of education as the complete and multifaceted development of human personality—notwithstanding all the criticisms that such a model attracted—there has been a lax transition to the notion of schooling as the intensive accumulation of technical competencies and practical abilities, which are complementary to the flexible and precarious employment typical of an unstable market. Even as part of a different historical context, Gramsci had already identified and denounced this tendency, which has fully become reality only today. 'In the modern school, I believe, a process of continuing degeneration is taking place: the vocational school, which addresses immediate practical interests, is gaining the upper hand over the 'formative' school, which does not have an immediate interest' (Q4, §55; PN2, p. 228).

Amid the alienating forms of accumulation of data and information which are typical of what Nietzsche stigmatised as the 'blind collectionistic fury' (Nietzsche 1974, p. 27), hegemonic knowledge in the age of the monotheistic market is fragmentary and partial, specialised and programmatically detached from any vision of the whole as the dynamic combination of its parts. With the successes ofthis fragmented knowledge, there is a corresponding immediate rejection of a dialectical vision which—as Gramsci proposes—recognises the contradictions inherent to the dynamic totality's contradictory becoming.

In Gramsci's view, culture and education should enable young people to develop a critical consciousness of their historical world, conceived in its totality, but then also of their historical roots and perspectives, so that they can develop as human beings in a complete sense. Instead, today, secondary schools and universities increasingly choose to follow the path of sectorial specialization, resulting in the fragmentation of knowledge and the prevention by the establishment of that holistic vision from which, depending on specific interests and propensities, specialisations can then subsequently develop. Without an awareness of its own historical world, specialization becomes sterile, self-referential and without perspective and narrows towards an impersonal, non-relational competency which is detached from the cultural dimension.

Secondary schools and universities are increasingly reduced to the function of training grounds for indoctrination in the politically correct dominant ideology and to mere producers of competencies and abilities to be profitably invested in the world of flexible and precarious employment, thereby diverting from their formative function as places of *Bildung* of human beings. They are completely swept away and redefined by the corporatisation processes which are ongoing today; processes which transform head teachers into company managers and which redefine students—using impersonal and reifying bureaucratic language—as 'consumers of education', assessed according to a system of debts and credits which reveals, once

more, the appropriation of the world of culture and of everyday life by the forms of the commodity system.

In many respects, the Italian situation is emblematic. Ever since the 1990s, through a plethora of interchangeable reforms from both left- and right-wing governments, there has been an intensification in the dynamics of the capitalistic destruction of education, thus removing one by one the gains made by Gentile's otherwise criticisable—and even criticised by Gramsci—school reform of 1923.

In the interests of modernisation, of overcoming antiquated bourgeois forms, of competitiveness and of the preparation for accessing the world of flexible and precarious employment, the education system has increasingly been made to conform to the company model (the use of terms such as debts and credits, head teachers operating as managers, teaching of Latin and Greek replaced by IT and English language, etc.). As Gramsci wrote in 1932 in his *Prison Notebooks*:

> In the old school the grammatical study of Latin and Greek, together with the study of their respective literatures and political histories, was an educational principle—for the humanistic ideal, symbolised by Athens and Rome, was diffused throughout society, and was an essential element of national life and culture. Even the mechanical character of the study of grammar was enlivened by this cultural perspective. Individual facts were not learnt for an immediate practical or professional end. The end seemed disinterested, because the real interest was the interior development of personality, the formation of character by means of the absorption and assimilation of the whole cultural past of modern European civilisation. Latin and Greek were not learnt in order to speak them, to become waiters, interpreters or commercial letter-writers. They were learnt in order to know directly both civilisations—civilisations which were a necessary precondition of our modern civilisation: in other words, they were learnt in order to be oneself and know oneself consciously. (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 37)

This passage deserves the highest attention, since it highlights how studies in classical Greek and Latin culture constitute a fundamental 'educational principle' for the formation of single individuals as well as of 'national life and culture' and of Italy's concrete historical community. Far from possessing 'intrinsic thaumaturgical qualities' (Q4, §55; PN2, p. 228), the study of Latin and Greek opens the way to knowing the living roots of the world in which one lives, understanding its past and, therefore, making it possible to understand the present.

This type of education was detached from the notion of 'serving-a-purpose', in particular, from the axiomatic notion of the immediate utility of having access to the world of employment (the 'immediate practical-vocational purpose'). Instead, education was disinterested in any type of programmatic activity or, if we prefer, only interested in the formation of young members of society in a complete sense; so that they could, through 'the assimilation of the whole cultural past of modern European civilisation', reach the deepest knowledge of their roots and of the historical, social and political process leading to the present; 'thus, to be oneself and know oneself consciously', in order to become human beings in a complete sense.

This must not, of course, lead to reading Gramsci as a defender of Latin in a purely conservative tone: a careful reading of the text makes this Gramscian hermeneutical notion impossible. It means, instead, that by giving value to the emancipatory and critical role of learning Latin—pertaining to a different goal than the

simple exaltation of the study of the Latin language—he is targeting the dominant tendency to destroy culture and the critical sense that learning Latin helps to develop.

In conclusion, we can summarise the main concepts outlined in this chapter as follows. Pedagogy, understood as a specific practice connected to scholastic and academic formation, occupies a central role in Gramsci's reflections; and, at the same time, if understood in its wider sense, it represents a fundamental theoretical nucleus of the *Prison Notebooks*, which may be rightfully understood as a pedagogical text directed at the Italian masses. The objective, which Gramsci comes back to with incredible frequency, is to enable the masses to escape their condition of passivity, reforming them in a moral and intellectual sense, in view of the 'active revolution' which will mark the transition to a 'regulated society'. The philosophy of praxis is directed at ensuring that the masses abandon the passivity to which they have been historically condemned and that they freely undertake revolutionary action in concrete historical conditions. As Gramsci asserted, the economic contradiction must be exclusively overcome through politics, thus through the conscious and organised activity of the masses which are 'formed' and 'educated' by the party and its intellectuals.

Therefore, without exaggeration, we can safely say that it is impossible to understand the letter and the spirit of the *Prison Notebooks* without considering their pedagogical component, in the two ways just mentioned. The philosophy of praxis is intrinsically also a pedagogy of praxis.

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Part II
Using a Gramscian Framework for Research

Chapter 5
A Pedagogy for Power: Antonio Gramsci and Luis Emilio Recabarren on the Educational Role of Working-Class Organizations

María Alicia Vetter and John D. Holst

Why a comparison between Gramsci and Recabarren? Besides the intriguing nature of a 'failed encounter'[1] between them at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922, when the fact that Gramsci was a member of the Latin Secretariat of the Comintern under Trotsky (Caballero 1986; Young 2012) made their meeting a must, Recabarren and Gramsci shared a common communist culture during a key period of global working-class organizing. It is impossible to compare and contrast the trajectory of Recabarren as organizer between 1900 and 1917 to Gramsci's beginnings in the PSI between 1914 and 1917; nevertheless, a more

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[1] Massardo (2012) contends that the meeting of Recabarren and Gramsci in 1922 at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International can be called a 'failed encounter', since there are no documents written by either one which specifically refer to such an encounter. There is nevertheless a photograph, among photographs that Recabarren presumably brought back with him to Chile after his trip to Moscow, and that accompanied his notes and reports on his participation at the meetings, where they both appear in a group that includes the Latin American and the Spanish participants. Most interesting, given the assumed subordinate position of Recabarren in relationship to Gramsci, is that Recabarren occupies center stage in the group, while Gramsci, looking very young, is standing almost inconspicuously in the last row. Ironically, Massardo (2012) laments this missed opportunity for Gramsci's influence on Latin American political thought. My personal opinion is that the senior intellectual and leader and organizer of long standing in that group was Recabarren, so recognized by his peers.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_5

attentive comparison of their views after the triumph of the Soviets shows that both intellectuals came under the influence of the Revolution and of the Third International. This is particularly evident in their views of the party.

Luis Emilio Recabarren, a Chilean organizer of the early twentieth century in Chile, wrote extensively in the working-class press between 1900 and 1924. He founded the Socialist Workers Party of Chile (POS) in 1912, which, under his influence, became the Communist Party of Chile (CPCh) in January of 1922. He is considered to be the most important organizer of the Chilean working class of the period, as well as the main founder of its organizations and of the period's working-class press. Compared to Gramsci's, Recabarren's endeavors as an organizer appear more extensive and lasting as he was involved in political organizing continuously from 1894 to 1924, the year of his death, and the Party he founded exists to the present day. Recabarren has also been recognized as a cofounder of the Communist Party of Argentina (Ulianova et al. 2005), the most important communist party in the region, as well as having had a significant influence on the founding of the Communist Party of Uruguay. Gramsci, on the other hand, has had a far more lasting impact as an intellectual on the international Left. This is not recognized as a demerit to Recabarren, whose works are not well known. On the one hand, the reputation of Recabarren as a working-class intellectual has suffered from a preference for his reputation as organizer and, on the other, Gramsci's intellectual development based on higher education studies, as well as a prolonged period of studying and writing seem to outdo Recabarren's theoretical output. Nevertheless, their outlook on the role of the working-class organizations more often than not coincided during the period 1914–1924 and beyond.

Antonio Gramsci was born in 1891 to a family of modest means in the town of Ales, in Sardinia. Just as Recabarren, who was born to a family of similar economic means in Valparaiso, Chile, in 1876, Gramsci was pulled out of school at age 11 and sent to work to support the family. Unlike Recabarren, who received his intellectual training from working through his childhood and adolescence in printing shops and then for major presses as a typographer, Gramsci did eventually return to school to finish his studies and won a scholarship to the University of Turin, where he enrolled in Modern Philosophy in 1911. By the time Gramsci started his studies there, he was already politicized by several influential teachers as to 'Sardist exceptionalism', which he would distance himself from later on, without abandoning what became the 'Southern Question' (Jones 2006). At the university, Gramsci came in contact with important thinkers, as well as with other students involved in political activity. Tosca, Togliatti, and others became his comrades in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI).

Gramsci applied for membership in the Italian Socialist Party in 1913, at 22 years old. This membership marked the beginning of Gramsci's nearly 24 years of militancy in revolutionary parties that would only end with his death on April 27, 1937. Gramsci's militancy in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) (1913–1921) and the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) (1921–1937) included prolific writing and editorial staff work for several Socialist (*Il Grido del Popolo, Avanti!, La Città Futura, L'Ordine Nuovo*) and Communist papers (*Lo Stato Operaio, L'Unità, L'Ordine Nuovo*), the establishment of party educational initiatives (Club of Moral Life, PSI; School of Culture, PSI; Institute of Proletarian Culture, PSI; correspondence school,

PCI), local and national party leadership positions culminating in his position as general secretary of the Communist Party of Italy, representation of the PCI on the executive committee of the Communist International (including extended stays in the Soviet Union [1922–1923]) and Vienna (1923–1924), and successful candidacy to the Italian parliament as a member of the PCI.

Recabarren, on the other hand, got his political training from participation in the civil war of 1891 at age 15 and then through his militancy in the Democratic Party, a party of artisans and white-collar workers, which he joined in 1894. In spite of his misgivings about the Democratic leadership, Recabarren organized inside the party for 17 years, constantly trying to move it forward, which included several efforts to found a new socialist party. Recabarren finally broke with the Democratic Party in 1911[2] and founded the Partido Obrero Socialista [socialist workers' party] (POS) and the newspaper *El Despertar de los Trabajadores* in Iquique in 1912. Under Recabarren's leadership, the POS provided direction to working-class organizations in Chile during a whole decade, and, also under his leadership, it became the Communist Party of Chile (CPCh) in 1922.

Between 1914 and 1918, major world events, WWI and the Russian Revolution of 1917, influenced Recabarren's writings, as they did Gramsci's. In 1918, Recabarren (1986b/1918) took over the leadership of the Federation of Chilean Workers (FOCH), which in 1921 joined the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU). In 1922, the POS, now the Communist Party of Chile (CPCh), joined the International, and Recabarren was chosen to represent both FOCH and CPCh at the Fourth Congress of the Third International in Russia. Recabarren arrived in Moscow on November 16, 1922, which was announced at the Credentials Commission meeting, of which Gramsci became an elected official on the same date (Riddell 2011).

After a 6-month stay at a clinic near Moscow, Gramsci attended the Fourth Congress as well, representing the CPI. It can be assumed that Gramsci and Recabarren attended the same general meetings, as well as the section ones that related to their respective countries. There are records in the proceedings of Gramsci's interventions (Riddell 2011), as there are records in Soviet files of the extensive report on the CPCh and the workers' organizations in Chile that Recabarren presented at the time to the International (Ulianova et al. 2005). We can assume that Recabarren and Gramsci never crossed paths again, as Recabarren died in 1924 without ever returning to Europe.

Some of the coincidences in Gramsci's and Recabarren's lives, choices, and intellectual output highlight, not only a common revolutionary culture but also similar historical and territorial backgrounds. Although at first glance the historical backgrounds for the Italian working class and the Chilean working class might appear very different, with Italy set in a European context and pre-fascist era, and Chile in a South American context in which peasant revolts appeared to be the rule for revolutionary outcome, both classes had more in common than it is to be expected. The Chilean working class was by the twentieth century an industrial

[2] Recabarren's differences with the Democratic Party had started as early as 1906, when he tried to found a new democratic party, Partido Democratico Doctrinario (Jobet 1965).

working class, with a large number of workers tied to mining.[3] It was a revolutionary class contending with semicolonial oppression, while the peasant class lived in semifeudal conditions, with the owners of the land already involved in capitalist ventures.[4]

Several aspects of the situation of the Italian working class and its peasantry coincide with conditions in Chile. The Italy that Gramsci was born into in 1891 was a younger nation than Chile, which had won its independence in 1817. Nevertheless, and due in part to the 1879 so-called War of the Pacific that allowed Chile to add an enormous territory in the north, the disarray and uneven levels of development that Italy presented towards the end of the nineteenth century can be likened to similar uneven development in Chile. It could be said that in the Southern Cone, which included Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, conditions were more similar to those in Southern Europe than to other countries in Latin America. Although at the International, European countries such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain were likened to Latin American countries in terms of their development (or lack of it), I would argue that the Southern Cone presented similar levels of industrial development with very combative and organized working classes.

Gramsci and Recabarren shared an almost identical view of the role of the working class in the defeat of capitalism and of its leadership role in attaining and maintaining a socialist society on its way to becoming a communist one. For Gramsci, the historic mission of the working class was the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society; this could only be accomplished if the working class broke with bourgeois hegemony and asserted its independence as a class capable of assuming the leadership of a new society. Party education within the popular movements had the aim of breaking 'the bond of apparent legality which still unites the majority of the population within the form of bourgeois institutions' (Gramsci 1977/1919, SPW-1, p. 138). Gramsci (1978) saw the formation of the CPI as a great step in this direction for the working class.

A civilizing aspect was central to Recabarren's philosophical and educational vision. Recabarren believed that Christianity had outlived its civilizing role and had proved incapable of fulfilling its promises. It was the turn of socialism to set the basis for a truly civilized society. A civilized society would be one of full equality and where all human beings could develop their nature as *species beings*. Recabarren understood that the advent of the new civilization required that the working class overcame capitalism and took charge of the management of the new society. The civilizing force of socialism, Recabarren proposed, had to be conducted by workers, who, by educating themselves towards the task of educating society, would then

[3] According to Ortiz Letelier (2005), the industrial working-class sector in Chile grew from 150,000 in 1890, to 250,000 in 1900. By 1920, the numbers surpassed the 350,000 people. Although modernization created unprecedented industrial work in the cities (the urban population had doubled between 1875 and 1920), the largest sector of workers remained in the mining of saltpeter, copper, and coal.

[4] In *Landlords and Capitalists*, Zeitlin and Ratcliff (1988) make the case for a new interpretation of the so-called feudalism that some argued was still prevalent in the Chilean South.

direct the process of civilizing the entire society. For this task, organization was the key.

5.1 Recabarren's Views on the Role of the Organizations (1903–1922) as Compared to Gramsci's

It was in and through the working-class organizations that Recabarren believed the education of workers should take place. He perceived these organizations to be both sites in which formal and informal learning could take place and class entities that were in themselves educational tools for the workers to become subjects and agents of change.

As Recabarren continually developed new theoretical frameworks and the Chilean working class became involved in different practical experiences, Recabarren identified and highlighted different class organizations, or combinations of them, as leading forces of the working class. Mancomunales were the first organizations Recabarren thought should play a leading role of the working class. Mancomunales were organizations that combined aspects of mutuality with the trade unionism of the resistance societies. Although short-lived, they had great impact.[5] Soon after their demise, Recabarren started favoring trade unions or labor unions (*sindicatos*) as leading organizations of the working class, then a combination of party, cooperatives, and labor unions and, later, union councils and union federations.

Although Recabarren understood that most of these organizations existed initially solely for self-defense purposes, he placed a particular emphasis on their educational potential and their revolutionary mission. Recabarren's involvement in the Mancomunal of Tocopilla (1903–1906), where he directed a newspaper and organized workers for the building of a workers' center, led him to believe that the combination of mutualism and trade unionism, coupled with municipal action, could lead the working class on to further socialist action.[6]

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[5] Both the mutual aid societies and the resistance societies had been popular in Chile since the nineteenth century. While mutual aid societies took care of the workers' immediate needs, the resistance societies (so called because unionism was understood as resistance to capitalism) fought for better labor conditions for workers and often used the strike to demand negotiation. The mancomunales were organizations that combined both lines of defense in one organization; they appeared around 1900 in the north of the country and spread quickly through the ports in the north and then to the rest of the country.

[6] According to Salazar (1994), the relative political and administrative independence of the municipalities presented at the time the possibility for self-governance at the local level within the reach of workers. Recabarren (1985/1904) pointed to its advantages many times during his leadership of the Mancomunal of Tocopilla, and later on in other organizational drives as well, considering it the one administrative entity that workers could elect and administer democratically to further their own interests (p. 107).

Travelling to Argentina at the end of 1906, Recabarren was witness to the powerful organizing potential of the trade unions, which had accomplished important social gains such as the 8-h workday. Recabarren then proposed that Chilean workers should move forward from the mancomunal-type organizations towards the formation of full trade unions.

In Argentina, Recabarren (1986a/1907) confirmed his long-held belief that the general strike was the most effective weapon in resolving the conflicts of the working classes with capitalism. Echoing the discussions in Europe resulting from the 1905 Russian Revolution (see Luxemburg's (1970/1906) *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions* of 1906 for comparison), Recabarren (1986a/1907) read a declaration at the IV Unification Congress that highlighted the educational value of the general strike:

> [C]onsidering that the general strike is genuinely a workers' weapon and the most effective…. That it reveals to the workers in the most evident fashion the profound antagonism of interests that divides the two classes…. That it strengthens the fighting spirit improving consciousness and strengthening the workers' organization….the IV Congress declares that the general strike is a superior and effective mean and advises the proletariat to train and prepare for it….[I]t must take place spontaneously and at the very moment and under the circumstances that it might be required. (p. 78)[7]

The 2 years he spent in Argentina provided Recabarren both new theoretical understandings and practical party experience in the Argentinean Socialist Party. It was during this period that he began his efforts to found a Chilean socialist party. During his travels in Europe, Recabarren became better acquainted with cooperative action, and, in 1912, in Iquique, he combined the founding of the Partido Obrero Socialista (POS) with the founding of several cooperatives. Recabarren (1986b/1916) believed that it was largely through the cooperatives that the working class would be able to abolish private property and expropriate capital, at the same time socializing society and establishing a collective system:

> The day that all industries have fallen into in the hands of socialists; the day that all intermediary actions of industry and commerce are in the hands of socialist cooperatives, won't in fact the capitalist class have disappeared, swallowed by cooperatives? The day the industrial system will be in the hands of the socialist cooperatives, that day industrial work will be simplified and reduced to the limits that are needed, providing for an effective economy that would increase social well-being and ensure peace all over the world. (1986b/1916, p. 136)

Moreover, the cooperatives combined with the unions and with the party offered a ground for workers to train for the future society; they formed 'a positive school that provides the practical experience of THAT WHICH MUST BE life'[8] (p. 137). Nevertheless, Recabarren (1986b/1916) warned against contentment with immediate gains. Socialist action, he said, should have 'as the aim of its action the defeat of the patron class to replace the system of exploitation with one of cooperation'

[7] All quotations of Luis Emilio Recabarren are translated from the original Spanish by María Alicia Vetter.

[8] Capitalized in the original.

(p. 138). Union and cooperative actions had to be, therefore, 'infused with socialist doctrine' (p. 138) to achieve their ultimate aims.

By this time, Recabarren considered it fundamental for the working class to have a working-class party that interpreted and struggled exclusively for the working class and from where that class's most prepared members could educate and lead. Furthermore, he saw different sectors in society playing a part in a socialist education: the socialist intelligentsia, the press, the schools, and the socialist representation in congress and in municipal governments, which would ideally have a say on national education.

The role of the Socialist Workers Party was to abolish class differences and turn private property into collective property. The duty of socialists was to transform society through an education that would be conducive to the ultimate goal of human emancipation:

> The POS declares that its objectives are: the total emancipation of Humanity, abolishing class differences and turning all into one class of workers, who will be the owners of the fruits of their labor, free and equal; honest and intelligent; and the installation of a system in which production, as well as its products, will be owned collectively. In other words, the objective is the transformation of individual property in collective or common property. To achieve these goals, we will transform as much as it is possible the (present) social environment, rescuing it from ignorance, from vice, and from prejudice. (Recabarren 1976a/1912, p. 176)

Recabarren (1976a/1912) claimed, then, that these objectives would be accomplished through political struggle in Congress and through participation in the municipalities. More immediately, the party would create cooperatives and organize workers in trade unions and mutual societies to support the workers in the struggles 'between labor and capital' (p. 177).

And, finally, that the POS would accomplish:

> all those political and economic measures that … will improve the moral and material conditions of the proletariat, improving both its intellectual as well as its moral levels, correcting vices and abolishing the sources of them, organizing in trade unions that will assert an influence on the evolution of the environment, which will transform the present society into one of mutual benefit. (pp. 179–180)

For his part, between 1914 and 1917, Gramsci identified the Socialist Party of Italy (PSI), the Confederation of Labor and the cultural or educational associations of the Party as the key organizations of revolution, without a fully elaborated theory of the relationship between them.

> Given the nature of the environment in Turin…, it is here that the first nucleus could emerge…of a cultural organization with a distinct socialist and proletarian identity, which would become, along with the Party and the Confederazione del Lavoro, the third organ in the Italian working class's drive to assert its rights. (Gramsci 1994/1917, PPW, p. 38)

Gramsci (1994/1914) proposed the party as the essential instrument of revolution. In his first published article, he equated the party with an embryonic workers' state; while mentioning other 'organs', he was vague as to what these might be. 'The Party is a State *in potential*…which is seeking, through its daily struggle with this

enemy, and through the development of its own internal dialectic, to create the organs it needs to overcome and absorb its opponent' (PPW, p. 4).

The growing movement among the industrial proletariat in Turin moved Gramsci to enter into direct contact with militant workers in the Turin Factories and he began to question the role of the party as an instrument of revolution. Between 1918 and 1920, Gramsci developed his theory and program of the Factory Councils as the Italian manifestation of Soviets. Gramsci (1994/1920), as did the Third International, regarded the emergence of Soviets or Councils as a world historical event, marking a new era in the history of humanity.

> We say that the present period is revolutionary because the working class is beginning to exert all its strength and will to found its own State. This is why we say that the birth of the Factory Councils is a major historical event—the beginning of a new era in the history of the human race. (PPW, p. 165)

While in the earlier phase, Gramsci wrote of the Party as a state *in potential*, in this second phase, Gramsci (1977/1919) clearly identified the Factory (and peasant) Councils and their organization and coordination on regional, national, and international levels as the organs of popular state power.

> The proletarian dictatorship can only be embodied in a type of organization that is specific to the activity of producers, not wage-earners, the slaves of capital. The factory Council is the nucleus of this organization….The Council is a class, a social institution….Hence the Council realizes in practice the unity of the working class….The Factory Council is the model of the proletarian State. (SPW-1, p. 100)

In this second phase, Gramsci (1977/1919) identified the Councils, the trade unions and the party as the three key organizations of revolution.

> This, then, is the network of institutions in which the revolutionary process is unfolding: the Councils, the trade unions, the Socialist Party. The Councils, historical products of society, brought into being by the need to master the apparatus of production; products born of the newly achieved self-awareness of the producers. The trade unions and the Party, voluntary associations, driving forces of the revolutionary process, the 'agents' and 'administrators' of the revolution. (SPW-1, p. 146)

Gramsci (1994/1919) argued that the party was not a state *in potential* but an instrument that should educate, coordinate, lead, and guide the popular movement toward the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat through the full formation and coordination of urban and rural Councils.

> The Socialist party and the trade unions….will not be immediately identifiable with the proletarian State….The Party must continue in its role as the organ of communist education, the furnace of faith, the depository of doctrine, the supreme power harmonizing the organized and disciplined forces of the worker and peasant classes, and leading them towards their goal. (PPW, p. 97)

Moreover, Gramsci (1977/1919) identified the error of equating the Party apparatus with the form of the revolutionary process as a major cause of the defeat of the German revolutionary upsurge of the period.

With the September 1920 defeat of the factory occupations, Gramsci increasingly placed blame for these defeats on the reformism within the PSI, the PSI's

failure to provide revolutionary leadership within the working-class and peasant organizations, and the PSI's failure to theoretically understand and, therefore, transmit, the historic significance of the period of which the Factory Councils were the highest expression. In what we can call this, the third phase of Gramsci's theorization of the role of the party, Gramsci, along with others, stepped up the fight for the formation of an Italian communist party aligned with the Third International. Based on what he had identified as the errors and shortcomings of the PSI, a major concern for Gramsci in the Communist Party of Italy was cadre formation. With the strategies of the Councils and later cells and worker and peasant committees—that relied heavily on the capacity of working-class and peasant militants at the base—Gramsci argued for an educational program for theoretical and ideological development of the party members to safeguard against the defeats of the 1919–1920 period. In this third phase of Gramsci's thinking on the party, he did not give up on the idea of organs of state power beyond the party, but he did emphasize a stronger leadership role for the party in pushing forward the revolutionary process through its members organically based in the myriad of working-class and peasant organizations. After September 1920, Gramsci pushed for the formation of the Communist Party and the education of the cadre, first in the councils and then in cells.

Recabarren, as well, recognized the leading role the unions could play, then the centralizing role of the unions' councils and, ultimately, the central leadership of the Federation of Chilean Workers (FOCH). He saw the unions playing an organizational and educational role in the present and foresaw them playing an administrative/managerial role in a new society. All along, Recabarren promoted the party (first the POS and then the CPCh) as an organization where the members of the unions should participate and encouraged the party members to militate in the unions. He considered the party to be a venue where an ongoing educational project of the leadership should take place.

Discussing how the different unions had been unable to keep going without a central organization, Recabarren (1986b/1915) argued that it was the Socialist Workers Party that should provide such organization to the unions. Recabarren (1986b) explained how workers once in the party should organize in trade unions under the umbrella of the party. The party should educate members through lectures, books, pamphlets, and newspapers, as to the nature of socialism, the mission of the organizations, and the gradual improvement conquered through education and organization. The party should fight for better salaries, while at the same time 'upgrade the producer as the … maker of humanity' (p. 127). This would entail the education of the individuals because 'without culture, there is no Socialism' (p. 127). While fighting to improve working conditions 'so as to eliminate all forms of exploitation, oppression and humiliation' (p. 127), the party should dedicate efforts 'to all that elevates and dignifies humans' (p. 127). This required, according to Recabarren (1986b), 'an unlimited educational program' (p. 127). All members were required to participate in these activities.

By 1917, Recabarren (1976b/1917) proposed that the unions played a central educational and organizational role:

> The present state … in the present historical moment cannot be modified favorably for the welfare of the working class but by the action of the socialist workers' organization that already exists, and whose fundamental unit must be the trade union. (p. 189)

Recabarren (1976b/1917) argued that the main activity of every union should center on the development of the intellectual and the moral capabilities of its members and their families. The educational activities would have two functions: first, to educate the individual's professional, economic, and cultural potentials; second, to provide the members with knowledge and information that would allow them to seek and find truth and comprehend 'the reason for human existence, the mission of human society and the way it should be organized to lead lives of freedom and happiness' (p. 190).

Recabarren (1976b/1917) understood that the material conditions of working-class life depended on the intellectual development of workers; therefore, unions should exist for purposes that went beyond the immediate gains, otherwise, they would be 'useless for our purposes of social perfecting' (p. 192). He also believed that there should be particular attention given to a cadre of the more advanced, who in turn would educate the other members.

Recabarren (1976b/1917) envisioned each union as a 'school', one 'that would also be a popular democratic university that would provide the information and means needed … for the unrestrained development of knowledge: a cultural center always marching towards perfection' (p. 193). Unions, Recabarren thought, would be the centers of development and distribution of the future society, and, therefore, they should start preparing for that future endeavor: 'Cannot we aspire to have the union initiate the "ways" of the future life?' (p. 193).

The measure of a successful union would be:

> [A]n honest administration in plain view of the members; large attendance at events; intellectual production in conferences, newspapers and pamphlets; an ethical behavior over all; and by the best relations it would maintain with other unions of the same industry in near and far away towns and with the unions of other industries. (p. 196)

Recabarren (1976b/1917) believed that membership in the unions should be obligatory and that unions should become:

> a political class force, as it has been done by the English and North American unions … where since their program is not fundamentally different from the socialist program … in that it seeks the abolition of the Capitalist system of production … have become in the practice sections of the Socialist Party. (p. 218)

In 1917, Recabarren (1976b/1917) still argued that an (independent) municipality should be considered an instrument that in workers' hands and, coupled with union action, would allow the working class to yield a significant amount of power. Calling it a 'social force', which had played a supporting role in the past when workers had been on strikes, he argued for its role in education, health, housing, industry and labor, and all services. Furthermore, 'the municipality can become in the hands of the unions a "means" to accomplish the abolition of the capitalist system' (p. 274).

Recabarren (1976b/1917) considered the unions a veritable training ground for the future society, where he envisioned the unions playing an administrative role:

> Whichever form the action of abolishing the capitalist system takes, there will be a need in the New Society for some organization to be in charge of the administration of production and of distribution of goods, and I believe that organization could be the unions…. Therefore, why couldn't they start (their administrative role) today … with the support of the cooperatives and the municipalities? (p. 275)

In 1918, Recabarren started fostering the importance of the Federation of Chilean Workers (FOCH), of which he became an officer, and founded chapters of the federation in the north of the country. Early in 1914 he had disparaged such an organization. Nevertheless, he grew to consider it essential–an educational organization and emancipatory tool—as long as it was infused with the 'doctrine' of socialism:

Over the course of the year 1918, Recabarren successfully guided different workers' organizations to join in one FOCH. The resolutions of the First Regional Congress of the FOCH in 1919, in the town of Union, were the ones previously adopted by the POS in 1918. Among other resolutions of importance, the congress included those that concerned education: the financing of speakers to travel around the country offering lectures; the ongoing combat against alcoholism; the struggle for free, lay, and obligatory primary education; and the creation of free cultural spaces, such as libraries and theaters (Recabarren 1987/1919, p. 10). For Recabarren (1987/1919) the importance of the FOCH resided in the collective power of workers through the organization:

> The objectives of unionizing will not be achieved but with the existence of a collective force, whose value will reside in the most perfect education of that force. Once that collective force has been educated in the objectives that have given rise to it, the application of such objectives must be a methodical and intelligent task. (p. 24)

But the collective organization should never lose sight of its ultimate purpose, which was to organize the society of the future. Recabarren (1987/1919) insisted that the organization of the society of the future was predicated on the education of workers, which would ensure the socialization of the instruments of labor and the abolition of salary. 'The Federation must not only be the force that raises salaries, but also the one to ensure its increase in time, and also the one that guarantees its disappearance when it is no longer necessary' (p. 25). The collectivity, Recabarren argued (1987/1919), should provide individual development—intellectual, moral, cultural—to each of its members. The collective force should be the end result of that education.

Calling on the workers' federations to have members vote in the electoral system, Recabarren (1987/1920) pointed to the power in their numbers:

> If today there are in Chile close to 200,000 workers and employees organized in Federations, it is easy to understand that more than half of the electoral force belongs to the Federation of Chilean Workers and other workers organizations. And, with those numbers we still put up with slavery, hunger, and injustice? (p. 65)

Finally, Recabarren (1987/1920) argued that FOCH members should participate in the electoral system as a means to take away from the capitalists the power to

exploit workers and deliver it to the masses instead so they could govern themselves.

In December, 1921, at the Fourth Congress of FOCH, its members voted to have the FOCH join the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU), and Recabarren was elected to represent the FOCH as its delegate to the RILU. The next 3 years were ones of great workers' mobilization and activities in the country. Workers organized into increasingly more cohesive organizations, and there were great strikes in different sectors, such as by coal miners, dock workers, and fishermen. The FOCH became the major organizing force.

In 1922, Recabarren pushed for and was successful in turning the POS into the Communist Party of Chile (CPCh).

5.2 Comparing Recabarren's and Gramsci's Views on the Role of the Party

From his militancy in the Democratic Party to his founding of the POS and then the CPCh, Recabarren always considered the political party to be essential. He understood that not all workers would join the party but considered it a necessity that the party would provide leadership to the organized workers.

When in January, 1922, at its IV Congress, the POS was transformed into the Communist Party of Chile, Recabarren (1987/1922) wrote:

> What is the Communist Party? In the first place it is not and it will never be a political party, because it will never accept political relations with the parties of the capitalist class. We accept electoral participation as an instrument of struggle and strictly of a revolutionary character, never of a political character. (p. 154)

What Recabarren (1987/1922) meant here was that the Communist Party of Chile was an organization that operated outside the bourgeois political arena; it was not just another party that participated in the electoral process with the aim of acceding to representation in the bourgeois state's branches of the executive and of parliament. He saw participation in elections as exclusively a chance to create consciousness in the working class and to fight for immediate gains. The role of the PCCh was educational:

> The Communist Party has as its immediate objective to train, orient, and provide scientific discipline to its members in order that they become the revolutionary vanguard of the people and, with its members present in all the unions, help direct the march of the proletariat towards the final triumph of our aspirations of abolishing the capitalist system with all its injustices and miseries. (p. 154)

This view of the party was in total agreement with the Third International's views and with the recommendations of the Communist International that Recabarren (1965/1923) embraced after participating in the Fourth Congress: the party as educator of the vanguard of the workers and as overseer (and guarantor) of the 'working class's exercise of its power to better itself' (p. 148).

For Gramsci, the political party had a responsibility to play a key role in building the organizations that arose from the spontaneous struggles of the working class and peasantry. But, just as Recabarren advocated, Gramsci thought that the party should guide and lead. Party members, as activists in the organizations of workers and peasants were to 'transform the rebellious impulses sparked off by the conditions that capitalism has created for the working class into a revolutionary consciousness and creativity' (Gramsci 2000/1920, AGR, p. 96). As the 'political organization of the conscious avant-garde of the proletariat', the party 'has the historical task of organizing the class of impoverished workers and peasants into a ruling class' (Gramsci 1977/1920, SPW-1, p. 154). A revolutionary party would be made up of the most conscious and prepared elements of the popular classes and, therefore, would not only be prepared to lead but carried a responsibility to lead. This leadership and organizing role and the very party members who carried it out, however, had to be rooted in the day-to-day realities of the popular classes. The party could not stand apart from the popular classes; it was an actual reflection of the best elements of them. Gramsci (1977/1920) described this delicate act of leading and organizing from within when explaining the success of the original *L'Ordine Nuovo* program of the Factory Councils.

> The workers loved *L'Ordine Nuovo*….[b]ecause in its articles they rediscovered a part, the best part, of themselves. Because they felt its articles were pervaded by that same spirit of inner searching that they experienced….Because its articles were not cold, intellectual structures, but sprang from our discussions with the best workers; they….were virtually a 'taking note' of actual events, seen as moments of a process of inner liberation and self-expression on the part of the working class. (SPW-1, pp. 293–294)

In this period of the Factory Council movement, Gramsci (1977/1919) argued that the immediate organizing tasks of the Socialist Party were:

> to promote the development of proletarian factory institutions wherever they exist and to set them up where they have not yet emerged. To coordinate them locally and nationally. To make contact with similar institutions in France and England. And finally…to generate teeming communist forces who…will defend the [then existing Soviet] Republics in the first instance and, in subsequent stages of the general process of development of revolutionary consciousness and power, will bring into being the International of Communist Republics. (SPW-1, p. 82)

Gramsci (1978) would carry these ideas through to the Communist Party of Italy's 1926 Lyons Theses.

> The party leads the class by penetrating into all the organizations in which the working masses are assembled; and by carrying out, in and through these, a systematic mobilization of energies in line with the programme of the class struggle. (SPW-2, p. 368)

A fundamental aspect of the organizing and leadership role of the party was to build unity among all the social sectors/classes facing exploitation under capitalism. The primary classes in this unity were the industrial proletariat and the peasantry, but the party had to work to build unity even beyond these two classes.

> The Socialist Party ought to embody the vigilant revolutionary consciousness of the entire exploited class. Its task is to draw the attention of all the masses to itself, to ensure that its

> directives become their directives and to win their permanent trust, so that it may become their guide and intellect. (Gramsci 1994/1920, PPW, p. 157)

Gramsci (1994/1920), like Recabarren and other Marxists, believed that it was the industrial proletariat that had demands for which the resolution would entail a revolutionary solution to the crisis of capitalism. Therefore, the unifying role of the party must consist in a unity around the demands and leadership of the industrial proletariat in the revolutionary process.

5.3 The Party and Its Participation in Parliamentary Politics

The issue of parliamentary representation, in other words, the participation of the party in bourgeois politics, was always a subject for discussion on the Left in Chile. The Democratic Party had considered it a way for the working class and other disenfranchised sectors to have access to power and compete with the middle and upper classes for participation. With the Socialist Workers Party, Recabarren (1986b/1915) still vied for parliament as a way to give the party a voice but made clear that the Socialist Workers Party had its own agenda. On a speech on his candidacy as representative in 1915, he stated that he did not 'need to be elected representative to struggle for the cause of proletarian redemption' (1986b/1915, p. 75).

> We, socialists, have our party program, which we try to accomplish … with or without parliamentary representation. To offer a program, we might present you with our past work, with which we have accomplished educational work that constitutes the best preparation of workers and proletarians in the struggle for life. Promises I cannot make without falling into the same empty vulgarities of the candidates of the bourgeois parties. If you want to consider my past 20 years of struggle as a promise … you might be able to see the promise of my work in the future. (p. 74)

Furthermore, Recabarren (1986b/1915) did not hesitate to identify the National Congress as the place where laws were passed that harmed the working class rather than protect it but reminded his listeners that having representation there did provide an avenue to change those laws in their favor; at the same time, he warned them of the dangers involved in allowing the bourgeoisie to continue directing the fate of the working class from their seats in congress:

> I consider that which we call National Congress, or Temple of the Law, to be nothing but a big factory of chains for the People, where the chains that eternally enslave the poor proletarians are constantly being renewed. So, if the Socialist Party and, with it, the working class, aspire to have representation there, it is precisely so as to brake those chains, to free the People, and to prepare them for a better future. The Socialist Party is part of the working people themselves; … our mission is to warn the People about the danger involved in letting the bourgeoisie continue in parliament passing laws that are oppressive to the People. (p. 75)

Recabarren did not win the election in 1915. In 1921, he was elected Representative for Antofagasta and, during 1922, as a congressman, he had a noteworthy participation in the House of Representatives with speeches in which he made evident that

the only reason to be there was to have the voice of the working class be heard. He ran again for the House of Representatives in 1924 representing the CPCh and he did not win.

The military coup of 1924 in Chile did away with Congress. Initially, Recabarren pointed to the swift elimination of bourgeois institutions under military rule as potentially educational and useful to the working class. The fascist nature of the military coup soon became evident doing away with any hopes for a working-class take over.

Gramsci, unlike others in the SPI and CPI, argued that it was important for the party to engage in electoral and parliamentarian politics. Gramsci, just as Recabarren did, argued that engagement in the electoral process was both a forum for propaganda or educational work on issues of the day, and a way through vote tallies to gauge a party's support and its enemies' support among various classes and regions of a nation. During periods of revolutionary upsurge, he thought, party members elected to parliament could act to paralyze the parliamentary process itself. Gramsci's (1978) revolutionary stance eventually took him to a complete rejection of bourgeois forms of democracy in all its manifestations, including parliaments and electoral politics.

> With the creation of the Communist Party, the working class has broken all its traditions and asserted its political maturity. The working class no longer wishes to collaborate with other classes in the development or transformation of the bureaucratic parliamentary State. It wishes to work positively for its own autonomous development as a class. (1921, SPW-2, p. 33)

For Gramsci (1977/1919), the parliament, as an instrument of the bourgeois state, must be exposed as an instrument of the brutal rule of the bourgeoisie and done away with through revolution. But, elected to a seat in parliament, Gramsci had a short although significant participation before his arrest on November 8, 1926. Calling for a general strike in the parliament in 1924, he expected that a concerted effort of the opposition could still defeat the fascists. The opposition did not come to an agreement, and Mussolini moved in the next 2 years to a one party dictatorship (Cammettt 1967; Jones 2006).

5.4 Conclusion

Massardo (2012) and others have lamented the 'missed' opportunity in 1922 for Gramsci to have had an influence on Chilean thought when he and Recabarren coincided in Moscow. We hope this chapter not only shows that in 1922 the Chilean working class had its own intellectuals but that it also makes evident that Recabarren's and Gramsci's views at the time were so similar that the desired influence would have been rendered unnecessary. Furthermore, we hope this shows that the ahistorical thrust of such lamentations tends to obscure the timely contributions of native working-class intellectuals. Thus, in this chapter, we have strived to

highlight the similarities between the two thinkers, without diminishing either figure in the process.

The major coincidences in Gramsci's and Recabarren's works have to do with their similar understandings of the role of the industrial proletariat in the achievement of socialism, as well as with the educational role they both saw the working-class organizations playing towards achieving and maintaining a socialist society. Between 1917 and 1924, they both came under the same influences exerted by the success of the Soviet Revolution and, therefore, came to similar conclusions as to the role of the revolutionary party. But, although Gramsci and Recabarren both played a leading role in moving their socialist parties to join the Third International, Recabarren faced no resistance from the POS to do so, as did Gramsci from the PSI. When the POS became the CPCh, it did so as one body, supported by the masses it led (Ulianova et al. 2005). The CPI, on the other hand, was founded by a splintered group, and the masses stayed with the PSI, although it would be Gramsci's policies that would eventually transform the party from a 'sect' into a 'mass' party (Cammett 1967).

A major difference in their views of the role of the party resides in that although having changing views of the party over time, Recabarren never posed the party as a 'state in potential' as Gramsci did at first. For Recabarren, the necessity of a party was always evident but rather saw it primarily in an educational and leading role; that is why he proposed other working-class organizations to train for managerial roles.

The factory councils as organs of revolutionary power did not have a match in the Chilean situation, where workers' councils were organized by trade, rather than by work place. And, while Gramsci thought of the Factory Councils to be an Italian version of the Soviets, Recabarren likened the Soviets to municipal power, popularly elected (Recabarren 1923/1965).

Another important difference between them is Gramsci's more significant inclusion of the 'peasant question'. For Recabarren, the peasant class was part of the working class, undifferentiated from the industrial working class. This might have had to do with distance rather than with theoretical analysis. Recabarren worked predominantly with the industrial proletariat of the Chilean north, and, although not unfamiliar with the peasantry, he did not organize predominantly among them. This also meant that he did not engage in a 'Southern question', as he could have done, and he did not address the indigenous nature of the peasantry as such, or their struggle as a national question.

It was the education of the working class that both Gramsci and Recabarren considered essential for any advancement in the struggle to attain power. Thus, the importance they both gave to the organizations as educational sites and to the working-class press as educational propaganda. Moreover, echoing Recabarren (1965/1923) on the party as educator of the vanguard of the workers and as overseer (and guarantor) of the 'working class's exercise of its power to better itself' (p. 148), Gramsci (1994/1925) wrote:

> It is the proletarian vanguard, which is forming and educating its cadres, adding a further weapon—of theoretical consciousness and revolutionary doctrine—to the battery it is assembling to confront its enemies and the battles that await it. Without this weapon, the Party does not exist. And without the Party, there is no possibility of victory. (PPW, p. 267)

Overall, we can say that Gramsci and Recabarren are the most similar in their views of the organizations in the period between 1917 and 1924. It is not possible to compare Gramsci's intellectual output after 1924 to Recabarren's, although writings such as the Lyon theses and even writings of 1930, such as a call for a Constituent Assembly, echo similar calls by Recabarren before his death. There are evident gaps in the times their lives and works covered, which makes the coincidences in their views during the period we have highlighted all the more poignant. The centrality of organization and the fundamental role of education in the ascendance to power of the working class were their common understandings and goals, both internationally and for their respective countries. Finally, both Recabarren and Gramsci represent those working-class intellectuals who led the working class through a period of great unrest and enormous hope for humanity. The rise of fascism in both corners of the world only underlines how close their working classes came to achieve revolutionary change.

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Chapter 6
Gramsci as Theory, Pedagogy, and Strategy: Educational Lessons from the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement

Rebecca Tarlau

It was July of 2009, and I walked through a muddy encampment of makeshift tents, where dozens of families of landless rural laborers were living after having illegally occupied an area of land in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The families had been organized to occupy this land by a national social movement, the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST), whose goal is to fight for agrarian reform in the Brazilian countryside: the redistribution of large land estates and the implementation of state policies that support sustainable, small farming. In 2009, the movement was celebrating its 25th anniversary and its success during this period helping over 135,000 families gain land rights through the tactic of land occupations (Carter and Carvalho 2009, p. 304).[1] Throughout the country, thousands of families were still continuing to occupy land, similarly to the families in this encampment, waiting for the government to grant them land rights.

At first sight, there was nothing normal or everyday about this encampment. The families were living in tents constructed with pieces of wood covered with thick, black plastic to protect them from the rain. As I walked around the camp, I saw tents of all shapes and sizes, with some families raising pigs outside of their tents or tending to small gardens. The camp was extremely muddy, and most people wore knee-high boots as they walked around. There were about 100 families in the camp, although the MST leader I was walking with, Roberto, said this number was hard to estimate because many people had left the camp temporarily or permanently due to the difficult living conditions. Roberto explained that the families had been occupying this area for over 3 years, and he was determined to stay until he won the rights to farm this land.

[1] This is a conservative estimate of the number of families that have received land through MST land occupations. The MST leadership estimates that approximately 350,000 families have received land rights through MST-lead land occupations (www.mst.org.br).

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_6

As we walked through this atypical setting, a very typical event occurred: several parents walked across the camp, taking their children to school. These parents were heading to a small state-recognized public school located in the middle of the encampment, also constructed with wood and black plastic material. The school was split into three multigrade classrooms, which went up to the fifth grade. The three teachers working at the school were also living in the encampment, occupying land. I watched as one girl arrived to the school without shoes, her feet completely muddy. Roberto explained that in the city the young children in this camp would be ridiculed for arriving to school like this, but here it was understood that these children were in the midst of a political struggle, and appearances were irrelevant to learning. In the fourth and fifth grade joint class, only one boy arrived that day, due to the heavy rain. This did not seem to faze the teacher, Cristiano, who immediately went inside the classroom and started telling the student in an excited voice about the new material he had prepared. As I watched Cristiano teach one-on-one, I realized that many people might think of this school as a joke; however, it was actually more personal attention than this student would ever receive in an urban school classroom with 35 other students.

As we walked away, Roberto explained that these schools, known as 'Itinerant (Mobile) Schools', are one of the most important parts of the MST's political struggle (Camini 2009). First, the schools allow for the development of a new generation of leaders organically connected to the movement, who are able to participate in a several-year land occupation while studying. Second, the curriculum and organizational structure of the schools are designed to respect the experiences that these children brought with them to the classroom, such as their histories of landlessness and rural upbringings, thus placing value on their previous understandings and knowledge. Third, these schools represent the MST's engagement with the Brazilian state and the movement's attempt to occupy and transform state institutions. Together, these three aspects of the Itinerant Schools correspond to what I argue are Gramsci's three contributions to educational thought: his philosophy of struggle, his pedagogical approach, and his theories of revolutionary strategy.

6.1 Background: MST, Education, and Gramsci

I still remember vividly this first visit to an MST encampment in 2009 and my realization of the organic relationship between the MST's political, economic, and educational struggles. Since 2009, I have spent more than 20 months living in MST settlements and camps,[2] learning about the movement's educational proposal for the Brazilian countryside. My research has focused on the MST's attempts to engage the state and transform public education, from kindergarten to universities, in four

[2] MST camps refer to the areas that families are illegally occupying, and settlements are formed once these families gain legal land rights.

regions of the country, exploring how these attempts have succeeded, failed, and/or produced unique outcomes in these geographical locations.

When I began conducting this study in 2009, the MST's educational proposal was already nationally known as 'Education of the Countryside'.[3] The most basic pillar of this educational approach is the right of rural populations to have access to education in their own communities. In addition, this education proposal demands that these public schools be based in the rural histories and cultures of these populations. The goal is to promote collective intellectual and manual labor practices and link learning to these communities' larger economic and political struggles (Arroyo et al. 2004). These educational ideas are based in a range of philosophical and pedagogical theories, including those of Paulo Freire (2002 [1968]), Jose Martí, Anton Makarenko (Makarenko 2001 [1933]), and Moisey Pistrak (2010 [1924]). The MST has had tremendous success pressuring the Brazilian state to implement this educational approach. Some of the MST's most significant educational victories include establishing a National Program for Education in Areas of Agrarian Reform (PRONERA) (1998), developing federal legislation to support Education of the Countryside (2001), creating an Education of the Countryside office in the Ministry of Education (2004), and winning access to over 2000 schools with 8000 teachers attending to 250,000 students in MST settlements and camps across the country (Carter and Carvalho 2015, p. 252).

Over 5 years of researching these educational initiatives, I have come back again and again to the theories of Antonio Gramsci. Sometimes, this has been based on my own intellectual interests, but often it is the MST leaders themselves who keep reminding me of Gramsci's relevance for understanding the movement's educational struggle. One conversation that is particularly memorable was in 2011 with a leader of the MST education sector in the state of Pernambuco, Rubneuza. I asked Rubneuza why the MST bothered to engage the state and transform public education, when the movement could just establish its own nonformal educational practices among its activists, independent of the state. She responded,

> Education is always tied to the economic model. In this sense, the schools in our society are capitalist schools, because the system needs this ideological tool in order to sustain itself. Therefore, whatever work against this system, whatever counter-hegemonic project, is also going to need education, and it is within that hegemonic space that you have to construct this counter-hegemony, that you have to dispute for other principles.

In this quote, Rubneuza offers a Gramscian analysis about the relationship between political strategy and public education. She starts off discussing what Karl Marx would refer to as the relationship between the base—the economic system—and the superstructure, the school system. From a Marxist perspective, schools are an ideological tool of the capitalist system, what Althusser (1984) refers to as an ideological state apparatus. Thus, Rubneuza admits, schools are explicitly designed to support the capitalist economic system.

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[3] For more information on these federal changes, see Tarlau (2015a).

Nonetheless—and this is what makes her statement incredibly Gramscian—Rubneuza also says that any counter-hegemonic struggle also has to be carried out in this same educational terrain. In other words, the challenge is not to construct a world outside of the current hegemony (which, according to Gramsci, would be impossible) but to dispute within the current hegemonic model alternative principles that can be concretely implemented. Thus, the MST's attempt to enter the state and govern public schools is not a form of cooptation but, rather, a strategic attempt to transform the civil society terrain. This necessarily leads to contradictions, tensions, and defeats, but it is critical to the MST's larger political struggle: garnering the moral and intellectual leadership of civil society for an alternative hegemonic project.

Rubneuza's reflection about public schooling is an example of why the MST is an emblematic case in modern society of what Gramsci referred to as the Modern Prince. First, the MST has a relatively coherent alternative economic proposal to capitalism. Second, MST leaders attempt to garner consent for this proposal by becoming 'permanent persuaders' and advocating for this new social vision, through the organization of space, everyday routine, and economic opportunity.[4] Education and schooling are central components of this process.

In this chapter, I use the case of the MST to highlight what I see as Gramsci's three educational contributions: (1) his deeply educational *theory* of the process of social change, (2) his analysis of the *pedagogical* process through which learning and education should take place, and (3) his suggestions about appropriate *strategy* when attempting to engage the state and transform public institutions, including school systems. I illustrate these three contributions through an analysis of Gramsci's writings, returning continually to the case of the MST to show how Gramsci's educational proposals are being implemented in the twenty-first century.

6.2 Gramsci's Theory of Social Change: Grassroots Leadership and the Myth of the Intellectual

> [Marx] is the stimulator of mental laziness. – Antonio Gramsci, May 4, 1918, 'Our Marx' (AGR, p. 39)

Classes on Gramsci often focus on his famous 'Prison Notebooks', written between 1929 and 1935, while he was in prison in Italy. However, I believe that some of Gramsci's most important writings for his theory of social change—a theory that I argue is deeply *educational*—were written well before he went to prison. For example, between 1917 and 1918, Gramsci wrote several articles reflecting on the significance of the Bolshevik revolution. In an article he wrote on December 24, 1917, 'Revolution Against Capital', Gramsci makes the provocative argument that the success of the Bolshevik revolution was a revolution against Karl Marx's book, *Capital*.

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[4] I draw on these three components of the Modern Prince from Tugal's (2009) Gramscian analysis of political parties in contemporary Turkey.

Gramsci writes, 'The Bolsheviks reject Karl Marx, and their explicit actions and conquests bear witness that the canons of historical materialism are not so rigid as one might have thought and has been believed' (Gramsci 2000, AGR, p. 33).

Here, Gramsci is critiquing the assumption that communist revolution has to first take place in the most advanced capitalist societies, namely, Western Europe. Of course, Gramsci is not actually attempting to discredit Marx; he is simply trying to argue against a reductionist reading of Marx that interprets history as a linear trajectory or stages of development. This, Gramsci argues, 'turned Marxism into a gradual unfolding of impersonal economic "laws"' (Gramsci 2000, AGR, p. 30). The Bolsheviks proved these mechanical laws to be incorrect, successfully carrying out a communist revolution in a largely peasant, nonindustrial society. According to Gramsci, the Bolsheviks reject reductionist Marxist doctrine, but they 'live Marxist thought':

> This thought sees as the dominant factor in history, not raw economic facts but man, men in societies, men in relation to one another, reaching agreements with one another, developing through these contacts (civilization) a collective, social will; men coming to understand economic facts, judging them and adapting them to their will until this becomes the driving force of the economy and molds objective reality, which lives and moves and comes to resemble a current of volcanic lava that can be channeled wherever and in whatever way the will determines. (Gramsci 2000, AGR, p. 33)

In this poetic quote, Gramsci is again arguing against an economic deterministic vision of history. Instead, he proposes that people are the ones who create history, through their relations and interaction with each other and through their interpretation of economic facts. In other words, rather than social relations simply being a reflection of the dominant economic model, people have the ability to transform their social, economic, and political practices through the construction of a collective will. Importantly, Gramsci writes that in normal times—unlike the tumultuous moment in Russia at the turn of the century—'a lengthy process of gradual diffusion through society is needed for such a collective will to form' (Gramsci 2000, AGR, p. 34).

A few months later, on May 4, 1918, Gramsci expresses a similar sentiment in an article entitled 'Our Marx'. He writes that, 'Marx did not write a nice little doctrine, he is not a Messiah who left a string of parables laden with categorical imperatives, with absolute, unquestionable norms beyond the categories of time and space' (Gramsci 2000, AGR, p. 36). Gramsci argues that the only Marxist norm that exists is, '"Workers of the world, unite!" The duty of organizing, the propagation of the duty to organize and associate, should therefore be what distinguishes Marxists from non-Marxists' (p. 36). Thus, according to this quote, a Marxist is not somebody who has the most advanced *understanding* of Marxist theory but, rather, those who are doing the *work* of organizing a collective will. Gramsci returns again and again to the need for the construction of this collective will among the working class: 'Will, in a Marxist sense, means awareness of ends, which in turn means exact knowledge of one's own power and the means to express it in action' (Gramsci 2000, AGR, p. 38). Thus, by this definition, the collective will that is necessary to transform history is an understanding of one's own power and the ability to express this power through concrete and strategic actions.

These early writings on Marxism are precursors for Gramsci's more famous prison writings on intellectuals. In one often-quoted passage, Gramsci writes, 'All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say; but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals …. Thus there are historically formed specialized categories for the exercise of the intellectual function' (Q12, §1; AGR, p. 304). Gramsci's major point about intellectuals is that the notion of an 'intellectual' as a distinct social category is a myth. While there *are* 'traditional intellectuals', they are only such due to their professional position. In contrast, in every class or social group, there are 'organic intellectuals', distinguished less by their profession and more by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong. These intellectuals give social groups 'homogeneity and an awareness of its own function' (Q12 §1; SPN, p. 5) and must be active participants in practical life, 'as constructor, organizer, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator' (Q12 §1; SPN, p. 10). Gramsci writes that all members of a political party should be regarded as intellectuals, because they perform a public function: organizing class struggle.

Why are these early writings and the 'myth of the intellectual' so important for understanding Gramsci's theory of social change? In these passages, Gramsci is making three basic points: (1) Economic 'law' does not make history; people make history; (2) In order for this to happen, everyone has to become an intellectual; and (3) People only become intellectuals through the hard work of organizing. Thus, in Gramsci's theory of social change, one or two people interpreting Marxist doctrine do not make history; rather, it is the working class's construction of a collective will and awareness of their own power that determines the future. I argue that this is a deeply *educational* theory of social change, as it assumes the need for working-class people to become leaders and thinkers, not simply followers of doctrines. As Gramsci writes, Marx is the 'stimulator of mental laziness', insisting that everyone becomes an intellectual and act collectively based on a united interpretation of economic fact and awareness of collective power.

How does the MST embody this theory of social change? Firstly, the movement has embraced the collective identity of a peasant (*campesino*) movement, thus rejecting the assumption of the peasantry as a backward, inferior social group that is destined to disappear as countries become more developed and 'modernized'. The MST participates in an international network of self-identified peasant organizations, called *La Via Campesina* (The Peasant Way),[5] which attempts to coordinate the work of farmer movements around the world to support food sovereignty. As opposed to relying on industrial agricultural production, food sovereignty is 'the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems'.[6]

[5] For more reading on La Via Campesina, see Desmarais (2007).

[6] La Via Campesina website, http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44

The MST's embracing of a peasant identity and the struggle for food sovereignty rejects economic determinism from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it dismisses the conservative assumptions of economic modernization, popularized by Rostow's (1971) *Stages of Economic Growth*, which defines development as a linear trajectory from 'traditional societies' to an 'age of high mass consumption'. This theory still holds popular imagination, particularly in Brazil, where a full transition to urbanization is still taking place. For example, in 2010, Mariza Abreu, the ex-Secretary of Education in Rio Grande do Sul, explained to me why it was important to close rural schools and build new, larger schools in cities. She said, 'This is the destiny of the world, to leave 2, 3, 4 percent of the population in the rural areas and to have agribusiness, and for the majority of people to live in urban centers … for agriculture to becomes mechanized'.[7] The MST leadership, on the other hand, rejects this 'common sense' view that the destiny of the world is urban modernization. As one MST national leader from Ceará, Maria de Jesus, states, 'We are proposing a united project of peasant resistance that involves all peasant sectors, if not, we run the risk of living like the United States with 4 percent of the population in the countryside, everything mechanized, and only eating foods with pesticides'.[8] The MST is conscious that total urbanization is a real threat in Brazil and they counter this trend by demanding policies that support the livelihoods of small-farming peasant communities in the Brazilian countryside. They reject urban 'modernization' as the unquestionable destiny for their communities.

On the other hand, similar to the Bolsheviks, the MST also rejects economic determinism among the intellectual left, which assumes it is necessary for industrial development to occur before socialism can be constructed. To the contrary, MST leaders attempt to implement socialist educational practices in the current moment, by investing in collective agricultural production, encouraging families to collectivize land holdings, promoting collective childcare, and eating collective meals. Although this socialist vision is far from the reality in most MST settlements, in some locations, these concrete socialist practices have been incredibly successful. For example, in several MST settlements in state of Rio Grande do Sul, families have created agricultural cooperatives that produce milk, organic rice, sausages, and baked goods for commercial consumption, all through the collective work of participating families. An equally important component of this work is the collective childcare and cooking, which all makes the agricultural work in the fields possible. Youth are also encouraged to join these cooperatives and are given work tasks as early as 12 years old so that they can become full members of the cooperative by 17. The existence of these utopian communities by no means suggests that socialism is on the brink of arriving to Brazil. However, these communities illustrate how MST families refuse to wait for this future, attempting to construct concrete socialist experiences in the present.

A second way in which the MST embodies Gramsci's theory of social change is the movement's organizational structure, whereby people take as much responsibility

[7] Interview with Mariza Abreu, November 1, 2010.

[8] Interview with Maria de Jesus, September 5, 2011.

as possible over their own destiny and struggle. This means constantly investing in grassroots, collective leadership within MST camps, and settlements. For example, as soon as a land occupation occurs, the MST leadership organizes families into 'base nucleuses' (NBs) or 'grassroots clusters' of ten families, which become the most important organizational component of the camp. Two coordinators (female and male) from each cluster form the camp coordinating committee, which makes decisions based on the discussions in the grassroots clusters. Beyond the camp coordinating committee, there are also thematic sectors that organize education, health, agricultural production, cultural activities, youth activities, and gender debates in these camps. The goal is for everyone to have a particular responsibility for the organization and functioning of the camp. As one MST leader, Alessandro, explains, 'My family moved 18 times before we went to occupy land when I was 10 …. Before we were nothing, rejected by everyone, but when we came to the camp we had responsibilities for the well-being not only of ourselves but of everyone in the camp'.[9]

The MST leadership attempts to replicate this self-governance model in the public school system as well, organizing students into grassroots clusters (NBs) and creating different sectors within the school for agricultural work, discipline, health, and social and cultural activities. This focus on self-governance is based partially on the educational theories of Anton Makarenko, a Ukrainian Soviet educator who established a school for orphans after the Bolshevik revolution. While most Soviets felt that these orphans were delinquents, who would never contribute to the new socialist nation, Makarenko believed that by giving the orphans responsibility over their own education, they would become inspired to be great leaders. Makarenko (2001) wrote about these experiences in his book, *Road to Life*, called *Poemas Pedagogicas* in Portuguese, which has become a pillar of the MST's educational proposal (Tarlau 2013a). Marli, a member of the MST education sector in Rio Grande do Sul, describes why these writings have resonated with the movement: 'Makarenko worked with the unwanted, the children that were rejected from society, for us, it was like the landless children'. Thus, investing in collective leadership and self-governance is a critical component of the movement's educational and organizational approach, as it turns marginalized populations into agents of their own history.

A third way the MST reflects Gramsci's theory of social change is in the fact that MST leaders acknowledge that the construction of grassroots, collective leadership, takes a lot of work. Therefore, internal discipline is a major part of this educational process. For example, when I was in Brazil in 2011, there was a national mandate throughout the movement that to hold a leadership position, you had to be studying in an official MST course. The goal was for all leaders of the movement to be advancing their educational credentials, both through internal popular education and formal schooling. This practice of constantly studying, writing, and researching is what distinguishes the MST from other social movements, where only a few of the top leaders are able to participate in intellectual debates.

[9] Talk at the Socialist Party Headquarters, Los Angeles, August 30, 2015.

In summary, through the movement's disciplined investment in grassroots, collective leadership, the MST rejects economic doctrines and messiahs within their movement, attempting to construct a collective will that can change the direction of history. This educational process directly embodies Gramsci's theory of social change.

6.3 Gramsci's Pedagogical Proposal: Philosophy of Praxis and Common Sense

> Is it better to 'think', without having a critical awareness, in a disjointed and episodic way … or is it better to work out consciously and critically one's own conception of the world and thus … take an active part in the creation of the history of the world? – Antonio Gramsci, (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 323)

If a central component of Gramsci's theory of social change is deepening everyone's intellectual capacity for critical analysis and action, so people can take collective ownership over their own struggle, how is this process supposed to take place? I argue that this is Gramsci's second educational contribution, his pedagogical proposal for developing the working class's intellectual capacity for critique and assessment. Other scholars have also discussed this relationship between Gramscian theory and pedagogical practice, drawing important parallels between Gramsci's writings and the educational theories of Paulo Freire (Coben 1998; Allman 2001; Borg et al. 2002). In the following section, I build on this scholarship by outlining several of the pedagogical components of Gramsci's writings and how these concepts relate to Freirean theory and the MST's educational practice.

Gramsci's writings on Philosophy of Praxis, common sense, and folklore are particularly useful for understanding his pedagogical proposal. In these notes, as Forgacs argues, Gramsci is focused on 'how to overcome the separation between Marxism as a philosophy (the "philosophy of praxis") and people's actual consciousness' (Forgacs 2000, p. 323). Rather than rejecting people's consciousness as 'false consciousness', Gramsci asserts that everyone is a philosopher in that everyone has a particular way of interpreting the world. However, he argues that for many people, this philosophy is 'spontaneous' or, in other words, uncritical. Thus, he argues, 'It must first be shown that all men are "philosophers", by defining its limits and characteristics of the "spontaneous philosophy" which is proper to everybody' (Q11, §12; AGR p. 325). He writes that this spontaneous philosophy is contained in (1) language, which is a 'totality of determined notions and concepts and not just of words grammatically devoid of content', (2) 'common sense' and 'good sense', and (3) 'systems of beliefs, superstitions, opinions', or popular religion and folklore. Together, language, common/good sense, and folklore make up people's philosophical understandings of the world.

It is this second point, Gramsci's concepts of common sense and good sense, which has become one of his most important intellectual contributions. Common sense, rather than being a synonym for 'logical thinking', refers to the combination

of folklore, local dialects, popular thought, and common interpretations of the world. The following quote highlights why common sense is an inherently contradictory philosophy and is worth quoting at length:

> The man of the people thinks that so many like-thinking people can't be wrong, not so radically, as the man he is arguing against would like him to believe; he thinks that, while he himself, admittedly, is not able to uphold and develop his argument as well as his opponent, in his group there is someone who could do this and could certainly argue better than the particular man he has against him; and he remembers, indeed hearing expounded, discursively, coherently, in a way that left him convinced, the reasons behind his faith. He has no concrete memory of the reasons and could not repeat them, but he knows that reasons exist, because he has heard them expounded, and was convinced by them. (Q11, §12; AGR, p. 339)

This quote illustrates how people come to have certain beliefs about the world, through pure faith, not critical self-assessment. In this quote, a man believes that he is right about something, simply because everyone around him believes it as well. He 'remembers, indeed, hearing expounded discursively, coherently, in a way that left him convinced' a justification for this belief, yet he himself is not able to defend this position. As this example shows, common sense is our *uncritical* sense, our 'gut' feeling about the truth, not a systematic investigation of our thinking.

Again, Gramsci does not reject this 'spontaneous philosophy' as wrong, but he does believe it should be assessed, reflected upon, and critiqued. As Green and Ives (2010) argue, Gramsci's position on common sense is neither to accept it as a celebration of difference nor to impose a transcendental world view on it but, rather, to engage with it and translate it. This is what Gramsci refers to as the Philosophy of Praxis:

> First of all, therefore, it must be a criticism of 'common sense', basing itself initially, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity. (Q11, §12; AGR, p. 332)

This Philosophy of Praxis is explicitly pedagogical, as it describes the process through which teachers, educators, political party activists, and social movement leaders should engage with the working class, in order to deepen their capacity for intellectual critique. Rather than simply lecture and recite intellectual maxims, the pedagogical imperative is to base these conversations, discussions, and debates on people's previous philosophical understandings of the world.

This pedagogical approach has direct parallels with the educational ideas of Paulo Freire. Freire is famous for his critique of bank depositing education, where teachers are seen as the depositors of knowledge into the 'receiving' minds of the students. In this educational approach, the students are assumed to be passive in the learning process, simply waiting for knowledge to be told to them by the teacher. The alternative type of education that Freire suggests involves actively constructing knowledge through a constant dialogue between the students and the teacher. He calls this type of education, problem-posing education:

> The students—no longer docile listeners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own. (Freire 2002, pp. 81–82)

Problem-posing education is dialogical, meaning that it is based on an interaction, a dialogue between the teacher and the students. Knowledge is presented in a problematized way in which students have to discuss and answer questions, learning from each other but still being directed by the teacher. The teacher, however, is not asking these questions and stimulating the student's curiosity simply as an exercise but, rather, for her own benefit as well. While the teacher's knowledge is not considered equal to the students, she is also not the owner of knowledge devoid of the ability to learn through dialogue.

While Freire is writing about the relationship between teachers and students, Gramsci is discussing the relationship between communist party leaders and working-class populations. Nonetheless, the parallels that exist between their pedagogical approaches are obvious. For example, neither Freire nor Gramsci completely discounts the previous understandings of the students or workers, nor do they uncritically valorize it. As Freire (1998) writes,

> It's impossible to talk of respect for students for the dignity that is in the process of coming to be, for the identities that are in the process of construction, without taking into consideration the conditions in which they are living and the importance of the knowledge derived from life experiences, which they bring with them to school. I can in no way underestimate such knowledge. Or what is worse, ridicule it. (p. 62)

Freire believes in the inherent value of students' previous knowledge. He writes that if an educational program does *not* start with this knowledge and students' previous experience it is intangible and therefore becomes meaningless words—'blah, blah, blah'. However, Freire is also not advocating for nondirective education, based on the daily whims, interests, and impulses of the students. Kane (2001) defines the reduction of Freire's philosophy into nondirective education as 'basismo' or 'grassroots-ism'.

It is in this debate—the line between respecting students' knowledge and falling into nondirective education—that Gramsci has an important pedagogical contribution. Gramsci writes that is necessary to 'demonstrate that "everyone" is a philosopher', however, he is clear that the final goal is 'renovating and making "critical" an already existing activity' (Q11, §12; AGR, p. 332). This is the process of drawing out the good sense from the common sense, or 'overcoming bestial and elemental passions' and making more unitary and coherent the 'the healthy nucleus that exists in "common sense", the part of it which can be called "good sense"' (Q11, §12; AGR, p. 329). While Freire advocates for teachers to become promoters of dialogue and problem-posers, Gramsci makes clear that the goal of this dialogue is critical self-reflection of one's previous thought for the construction of a more coherent interpretation of the world.

The MST's educational initiatives offer a concrete, contemporary example of how this type of pedagogical practice takes place. From the very beginning, Freirean

theory was a central pillar of the MST's educational approach. Salete, one of the first teachers in the MST, explains that many of the original leaders of the MST already had experience with Freirean theory through their work with Catholic priests following liberation theology. This inspired their educational practices in the camps:

> How did we construct our literacy method for the kids? There are some things I never forget, even though it was long time ago …. I remember that before we would teach literacy through words like 'a' for *avião* (plane), but students had never been on a plane. So we began to use words around us in the camps, 'a' for *acampemnto* (camp), 'b' for *barraca* (tent), then we would discuss why were camped, the organization of the camp. Through this process you can give meaning to each word, to each letter.[10]

By teaching literacy through the words that the children were using in their day-to-day lives, Salete and other educators gave meaning to these children's language. Together, the teachers and students discussed what it meant to be landless and living under tents, developing a united analysis of this collective experience. Although Salete associates this pedagogical approach with Freire and classroom teaching, it is Gramsci who helps us understand the importance of these educational experiences for developing a common analysis among the working class and connecting this analysis to an actual social movement.

According to MST leaders, the movement has recently been critiqued by left-leaning intellectuals for drawing too much on Freire, as opposed to other pedagogical and educational theorists that are more strictly Marxist.[11] In a recent talk in Los Angeles, visiting MST leader Alessandro explained to a group of Freirean intellectuals how the movement has responded to these critiques. Alessandro explained that the MST does not only use Freire due to his *theoretical* contributions but, more importantly, because Freirean theory has decades of *practical* contributions within movements. In other words, social movements have been implementing Freirean ideas in practice for more than five decades. This position again resonates with Gramsci's pedagogical approach. In a note on the study of philosophy, Gramsci (2000) asks,

> Is a philosophical movement properly so called when it is devoted to creating a specialized culture among restricted groups, or rather when, and only when, in the process of elaborating a form of thought superior to 'common sense' and coherent on a scientific plane, it never forgets to remain in contact with the 'simple' and indeed finds in this contact the source of the problems it sets out to study and to resolve? Only by this contact does a philosophy become 'historical', purify itself of intellectualistic elements of an individual character and become 'life'. (Q11 §12; AGR, p. 331)

In this quote, Gramsci critiques the development of intellectual ideas that are only accessible to a 'restricted group'. He argues that is critical for these ideas to have contact with the 'simple'—everyday people—in order for them to have historical

[10] Interview with Salete, January 13, 2011.

[11] I have heard about these critiques from MST activists themselves, not the academics. More specifically, I have been told that the MST education sector has been critiqued for not drawing more the historical, dialectical, material approach of Dermeval Saviani.

relevance. This Gramscian quote foreshadows why Freire has remained relevant to the MST—because his ideas are constantly being put to the test in actual concrete circumstances. Freirean ideas have both a theoretical and a practical component; therefore, according to Gramsci, his philosophy has become 'historical', not simply 'intellectualism'.

In summary, I argue that Gramsci is an explicitly pedagogical thinker, with a concrete approach for how a process of education, learning, and critical reflection should take place. This pedagogical approach directly aligns with the ideas of Paulo Freire, most significantly, in their joint belief in the inherent value of working-class populations' previous knowledge and philosophy of the world. Nonetheless, both Gramsci and Freire believe that it is necessary to move beyond this previous knowledge and critically reflect and interpret these assumptions. For Gramsci, the goal of this pedagogical endeavor is 'to construct an intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups' (Q11, §12; AGR, p. 333).

6.4 Gramscian Strategy: Public Schools as Terrains of Contestation

A third and final Gramscian contribution to educational thought is his theory of revolutionary strategy and the role that public schools play within this strategy. Clearly, the elaboration of grassroots, collective leadership, and critical reflection of one's common sense does not need to occur within the formal school system. Therefore, what is the role of public schools, if any, within Gramsci's theory of social change? Is it possible to incorporate anti-capitalist, socialist pedagogies into the public school system, before a socialist revolution?

For decades, theorists of social reproduction in education have denied this possibility, analyzing instead how schools function in the interest of the dominant economic class (Althusser 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bowles and Gintis 1976). Althusser divides the State Apparatus into two parts: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), which includes the government, administration, army, police, courts, and prisons and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which encompasses religion, systems of public and private schools, the family, media, and culture. Althusser argues that in mature capitalist societies, it is the educational apparatus (replacing the Church) that has become the most important ISA for reproducing capitalist relations of production (Althusser 1984, 20). Bowles and Gintis (1976) also contribute to theories of social reproduction by illustrating how the values, norms, and skills taught in schools correspond to those existing in the capitalist workforce (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 237). Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) foundational work discusses schools as sites of social reproduction by introducing the idea of 'cultural capital': the field of rules, relationships, and linguistic and cultural competencies that proclaims itself as objective while representing the values of

dominant classes. Through their appearance as impartial and neutral, public schools are able to sort students. Together, these theories provide a convincing argument about the processes through which schools maintain capitalist relations of production.

In contrast to these theories of social and cultural reproduction, there is also a body of scholarship that has focused on the *transformational* potential of education, often referred to as critical pedagogy. Scholarship on critical pedagogy in the United States grew out of scholars' engagement with Freire's work, which offered a concrete pedagogy that students and teachers could potentially use to contest social reproduction in schools. Similarly to theories of social reproduction, critical pedagogy scholarship scrutinizes how hidden ideologies embedded in education normalize the hegemonic culture (Apple 2004; Macedo 2006) and reinforce social, racial, and economic hierarchies (McLaren 2003). However, scholars of critical pedagogy also maintains a 'Freirean optimism' by analyzing how educational practices can enhance students' ability for critical reflection and make them agents of change (Apple and Beane 2007; Giroux 2001; Hooks 1994; McLaren 1998). Nonetheless, Apple (2006) argues that there are few empirical examples of how counter-hegemonic goals have transformed the ideological conditions surrounding schools. Even Freire suggests that implementing this type of education requires political power, and therefore, carrying out these practices in schools before a large-scale political transformation is difficult (Freire 2002, 54).

Given these theories of social reproduction and social transformation, how should we theorize the MST's attempt to transform public schools in their communities to support an alternative economic model in the countryside? Is this a process of capitalist cooptation or an example of pedagogical liberation? The contribution of a Gramscian approach is to analyze reproduction and resistance as going hand in hand—even within a single institutional space—not as binary opposites. As described earlier, for Gramsci political struggle cannot happen outside of hegemonic social relations, but rather, it has to take place within these relations, in the terrain of civil society. Gramsci argues that there are two levels of the 'superstructure': political society (the State) and civil society (the ensemble of organisms commonly called private):

> The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare. In war it would sometimes happen that a fierce artillery attack seemed to have destroyed the enemy's entire defensive system, whereas in fact it had only destroyed the outer perimeter; and at the moment of their advance and attack the assailants would find themselves confronted by a line of defense which was still effective. (Q13, §24; SPN, p. 235)

As this quote indicates, for Gramsci, civil society is similar to the trenches of warfare, defending the state and the capitalist mode of production against frontal attacks—through the construction of consent, not pure domination. However, civil society also has a contradictory relationship to the state. As Burawoy explains, 'Civil society collaborates with the state to contain class struggle, and on the other hand, its autonomy from the state can promote class struggle' (Burawoy 2003, p. 198). Thus, civil society is both the amour, protecting the state, and the terrain on which resistance must be organized.

This Gramscian understanding of the state replaces the trope of pure state domination with the concept of hegemony. As Riley (2010, p. 16) explains, 'To the extent that a class is hegemonic, it does not rule directly as a class. Instead, the class rules in the name of a broader national interest'. By ruling through a broader interest, the hegemonic class garners the consent—moral and intellectual leadership—necessary to stabilize its rule. However, this also creates opportunities for organizing resistance,

> Since there is always a gap between the particular interests of the dominant class and the broader interests through which it establishes its claim to rule, this interest can become a point of reference for nonelites who can articulate their interests as better corresponding to it. The gap between class interest and national interest is therefore crucial for the development of counterhegemony. (Riley 2010, p. 16)

This quote describes counter-hegemony as the gap between dominant class interests and the broader societal interests through which the dominant class establishes hegemony. This becomes clearer if we examine the concrete case of public education. While public schools are important institutions of social reproduction in contemporary society, they are also historically a concession that was given to working-class populations during moments of political turmoil, in order to garner their consent.[12] Therefore, public schools are both an important part of the state's ideological apparatus and a civil society institution where resistance can be organized. While MST activists are attempting to transform public schools to support their struggle for socialism, these same institutions are simultaneously reproducing capitalist social relations. Drawing on both Gramsci and the MST leaders themselves, I advocate for a theoretical understanding of public schools as *terrains of dispute*, within which both repressive and liberatory educational practices are taking place.

What are Gramsci's concrete suggestions for schools? In his writings on education, Gramsci describes the educational crisis as linked to the process of differentiation and particularization that is taking place, which creates a system of specialized schools that serve to prepare people for professional sectors. Gramsci also writes that children cannot be *passive* 'mechanic receivers' of knowledge, because the child is not passive. However, 'The individual consciousness of the overwhelming majority of children reflects social and cultural relations which are different from and antagonistic to those who are represented in the school curricula' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 35). Teachers must be consciousness of this difference between what they are teaching and the culture and society represented by their pupils. Gramsci argues that educational democracy does not mean *unskilled worker becomes skilled* but that every 'citizen' can 'govern' and that society places him in a condition to achieve

[12] For example, Horace Mann's (1848) famous 'Twelfth Annual Report to the Secretary of Massachusetts State Board of Education' was given in 1848, the same year as Marx and Engels's (1978) 'Communist Manifesto'. In this report, Mann even references 'European theory where men are divided into classes' in contrast to Massachusetts political theory in which 'all men have an equal chance for earning and equal security'. Mann's writings became the basis for the Common School movement in the United States.

this. However, this is difficult because the son of a worker has more trouble than the son of a traditional intellectual in the classroom. Thus, Gramsci (1971) writes, 'If our aim is to produce a new stratum of intellectuals, including those capable of the highest degree of specialization, from a social group which has not traditionally developed the appropriate attitudes, then we have unprecedented difficulties to overcome' (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 43).

This difficulty in transforming the formal school system is probably the area in which the MST has the most to teach us. While Gramsci offers a framework for analyzing public schools as terrains of dispute and even offers a few recommendations for reforming schools, he was never able to experiment with putting these ideas into practice. Similarly, while Freirean theory spurred hundreds of popular education and literacy experiments around the world, there are fewer examples of how these practices have been implemented in a systematic form within the public school system.[13] In contrast, the MST has 30 years of concrete experiences 'occupying' public schools and implementing alternative educational practices.

How do social movements engage the state and implement counter-hegemonic goals within the bureaucratic-state apparatus? In other writings, I have detailed the process through which the MST has (successfully and unsuccessfully) attempted to implement their educational proposal in public schools. I have referred to this process as MST-state *coproduction* of public schooling (Tarlau 2013b), in which the MST takes part in the governance of the public school system: organizing teacher trainings, accompanying the day-to-day activities of the schools, and developing curriculum together with state actors. In some cases, the MST is able to participate in schools through alliances with other left-leaning groups that essentially allow the movement to take power in a given region or state, similar to a Gramscian War of Maneuver. However, more often, the MST participates in the governance of public education through a long, slow, process of garnering the consent of teachers, students, community members, and public officials for the movement's educational project, a Gramscian War of Position (Tarlau 2015b).

There are several lessons that I think we can learn from this process of social movement-led educational reform. First, it is critical to note that the gains that the MST makes in the public educational system are never permanent but, rather, a constant dispute for power. Sometimes a change in government results in the termination of the MST's participation, while at other moments, it is the MST leadership's lack of consent among the families living in settlements that brings these educational practices to an end. In other cases, one part of the state, such as the Ministry of Agrarian Development, might fully support the MST's educational initiatives, but another part of the state, the judiciary branch, will impede a program from moving forward. Thus, implementing a counter-hegemonic proposal in a public school system is a dynamic, shifting, and continual process of negotiation and contestation.

[13] Some exceptions include Paulo Freire's (1993) *Pedagogy of the City* and Pilar O'Cadiz, Pia Wong, and Carlos Alberto Torres's (1998) *Education and Democracy: Paulo Freire*, *Social Movements and Educational Reform in São Paulo*.

Second, the power of these alternative educational practices in the public school system is in their connection to an actual movement, engaged in broader political and economic struggles, which reinforces the educational practices in the schools. In other words, the main pillars of the MST's educational proposal—students' collective self-governance, the incorporation of manual labor, and curriculum that respects rural histories and culture—directly help to promote these same practices within the larger movement: families' self-governance of settlements and camps, the promotion of collective agricultural production, and the construction of culturally vibrant, peasant-intellectual communities in the countryside. In this way, the MST is engaging in the *opposite* process that Jean Anyon outlines in her book *Radical Possibilities*. Anyon writes,

> Indeed, educators are in an excellent position to build a constituency for economic and educational change in urban communities. Teachers and principals have continual access to parents and urban youth. If they are respectful caring, hard-working educators, trusted by students and parents, they have a unique opportunity to engage residents and youth in political conversations and activity. (Anyon 2005, p. 178)

Instead of teachers and principals using their position in schools to garner the consent of community members for the construction of a larger social movement, the MST leadership is garnering the consent of teachers and principals for alternative educational practices that reinforce the movement's political struggle. This connection between public education and actual political movements is a critical component of how Gramsci conceptualized the role of public education within revolutionary strategy.

Third and finally—and this is a point that I have already emphasized—while MST activists are attempting to organize an alternative hegemonic movement within schools in the Brazilian countryside, this processnever exists in isolation from hegemonic practices and ideologies. As Willis (1977) reminds us, students 'are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation and a partial penetration of those structures' (p. 175). This partial penetration and contestation occurs despite the particular ideological perspective organizing the schools. For example, while MST activists promote rural culture in public schools—including traditional dance and music—MST youth continue to listen to hip-hop, dress in urban clothing, and discuss their dreams to live in the cities. The same way students may resist the reproduction of capitalist relations in traditional schools in England (Willis 1977), students living on agrarian reform settlement often resist the MST leaders' attempt to use public schools to reproduce their movement. Therefore, public schools are terrains of dispute, not only between the MST and the state but between the students, MST leaders, parents, churches, teachers, community leaders, and other actors that interact with and have a stake in the local school system.

6.5 Conclusions

In February of 2014, 5 years after my first visit to the MST encampment in Rio Grande do Sul, I helped to lead an international delegation of 16 US activists to the MST's Sixth National Congress. This congress was a moment to celebrate the victories the MST has had over the past 30 years and also define the movement's strategy for the next decade. In this gathering of 15,000 peasant leaders, education was again a central component. Packets of reading materials, notebooks, and pens were passed out to all of the delegates, and the congress was described as a moment for study and reflection about how far the movement has come and how it will move forward in the future. For 5 days, there were lectures and discussions about the challenges for agrarian reform in the current political conjuncture and a united call for a new type of agrarian reform—People's Agrarian Reform—that would directly link to other working-class struggles. Elaborate cultural performances that recounted confrontations with the police, the death of peasant leaders, and the effects of capitalism on the environment were presented every morning as a way to break the disconnection between mind and body. Meanwhile, an entire city had been built around the conference center, with work tasks distributed among the 15,000 MST delegates for the construction of hundreds of kitchens, tent communities, bathrooms, and cleanup crews. In the middle of the week, another type of educational event occurred: 15,000 delegates marched to the Presidential Palace to demand a meeting with the President. Several police skirmishes occurred along the way, reminding delegates of the coercive arm of the Brazilian State.

During the congress, the MST education sector set up a school next to the meeting, for the children of the participating families. In total, 200 volunteer educators came and took care of 700 children, including 60 babies, during the weeklong meeting. As Flavinha, one member of the MST education sector, explains, the goal of this childcare center was not only to allow the moms to participate in the meeting, but also to construct a pedagogical experience for the children.[14] This pedagogical experience would allow the children, in age-appropriate ways, to also engage with the topics being discussed in the congress. This meant writing songs, creating banners, and debating the issues that the children were facing in their communities. The goal of constructing collective, grassroots leadership could never begin too soon.

On the third day of the congress, like the MST adult delegates, these 700 children participated in their own political action. Leaving their safe educational utopia in the midst of their families, the children took dozens of buses to the Ministry of Education. Several members of the MST education sector were waiting by the door as the buses arrived and held the doors open as the hundreds of children ran into the building, before the guards could stop them. For 3 h, the children occupied the building, asking that the Minister come downstairs and hear their demand for education in the Brazilian countryside. Top among those demands was an end to the

[14] Flavinha's statements can be seen on the official video of the Sixth MST Congress, found here: http://www.mst.org.br/2014/12/11/video-oficial-sobre-o-6-congresso-nacional-do-mst.html

closing of rural schools, an expansion of public education in the countryside, and the creation of policies that ensured these schools that would respect the children's right to live healthy, intellectual lives in their own communities. Eventually the Minister came downstairs, promising to stop the closing of rural schools and making a speech about the children's rights to an education in their communities. The children eventually left, leaving their handprints painted on the walls of the Ministry of Education, marking their conflict with the Brazilian state that day.

These different educational moments at the MST's Sixth National Congress in 2014 are, again, all quintessentially Gramscian. First, the congress illustrated his *theory* of social change, which invests in the intellectual capacity of the entire working class, at all age levels, and promotes the working class's collective self-governance. Second, the congress represented Gramsci's *pedagogical* proposal, which is to work with, in, and through people's common sense in order to develop a united vision for social transformation. Third, the congress engaged the state, embodying Gramsci's revolutionary *strategy*, through both the march to the Presidential Palace and the occupation of the Ministry of Education. The handprints that the children left on the Ministry's walls did not mark the end of the battle; rather, they showed why social change is a continual, long, and deeply educational process.

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Chapter 7
Language, Education and European Unification: Perceptions and Reality of Global English in Italy

Alessandro Carlucci

On 20 January 2015, the Italian television channel LA7 hosted a debate in which not only the topics discussed but also the guests invited were of an unusually supranational character. It featured, most notably, Marine Le Pen, the leader of the French *Front National*, confronting the former Prime Minister of Italy, Massimo D'Alema. Especially in the 1990s, D'Alema was a key figure in engineering the dismantlement of his party, the PCI, and in building a post-communist left in Italy. At approximately 18' of the footage,[1] D'Alema praised the EU for achieving unprecedented peaks in the history of human civilization. He supported his argument with a reference to his own satisfaction in being able to cross the French-German border without having to show a passport, whereas for centuries millions of young men died fighting on that border. Le Pen (who spoke in French, but was simultaneously translated into Italian, with only a few seconds interspersed across the debate when the audience at home could exceptionally hear her voice) conceded that D'Alema's noble sermon (*un prêche*, as she actually called it) certainly struck a chord in some European corners. In a swift feat of rhetorical ability, she conjured up the image of successful multilingual elites who spend weekends abroad, have business, partners, friends, or simply holiday apartments in different European countries and therefore regularly travel across the Rhine. Le Pen, however, claimed to be much more interested in representing the needs and demands of those who do not have, and cannot afford, any of the above.

In its typical TV-style simplicity (which probably gave it a better chance to influence the ordinary public), this debate was a good example of what happens when the left uncritically embraces abstract principles of tolerance and humanism – especially if these principles include Enlightenment values of universal peace and progress, as well as liberal notions of formal equality (or equal opportunities) for

[1] Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6m_dUzacS0.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_7

competing individuals. Whatever its faults, Marxist materialism had the unquestionable advantage of calling for an unswerving attention to the conditions of life and subsistence of the lower social classes. Neglect of these material conditions, with regard to the lower strata of today's European population, has caused the left to leave huge portions of social and political territory unguarded. It is in this territory that populist conservatives and nationalists such as Le Pen can manoeuvre and have recently attracted mass-scale popular support.

Antonio Gramsci (the founder of D'Alema's defunct party) was acutely aware of this risk. Criticism of abstract notions of universal progress and cosmopolitan civilization was a recurrent theme in his thinking. Rapone (2011) shows that, in Gramsci's early writings, this criticism focused especially on democracy – not on democracy as a set of rights, rules and procedures defining legitimate power but as a political programme of compromise between socialists and liberals, despite the latter's faith in capitalist individualism. The young Gramsci pointed out that the moral principles of the democratic tradition, such as tolerance and cooperation, can easily overshadow the real interests that often make those principles unfeasible. Moreover, their prevalent concern with political ideologies, and their reluctance to see the material factors that create (or erode) popular support for certain ideologies, can paradoxically turn democrats into an utterly intolerant faction. They can become unable to accept even the existence of groups that do not recognize basic, supposedly universal principles. Used to representing their contenders as misinformed, irrational obscurants, democratic movements have often advocated coercive methods in the repression of both internal dissent and international conflicts (as in the extreme case of humanitarian wars).[2]

These critical views also guided Gramsci's rejection of universal languages such as Esperanto (another topic that recurs from his early articles to his prison notes, as shown in Carlucci 2013). His criticism, however, was not restricted to this artificial language, which he saw as a typical product of utopian cosmopolitanism. He warned against any form of linguistic unification which is not 'the historical expression of adequate and necessary conditions': in the absence of these conditions, an international language (English, French or any other candidate for this role) can become 'an element of social stratification and of the fossilization of certain strata' (Q5, §23; PN2, p. 285). And this in spite of the fact that Gramsci strongly encouraged the workers to devote as many resources as possible to the learning of various foreign languages, 'in order to put themselves in contact with other cultural lives' (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 325), and also in spite of the fact that, as we shall see, he did not oppose the prospect of international linguistic unification.

This chapter applies Gramsci's views to the current debates on the expansion of English as a global language (henceforth EGL) and on the significance of this expansion for the future of the EU. Its aim is to illustrate the shortcomings of abstract universalism with reference to a specific domain – that of language policy – and to a chronologically and geographically circumstantiated case study, namely,

[2] Gramsci especially had in mind the situation in Italy and France in the run-up to the First World War, as well as during the war (see Rapone 2011, Chaps. 4 and 5).

Italy in the years immediately preceding the 2008 financial crisis, with its foundation-shaking repercussions on the EU. In pursuing this aim, I do not simply wish to show the enduring relevance of Gramsci's views on language.[3] I will specifically argue that, far from alleviating social inequalities, the spread of English in Italy has perpetuated inequalities due to family background and regional origin.

The chapter has a twofold structure. The section entitled 'Why a Gramscian approach?' summarizes those notions in Gramsci's thought which stand out as particularly promising sources of inspiration for approaching EGL, and the following section ('Why pre-2008 Italy?') clarifies the relevance of the Italian case. The second part of the chapter brings together (Sect. 7.3) and discusses (Sect. 7.4) the available data. In the fourth section, I also identify two possible ways of addressing the problems encountered in Italy, before summing up my arguments in the 'Conclusions'.

7.1 Why a Gramscian Approach?

Of all the political developments that might shock Gramsci, if he returned to life today, the debate on EGL would probably not cause any particular surprise. True, from his early twentieth-century Italian point of view, issues concerning dialects and national linguistic unification seemed more pressing than questions of international linguistic unification. Some of his writings (especially Notebook 29) deal primarily with the fact that Italian was yet to become a truly national language, regularly used by the majority of the country's population both orally and in writing. Nonetheless, international linguistic unification had received significant attention within the Marxist tradition. In particular, Lenin (1968) wrote at length about linguistic justice and insisted on the advantages of multilingualism. By arguing that '[t]iny Switzerland has not lost anything, but has gained from having not *one single* official language, but three: German, French and Italian' (p. 355), Lenin foresaw some of the claims that those dreading the advent of an English-only Europe have very recently put forward,[4] and his suggestion to make provisions so that 'speeches in different languages' may be delivered 'in the common parliament' (Lenin 1964, p. 21) sounds like a prediction of what happens in Strasbourg today. The language policy issues that emerged in the wake of the Russian revolution, and that remained at the centre of political and scholarly attention during the construction of the USSR, were not entirely dissimilar to the ones that the EU is facing today – except for the fact that it was Russian, not English, to occupy the dominant position. Gramsci,

[3] To a large extent, this has already been done by Peter Ives. Except for Ives (2006, 2009, 2015), however, the existing literature on EGL pays inadequate attention to Gramsci's writings. Even those who use Gramsci in this field (e.g. Phillipson 1992; Sonntag 2003; May 2012) underestimate his deep and far-reaching interest in language. Moreover, the empirical analysis of EGL in a particular time and place is beyond the scope of Ives's mainly theoretical interests, whereas my discussion engages precisely with analytical sociolinguistic data.

[4] For example, Grin (2015) and Lacey (2015) use the Swiss case to make a similar point.

who had studied linguistics at university, was familiar with these and other related debates,[5] as confirmed also by his aforementioned comments on Esperanto (which at the time was quite popular amongst different tendencies within the international working-class movement).

This is not to say that debates about linguistic unification have not evolved since Gramsci's death in 1937. A new wave of sympathy towards linguistic and cultural diversity began to rise, particularly from the 1970s onwards. As a result, many opponents of unification are nowadays in a strong position when they speak against the negative impact that EGL could have on the rights and destinies of Europe's linguistic minorities. The status of majority languages, too, has changed, especially of those which Antoine Meillet (1928) could confidently call 'great languages of culture'. But again, these changes would not look entirely unexpected to Gramsci. As other Marxists before him, he did contemplate the possibility of one language acquiring so much cultural prestige and practical use as to relegate national languages to the role of dialects (Carlucci 2013, pp. 114–115). And he also argued that, when 'a European union' comes into existence, 'the word "nationalism" will have the same archaeological value as "municipalism" has today' (Q6, §78; FS, p. 119). Many Italian linguists and intellectuals currently feel that the prestige of other EU languages is decreasing, and their functions are shrinking, due to the expansion of English. Occasionally, their reactions to linguistic globalization lean towards anachronistic forms of nationalism, including calls for protectionist measures. They seem to pretend that countries such as Italy, France or Germany still enjoy the levels of economic, political and cultural autonomy, and of global prominence, that they enjoyed a century or so ago (Graziosi 2015).

More realistically, critics of EGL have also exposed the imperialistic implications of its spread, denouncing the cultural and economic advantages it creates for English-speaking countries – the USA and the UK above all. There is little doubt that EGL constitutes an asset for those countries. Material benefits are not limited to the possibility of saving on translation and foreign language learning; they also include enhanced employment opportunities for their citizens, in so far as native speakers continue to be preferred to non-native ones in a variety of sectors – including public communication and (of course) English language teaching. Proponents of linguistic unification, however, are quick to argue that with more and more people learning English throughout the world, this unbalanced situation will eventually come to an end. What is now, to a large extent, the language of neoliberal hegemony may be appropriated by subaltern groups around the world and may well help to coordinate their struggles against neoliberalism. From a less radical position, Van Parijs (2011) views linguistic unification as an improvement because it will enable increasingly large sections of the world's population to participate in global civil society and political debate.

Despite its internal nuances and intellectual sophistication, debates on EGL often seem to be hampered by mutually exclusive attachments to either diversity or unification. Both sides have developed complex arguments about the political

[5] For details of this familiarity, see Carlucci (2013).

effects which they expect (one side with fear, the other with hope) from the future triumph of EGL. Yet they are less accurate when it comes to describing how linguistic unification is proceeding at present and often fail to consider relevant evidence of the effects that EGL has already had on our societies. Pennycook (2000, pp. 59–60) grasps this point when he writes that if an argument for diversity or unification is made 'in the abstract, without reference to the actual historical location of the languages and political struggles involved, the political outcomes of such an argument will be unclear'. Moreover, the distribution of the positive and negative effects of EGL is usually analysed according to different speaking communities and nation-states. It is not common to analyse its effects in terms of socioeconomic status across different national and linguistic communities. This leads to various inadequacies, including a scarce appreciation of the fact that, even in English-speaking countries, most benefits go to speakers who command particularly prestigious varieties, often as a result of better education and geographic mobility.[6] And outside of these countries, similarly privileged groups can compensate for their lack of native competence by reaching high levels of confidence in using different languages – including English – in an articulate and culturally prestigious manner. There are also reasons to suspect escalating effects across generations: the likelihood of globalization making young adults with different linguistic backgrounds get together is higher amongst those with higher incomes, levels of education and access to geographic mobility; already in their early childhood years, their children will therefore find themselves in an ideal environment, in which not only are different languages naturally acquired but more importance is attached (and more money destined) to education, linguistic or otherwise.[7]

Thanks to his unbiased views on diversity and unification, as well as his distinctive interest in the class stratification of language, Gramsci produced a whole range of ideas that can advance the debate on EGL. In particular, the following notions (which I have extracted and adapted from previous research on his life and work) can be most helpful to avoid the inadequacies mentioned thus far.

7.1.1 The Folklorist Mentality

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci criticizes the attitude to diversity typically embodied by the folklore scholar 'who is permanently afraid that modernity is going to destroy the object of his study' (Q11, §67; SPN, p. 419). It is worth

[6] See McSmith (2015) for recent findings by the UK's Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, showing that British top firms and other 'elite employers' prefer 'well-travelled candidates with the right accent'.

[7] On how '[a]ssortative mating' can 'reinforce the traits that bring the couple together', see Economist (2015a). The result, the magazine argues, is that on average the 'elite is producing children who not only get ahead, but deserve to do so', even in countries such as the USA which have always been a bastion of social mobility. See also Economist (2015b).

recalling this point as an antidote to the uncritical praise of linguistic diversity. The extinction of a particular linguistic variety is always a major loss for human culture. But we should not disregard practical reality and historical contingencies, in which what is best for a language is not always best for its speakers. Nor should we lose sight of the difference between languages that disappear without being recorded and described in sufficient detail and languages that leave behind a substantial corpus of texts and metalinguistic information. When the latter is the case, the unique worldview conveyed by the extinct language, through its grammatical, semantic and lexical structures, can to a large extent be recovered – similarly to what happens with other historical evidence of long-gone human habits and behaviours (not of all them worth reviving).

7.1.2 Unification, Diversity and Hegemony

Other notions feature prominently in Gramsci's writings, which can be relevant to current debates on EGL. His life was characterized by a wide range of significant experiences involving linguistic and cultural diversity. He spoke Sardinian (the language of his native island) as well as Italian and commended bilingualism as an asset to children's education (see Carlucci 2013, Chap. 1). His academic interests and political activity further showed him that language is always characterized by geographical, social and stylistic diversity. In this respect, history does not destroy but simply rearranges. Unity does not mean uniformity. A good command of the unitary language does not rule out the possibility of personal styles and usages or of local variation in the way it is used (see esp. Q29, §2; SCW, pp. 180–182).

Recast in today's terms, this means that alarming scenarios of linguistic impoverishment may not be inevitable: EGL does not necessarily imply the disappearance of less widespread languages, which bilingual speakers can continue to use in societies where linguistic rights are respected (see also De Mauro 2014). At the same time, diversity will re-emerge within EGL itself.[8] Indeed, in Gramscian terms, hegemony is different from mere imposition. Economic and political domination play a significant role, but amongst the factors enabling a hegemonic language to spread globally, we should also include its ability to absorb elements from the languages it subordinates. If norms of correct usage are too rigid, members of other speech communities may be put off. Inevitably, this causes the structure of the hegemonic language to change, as the number of its speakers gradually increases (see SCW, pp. 26–31 and SCW, pp. 41–43).

[8] As confirmed by the emergence of the so-called world English*es* and as the history of many successful 'global' languages of the past also suggests (see Adams 2007 and 2013 for Latin).

7.1.3 Passive Revolution

The notions sketched out so far are particularly apt to challenge abstract dogmatism with regard to how linguistic diversity can, and should, be preserved. But the Gramscian box also contains tools for questioning the views of those who seem to take the liberating value of unification for granted. His notion of passive revolution is one of those tools. Passive revolution identifies a way of managing historical change, so that the advantages of the elites are preserved 'alongside real gains for wide sections of the population, but the full potential of progressive aspects of […] historical change for the socially excluded is undermined' (Showstack Sassoon 2001, p. 7). In the *Prison Notebooks*, this notion is used to analyse transformations that failed to alter power inequalities between social classes in a radical way. Gramsci took his examples from history as well as current affairs (from the unification of Italy under the leadership of moderate bourgeois groups to the then-recent introduction of Fordist industrial production).

Today, as our case study will also confirm, we have several indications that EGL is part of a passive revolution. A hesitant, auxiliary knowledge of English (adequate primarily for the needs of consumerism and subordinate employment positions) is spreading widely, while a good command is being monopolized by the cosmopolitan community of well-educated scholars and technocrats and by the transnational, highly mobile elite of executives and top-level professionals. As we shall see, if the expansion of EGL continues to proceed in this way, it may facilitate the integration of economic markets but not the 'intellectual progress of the mass' (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 333) or the 'cultural unification of the human race' (Q11, §17; SPN, p. 445).

7.1.4 Linguistic Insecurity and the Effects of Meritocracy

In the last four centuries, many old forms of power inequality were shattered by the hegemonic expansion of capitalism, while new ones have been created and legitimized. In recent decades, in particular, mounting socioeconomic inequality has not been accepted grudgingly – most people have perceived it as inevitable and ultimately right. Linguistic insecurity appeared to Gramsci as a significant factor in reinforcing this kind of legitimization. Already in the early 1920s, he noted that dialect-speaking workers with a limited command of Italian were always in danger of considering themselves more ignorant and incompetent than they really were. He wrote that workers are always hesitant when they have to express their opinions and often think they should just listen to others' opinions (see Carlucci 2013, pp. 109–110).[9]

[9]This approach to linguistic insecurity is different from the one taken by many of today's sociolinguists (most notably William Labov). Gramsci focuses on the social and political passivity that linguistic insecurity can generate, rather than its strictly linguistic functioning. For an interesting discussion of this and other related notions, largely in keeping with Gramsci's views, see Bourdieu (1991).

In an age that trumpets individualistic notions of talent, aspiration and responsibility, EGL recreates this problem on a new scale. By sending their children to the best (and usually most expensive) educational institutions, as well as ensuring that they spend periods of residence abroad, today's elites are not only perpetuating educational inequalities; they are legitimizing their privileged social position through meritocratic rhetoric. They convince themselves and others that their outstanding language skills are simply the result of talent and hard work, as proved by their certified ability to progress through highly selective schools, universities, internships and so on (Litter 2013). The fact that those who succeed are often members of self-perpetuating groups is thus obscured, and political questions about socioeconomic privilege are effectively undermined.

There are, of course, exceptions to this 'hereditary meritocracy' (Economist 2015a), but they inevitably consist of individual cases. In the hope of being one of the individuals who rise from nothing and get into the elite, we close our eyes to the fact that, even when equal opportunities and meritocracy work to perfection, success for all is impossible:

> While proficiency in English, whether as a first, second, or third language, may provide an advantage for careers and employment in certain sectors of the global economy, the number of available jobs and the number of jobs being created that require significant knowledge of English is very small compared to the numbers of workers seeking jobs worldwide. (Ricento 2015b, p. 37)

With a good dose of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant 2011), merit – the only rightful claim to wealth and power – is presented as something that any hard-working individual can achieve, despite the fact that only a few will really achieve upward social mobility. In reality, especially in Europe, life is becoming more precarious for increasingly large sectors of the population. Again, this creates a widespread feeling of passivity and subordination towards those who succeed, coupled with acceptance of one's own lack of achievement as justly reflecting limited inborn talent. But this acceptance does not make the stressful effects of competition, or the material restraints for 'losers', any less felt. Hit by these effects but reluctant to question something that seems inevitable, more and more people, especially amongst the subaltern classes, turn to backward, largely irrational palliatives such as nationalism, hoping to release the pressure of an unbearably competitive job market by excluding foreigners.[10]

From an updated Gramscian perspective, meritocracy therefore emerges as an ideological pillar of the twenty-first-century neoliberal capitalism. In its real (or 'hereditary') form, meritocracy legitimizes social privilege; in its ideal form, it prevents people from questioning individualistic notions of 'achievement' or 'success'. As with any politically effective ideology, countless people genuinely believe in it and have their lives shaped by it. But only a section of the population, whether by accident of birth or exceptional merit, fully benefits from meritocracy. Within its discourse of pro-activeness and self-improvement, foreign language learning is

[10] According to many commentators, the results of the recent referendum on Britain's EU membership have confirmed this trend. The present chapter, however, was drafted several months before the referendum.

reduced to a matter of motivation, good will, open-mindedness and intellectual curiosity. Usually, those who most firmly believe in – and benefit from – this discourse are people who went to good schools, pay others to clean their homes and clothes, have time for cultural activities and can also afford holidays and voluntary work experience (as opposed to routine work as waiters or the like) in countries whose language they are willing to learn.

7.2 Why Pre-2008 Italy?

Let us now proceed towards our application of Gramscian notions by clarifying our selection of a particular case study. Sonntag (2003), Ricento (2015a) and Tupas (2015) show the uneven nature of the spread of English and highlight the key role of local contexts in determining the impact of EGL. They are notable exceptions to the often unsatisfactory attention to detailed factual evidence. Italy, however, was not included in these critical assessments. Until a few years ago, this exclusion may have been due to a shortage of statistical data (linguistic and socioeconomic), but today this is no longer the case. Such information exists, and we can therefore use it to analyse Italy's educational and linguistic policies.

As we shall see, the most detailed data were collected at the continental, national and local level between 2005 and 2007. This is the main reason why I have decided to focus on this period, for which more information is available. But it is not the only reason. During this time period, Euroscepticism was far less popular than it is today, and Europe had not yet become the epicentre of global economic and political crisis. This enables us to check the empowering effects of foreign language learning at a time when external circumstances were particularly favourable. After the crisis that began with the fall of the subprime market and the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, there has been a decrease in the number of Italian students participating in EU-supported programmes for geographic mobility (Borello and Luise 2011, pp. 60–61), as well as in the number of those completing secondary education and going on to university (ibid., p. 20). This disaffection for the EU, coupled with increased financial difficulties, would probably exert a distorting influence on our assessment of the potential of foreign language learning. For at least one reason, however, it is possible that a better picture would be obtained by using more recent data (if they were available to the same quantitative and qualitative level), especially as far as EGL is concerned: after a steady increase in the provision of foreign languages by Italian schools already in the 1990s (see MIUR 2001, pp. 36–38), between 2003 and 2007, Italian schools and universities were reformed in ways that further increased the number of pupils studying English (Balboni 2009, pp. 104–109).[11]

[11] The proportion of primary school pupils studying English reached 60.94% in 1999–2000. In 2003, English became compulsory for all children from their first year of primary education. In contrast, recent Italian governments have not consistently implemented the official EU policy of support for multilingualism – especially the principle that all Europeans should learn two foreign languages.

7.3 Foreign Language Learning in Italy

7.3.1 Historical Overview

In the second half of the twentieth century, mastery of foreign languages began to be perceived as an important element in the education of Italy's younger generations. Some, however, opposed the new emphasis on being able to communicate in a modern foreign language. Traditionally minded intellectuals maintained that priority should be given to classical languages or – as foreign languages began to be accepted as legitimate cultural and educational objects – to the study of grammar and foreign literary masterpieces. Along with this diffidence, another factor limited the provision of foreign language teaching by Italian schools: in a country where full mastery of Italian had not yet been achieved by the entire population, spreading the national language was seen as the main linguistic task of state-funded education.

This historical background began to have significant repercussions in the late 1960s, as French was losing its supremacy to English as the most widespread foreign language in Italian schools:

> At times parents openly rejected schools that could not guarantee English classes for their children. Improved standards of living in the 1970s, and growing economic success abroad in the 1980s, encouraged many families to provide their children with extra English language tuition, such as evening classes in Italy and study holidays in Britain. Fluency in English was soon perceived not only as an advantage in life but also as a mark of social prestige. Privileged families already sent their children to study abroad, especially to England, which offered good boarding schools. (Tosi 2001, p. 210)

The rapid increase in the appeal of the English language was part of a process of technological innovation and social transformation. This process, however, did not resolve the disparities (such as the north-south divide) which had afflicted the country since its unification in 1861 and which had become even deeper during the 1960s as a consequence of the mainly northern-based economic boom. In essence, the demand for English language learning became a mass phenomenon during the same period when Italy's school system was finding itself in an increasingly difficult situation. On the one hand, the new needs of a growing school population were putting the system under unprecedented pressure; on the other hand, it became evident (especially during the 1980s) that schools were no longer making significant progress in terms of general quality and were especially failing to compensate for the educational disadvantages that still derived from students' socioeconomic backgrounds and regional origin. In the early 1990s, Italy's school system was 'still far from ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens' (Schizzerotto 1994, p. 558). In particular, researchers found that, holding the levels of individual talent and diligence constant, family background remained a source of systematic inequality in student's results. The daughters of entrepreneurs, managers and independent professionals (*liberi professionisti*) living in the northern and central parts of the

country had the highest chances of gaining a university degree, whereas the sons of southern farmhands often struggled to complete compulsory education.

Variation in the quality of teaching 'across different areas of the country' (Brunello and Checchi 2005, p. 564) persisted during the 1990s. Lack of consistent decision-making by the central government went hand in hand with growing fragmentation at the local level, especially in secondary education. New types of schools and experimental curricula made their appearance, including a new upper secondary school, the *liceo linguistico*, focusing on foreign languages. At the same time, those who needed a better command of the English language – especially the politico-diplomatic and corporate elites, whose children were sometimes already growing up in multilingual families – had the opportunity to be educated in English at international schools and universities located in a number of Italian cities, where this language was used to teach all subjects (see Tosi 1990, pp. 59–60). Under pressure from the EU, this opportunity was partly introduced also in state-funded schools, in the form of content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Initially, this method was part of local experimentation, but later reforms incorporated it into the national curricula (Balboni 2009, Chap. 7). Even today, however, the number of subjects involved and the amount of time devoted to CLIL in state-funded schools remain quite marginal. And similar decisions to use English in state universities still cause the uproar of many academics and public figures.

It was in this historical context that Italians come to associate the 'dream of social mobility' with that of 'making their children fluent [in EGL] quickly and cheaply' (Tosi 2001, p. 211). Indeed, an 'increased number of ordinary families, wishing to imitate the élite', opted for private English tutoring, 'investing in all sorts of language training to help their children improve their English' (ibid.). But despite these efforts, only a minority gained access to effective foreign language learning.

7.3.2 Knowledge of English

In the early 1990s, one out of four lower secondary school leavers polled in a survey admitted that 3 years of compulsory training in a foreign language had led them to develop no skills at all in this field (De Mauro and Boylan 1995, p. 8). Nonetheless, there soon appeared indications that foreign languages were slowly starting to improve amongst Italy's younger generations, mainly through autonomous, extra-curricular learning activities (as confirmed by statistical data discussed in De Mauro 1998, pp. 183–84). And on the whole, a moderate optimism was justified by the fact that, whatever their levels of competence, more Italians were able to use a foreign language than ever before. This trend has continued in more recent years, with the quality and quantity of foreign language learning generally increasing in Italian society, and at last also in state-funded education. The teaching of English has especially expanded since the mid-1990s, and a policy of early start has been implemented whereby foreign language learning begins in primary schools.

Most of the data we have on foreign language learning are, however, based on what people say about their abilities. Their significance as nationwide statistical results is not always matched by their reliability as a source for sociolinguistic enquiry. For instance, quoting figures provided by ISTAT (Italy's Central Statistics Office) in 1997, De Mauro (1998, p. 184) states that the average knowledge of foreign languages amongst the younger generations is four times higher than the one possessed by the over 45s, specifying that '52.2%, 50.9% and 45.4%' of those aged, respectively, '15–17, 18–19, 20–24 have a good [*buona*] or excellent [*ottima*] knowledge' of English. But what does 'good' or 'excellent' knowledge mean here? This kind of evidence needs to be handled with care. Indeed, it is likely to tell us more about what Italians think of their knowledge than the competence they really possess.

As we shall see, researchers are inclined to believe that self-assessment leads to an overestimation of one's abilities.[12] However, at least two comments can be made in defence of surveys. First, the fact that many Italians do not believe they are sufficiently proficient in foreign languages is quite significant in itself: it suggests that they do not feel confident when it comes to using a particular foreign language. This is likely to imply a scarce willingness to take an active part in communication, especially if complex, unplanned forms of oral production are required (see LET it FLY 2007a, p. 79). Second, statistical data on foreign languages become more significant when they refer to a specific sample (for instance, a selected group of people who can reasonably be expected to judge their own skills in realistic terms) and when we compare them with other data focusing on the channels through which a confident command of foreign languages has been acquired. It is especially the second point that I shall develop in the rest of this chapter.

7.3.3 Data Published Between 2006 and 2007

Eurobarometer collected relevant data in November–December 2005 and released them in February 2006. Shortly afterwards, other data were made available by the *LET it FLY* project (*Learning, Education and Training in the Foreign Languages in Italy*, co-funded by the EU and the Italian government). Still in 2006, a joint project on illiteracy and cultural deprivation, involving Tuscany's regional administration and the prestigious *Accademia della Crusca*, provided further information – this time at regional level, their research having been conducted amongst the population of Tuscany alone. The following year, ISTAT also published figures on foreign languages in Italy. All of these data, as I have already noted, were based on self-evaluation of linguistic abilities.

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[12] As confirmed by European Commission 2012, Chap. 3. See also Parker (1995, p. 69) for the results of a research project which 'tested 4500 Europeans for "perceived" versus "actual" English-language skills'.

Table 7.1 Knowledge of foreign languages in Italy (based on LET it FLY 2006a)

Ability level	First foreign language (%)	Second foreign language (%)
Very good	7.1	3.3
Good	23.8	18.4
Adequate	19.0	18.6
Inadequate	50.1	59.7

The Tuscan sample provided particularly interesting information. All interviewees shared the following characteristics:

1. They lived in a region where parameters such as literacy rates, number of books read and Internet access were higher than the national average.
2. They belonged to a section of the population where familiarity with foreign languages is typically wider.

Hence, these informants could be expected to evaluate their own skills with reasonable accuracy according to various practical experiences: from communication with foreign peers to reading books in English to understanding American music and videos.

The sample consisted of 337 university students and other 169 youths in their final year of upper secondary school, with 97% of them claiming to know English and 73.7% indicating this language as the foreign language they knew best. As far as ability levels are concerned (i.e. the level of the knowledge that interviewees claimed to have), only 13% of these young adults said they were highly proficient (*esperto*) users of the foreign language they knew best. According to the authors of this research, only such a small section of the sample was definitely able to hold a conversation in a foreign language without difficulty. Most of the remaining students (three out of four) defined their level as either 'good' or 'fairly good' (*discreto*). Despite the characteristics of the sample, the authors regarded self-placement in these two ability levels as unreliable due to possible overestimation in the absence of objective assessment (Dal Carobbo 2007, p. 184).

These rather poor results are consistent with the statistical data collected as part of the *LET it FLY* project. As shown in Table 7.1 (from LET it FLY 2006a, p. 31), only 7.1% of the respondents, claiming to know at least one foreign language, considered their knowledge to be 'very good' (*molto buona*):

Again, the authors explained that cross-comparisons with other data gathered during the interviews indicated that self-assessment had led to overestimation. Therefore, to have a more truthful account of Italians' foreign language abilities, one would probably have to slightly lower the figures given in Table 7.1.

The data published by ISTAT a few months later seemed to show a reduction in the number of those who deemed their knowledge of foreign languages inadequate. However, the number of those who placed their knowledge within the two highest levels had not increased. ISTAT figures with specific reference to English are given in Table 7.2 (adapted from ISTAT 2007):

Table 7.2 Knowledge of English in Italy (based on ISTAT 2007)

Ability level	English (%)
Excellent (*ottimo*)	5.7
Good	23.6
Adequate	39.0
Inadequate	31.7

Finally, this survey also revealed the persistence of territorial differences and the existence of occupational disparities. In the north of Italy, more than 46% of the interviewed subjects said that they knew English, whereas in the south and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, the figure did not reach 40%. In the country as a whole, 68% of managers, entrepreneurs and independent professionals said that they knew English, as opposed to only 35% of blue-collar workers who did so.

7.3.4 The Role of School Education and Vocational Training

Younger and better-educated Italians know foreign languages better (LET it FLY 2006c, p. 70). In this respect, our sources confirm that the typical multilingual European is young and well-educated, with a multilingual background in terms of being born in another EU country or having parents from other EU countries than the country of residence, in a managerial position that frequently requires the use of foreign languages and, finally, motivated to learn (Eurobarometer 2006, p. 10). But Italy differs from other EU countries as far as tasks and training in the workplace, or other job-related educational opportunities, are concerned. These do not seem to represent widespread opportunities for learning a foreign language to high levels of proficiency. Few Italians regularly use foreign languages 'for work purposes or through permanent social contact' (LET it FLY 2007b, p. 9), and advanced knowledge is often a 'niche competence' which businesses require more on paper than in practice:

> An elementary use of linguistic knowledge is in reality relatively frequent (since this use, at least occasionally is required in approximately 50% of the companies in the sample surveyed, and 23% of them host foreign workers, with the consequent necessity for a minimal amount of interlinguistic and intercultural encounter). But in the companies what is required, rather generally, is the passive use of a vehicular language, usually English, in order to be able to have access to commercial, productive and technological information. (Ibid., p. 11)

Work-related training (if provided at all)[13] only seems to promote a basic knowledge restricted to the micro-varieties of the language used in a particular sector (see also

[13] In the period considered, secondary school certificate holders and university graduates participating in adult education and training greatly outnumbered participants with lower educational qualifications. Italy also exhibited very low participation rates in on-the-job training, whose availability and quality, moreover, tended to be higher for employees with higher educational qualifications (Gallina 2006).

LET it FLY 2006b, Chap. 3). Moreover, the use of foreign languages at work does not offer enough opportunities for compensating existing gaps (as illustrated by the following figures, from ISTAT 2007): only 0.7% of primary school and 16% of lower secondary school certificate holders use English for work purposes, as opposed to 56.6% of university graduates; only 30% of blue-collar workers use English for work purposes, as opposed to 64% of managers, entrepreneurs and independent professionals; less than 20% of those living in the south or islands (Sicily and Sardinia) use English for work purposes, as opposed to over 30% of those in the north.

Most Europeans perceive schools as the most valuable learning environment (as shown, for instance, by Eurobarometer 2006, p. 21). But the shortcomings of work-related learning opportunities make this perception especially strong in Italy, where people see school education as the best option to learn foreign languages in a culturally rich and confident manner (LET it FLY 2006a, pp. 13–16). There is, indeed, a positive correlation between the levels of education reached and self-evaluation of one's own foreign language skills: 58.3% of subjects with low levels of education claim to know at least one foreign language, against an average of 66.2% for the national population, but 68.9% of these subjects consider their competence inadequate, 'while on the national level the same negative self-evaluation is expressed by a smaller 50.1%' (ibid., p. 55).

It is also interesting to note another way in which these people (including those who did not complete elementary education) differ from the rest of the population. English is by far the most widely known language amongst them. In contrast, amongst university graduates, the range of spoken languages is more varied: 77.4% and 52.7% of them know, respectively, English and French, and 'a significant 15% declare they speak German, and 13.7% that they speak Spanish' (ibid., p. 6).

On the whole, the data published between 2006 and 2007 indicate, first of all, that English is the foreign language which more Italians claim to know, with its role becoming increasingly dominant as the only foreign language widely known by the young generations, especially by their less educated members. Secondly, schools emerge as a particularly important environment for creating a widely shared attitude of confidence in the use of foreign languages. This second finding gives rise to particular concerns, as the limits of Italy's school system (but also of other OECD countries) have repeatedly been highlighted – especially its inability to reduce disparities due to family and socio-geographic background.[14] Several studies stress the influence of family background on the geographic and social mobility of young people and on their educational careers. In particular, 'if the educational system is

[14] In 2007, Italy's educational equality deficit was described as follows: '17% of higher education students' fathers in Italy hold a higher education qualification themselves, while this is only the case for 10% of men in the same age group as students' fathers. The strongest selectivity into higher education is found in Portugal, with a ratio of 3.2. In Austria, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, students are about twice as likely to be in higher education if their fathers hold a university degree as compared with what their proportion in the population would suggest' (OECD 2007, p. 9).

not homogeneous, an educated parent always has some advantage in collecting information about school quality, and can reorient his/her child's choices towards better opportunities' (Checchi 2006, p. 216).

7.3.5 Constraints on Other Learning Channels

King (1999, p. 24) pointed out that 'the (desirable) introduction of communicative approaches to language learning and teaching has also meant a shift [away] from the library'. This evolution has 'brought with it obstacles relating to access and equal opportunities', causing foreign language learning to retain 'an element of elitism' (ibid.). Especially non-formal ways of learning raise complex questions about how many people have access – for instance – to holidays in English-speaking countries or to the relevant information and communication technology (ICT) and audiovisual material. Undoubtedly, 'the electronic revolution [...] has accelerated people's contact with English' (Holborow 1999, p. 58), yet some people, in Europe and elsewhere, still have limited access to the Internet (or to computers in general), as well as to digital or satellite television, DVD players, and other potentially helpful technologies. This is usually due to age. But we should not underestimate the impact of socioeconomic constraints, which can also limit people's access to other learning opportunities. Indeed, lack of time and money are amongst the main reasons given by Europeans for not studying languages: 'Slightly over a third (34%) have problems with fitting language lessons into their schedule [...] and 22% refer to the expense of classes' (Eurobarometer 2006, p. 37).

Our Italian data show significant gaps in the access to ICT. The number of families owning relevant technologies is higher in the north of the country than in the south. Moreover, possession of a personal computer and access to the Internet by families where the head of the household is a blue-collar worker are significantly lower in comparison with families where the head of the household is a manager, an entrepreneur or an independent professional. With respect to non-school formal learning, the *LET it FLY* project provides further information, thanks to its detailed survey of the demand for foreign language learning in Italy. In accordance with the general European trend, lack of time is one of the main reasons for not having begun to learn a foreign language yet. Concerning the cost of language lessons, only 1.4% of respondents indicate it as the reason why they have not yet undertaken the study of languages. However, 47.7% of them see affordable fees as a condition to their future enrolment in a foreign language course (LET it FLY 2006a, pp. 45–54).

The presence of English language content is also quite limited in traditional media (with the exception of music – where lyrics, however, are seldom the focus of listeners' attention); in particular, dubbing has historically been the rule in Italian cinemas and television channels. So much so that it is difficult to imagine how the public and the media industry could cope with Van Parijs's proposal (based on experimental evidence from small European countries with comparatively higher standards of English) of a ban on dubbing, to be replaced with subtitles (Van Parijs

2011, pp. 106–115). Incidentally, the material recently discussed by this author vindicates the importance that Gramsci attached to equal linguistic self-esteem for the creation of a 'transnational demos' (as Van Parijs calls it). The author hopes that, thanks to the expansion of this demos, subaltern groups will be able to assert their demands rationally and coherently regardless of national differences. But from our Gramscian point of view, it is also interesting to look at the measures that Van Parijs proposes for implementing his democratic programme: these range from noble but somewhat utopian proposals – such as compensatory payments from English-speaking to non-English-speaking countries within the EU – to crude impositions such as the above-mentioned ban on dubbing.

Finally, the role of international geographic mobility needs to be considered. Schools and universities are increasingly interested in geographic mobility as an instrument to enhance the study of foreign languages. And the EU encourages this interest through specifically designated programmes. Despite these positive notes, however, actual participation is restricted to narrow sectors of Italy's youth. For instance, just over 10% of those polled in the *LET it FLY* project spent periods of study abroad (LET it FLY 2006a, p. 17). Moreover, there are evident risks of 'auto-selection' amongst potential participants according to 'the old logics based on wealth (and on the prohibitive costs of mobility) rather than on the motivation and resources which can be activated in learning' (LET it FLY 2007c, p. 9).[15]

7.4 Discussion

Large portions of the European population perceive the English language as a social 'good' with unquestioned instrumental value, and several governments promote it as such. Apart from the fact that these perceptions and policies create considerable advantages for native speakers of prestigious varieties of English, recent research has shown that, in non-English-speaking countries, mastery of this language is often a factor in reinforcing – rather than reducing – unequal power hierarchies (see also Grin 2005). The Italian data confirm these findings. The social mobility of some individuals is certainly boosted by the fact that they have learnt English, but this reality remains beyond the reach of many, despite being presented as possible for all.

Moreover, recent research also shows that knowledge of other international languages (such as Spanish, Arabic or Chinese), especially when combined with high levels of proficiency in English, is financially more rewarding for individuals than knowledge of English alone. This is indicative of new ways in which global capitalism is raising the level of linguistic competition. As far as individual skills are concerned, this increased competition entails the allocation of resources (better jobs, prestigious higher education, etc.) to those who are proficient in *two* foreign languages. This development may be welcomed from the point of view of personal enrichment and in terms of the global maintenance of linguistic diversity at societal

[15] For more recent (but no less sobering) data, see Van Mol (2014).

level; however, it also sets new challenges to educational systems and policies and, once again, clearly runs the risk of widening the gap between, on the one hand, abstract universal progress and, on the other, practical issues of inequality and exclusion for real individuals.

The EU sets similarly ambitious objectives for the language policies of member states. In order to promote 'democratic citizenship' and eradicate 'prejudice and discrimination', governments should ensure that EU citizens learn more than one foreign language and, above all, that they develop a 'plurilingual competence' in which different languages interrelate and contribute to communication (Council of Europe 2001, pp. 11–14).[16] Again, in the light of what we have seen so far, these objectives largely reflect the linguistic background of the elites, but one wonders how realistic they are for the rest of the population.

In sum, the spread of languages through which increasingly large sections of the continent's population may communicate is no guarantee of improvement with respect to the democratization of European society, wider access to political power and a more equal distribution of cultural and economic resources. Crystal (2012), however, authoritatively explains that the intrinsic mechanism of language acquisition is not what prevents new generations from overcoming language inequality. On this ground, Crystal remains fairly optimistic about the future role of EGL:

> If a global language is taught early enough, from the time that children begin their full-time education, and if it is maintained continuously and resourced well, the kind of linguistic competence which emerges in due course is a real and powerful bilingualism, indistinguishable from that found in any speaker who has encountered the language since his birth. These are enormous 'ifs', with costly financial implications, and it is therefore not surprising that this kind of control is currently achieved by only a minority of non-native learners of any language; but the fact that it is achievable (as evidenced repeatedly by speakers from such countries as Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands) indicates that there is nothing inevitable about the disadvantage scenario.…There is…widespread agreement that, if we want to take the task of language learning seriously, one of the key principles is 'the earlier the better'. And when this task is taken seriously, with reference to the acquisition of a global language, the elitism argument evaporates. (Crystal 2012, pp. 16–17)

These enormous 'ifs' about the viability of bilingualism concern not only the global language but also the future of less widespread languages (be they local or potentially also national ones). Indeed, a related question is 'if' societies can be transformed in such a way as to make the protection of linguistic diversity not only desirable according to moral and scientific principles but also financially viable and more immediately beneficial to the practical needs of everyday life.

A possible answer to these questions may expand on the observation that language inequality is often perpetuated by an uneven allocation of resources or – in the words of a Marxist scholar – that access to EGL simply 'parallels access to the fruits of society' (Holborow 1999, p. 58). Drawing on Gramsci's comments about linguistic transformations as 'an effect not a cause' of socioeconomic transforma-

[16] See also the European Commission's website, where employability is cast into relief as one of the fundamental reasons for learning 'two languages other than [the] mother tongue' (http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/strategic-framework/index_en.htm).

tions (1975, p. 344), we could argue that the full integrating potential of international languages will be realized through the active struggle for a more egalitarian society, if and when the negative effects of passive revolution are removed. Only radical changes in global capitalism can release the full benefits of innovation beyond the realms of economic production and exchange, allowing them to have a positive impact on populations at large – not only on national and transnational elites or on single individuals outside the elites. In the meantime, the EU's language policy of communication with citizens through all the official languages of its member states is arguably the most impartial and inclusive of possible arrangements. All documents of public interest are, as a rule, translated into the national languages. Despite frequent claims to the contrary, this policy does not have unbearable costs (only 0.0085% of the EU's GDP, and less than 1% of its budget, according to Gazzola 2014, p. 232). A shift to English as the only official language would replace translation and interpreting costs within the organization with language learning costs outside the organization, and these externalized costs would be borne 'only by the non-native speakers of the hegemonic language' (Grin 2015, p. 133). Moreover, in addition to favouring English-speaking countries, such a reduction of official languages would be detrimental to EU citizens with low levels of education and income, as well as to the elderly and the socially excluded.

But there is an element of self-satisfied acceptance of the status quo in this approach. The question remains of what governments can do to facilitate a confident interaction between citizens regardless of socioeconomic status, either through widespread 'plurilingualism' or, more realistically, through equal access to English – the language which most Europeans already perceive, study and use as a lingua franca. The process is undeniably underway, supported, albeit unevenly, by a whole series of economic, technological and juridical conditions (including the right for EU citizens to work in all member states, alongside the lifting of internal border controls). And Gramsci himself wrote that, while they cannot implement utopian objectives, language policy interventions can 'speed up the already existing process' (1975, p. 2345). Ultimately, it is through direct interaction – much more than from the current ability to read official documents – that Europeans can reasonably be expected to build a stronger fellow-feeling and push their old enmities further into the past.

In this respect, countries such as Italy may wish to take inspiration from the countries mentioned by Crystal, as well as from Belgium and Lithuania (De Mauro 2014, p. 74–75). Here, purposeful policies have turned English into a widely shared asset for all social classes – even if not a fully liberating instrument in the hands of subaltern groups – without detriment to the native languages. The Italian case, however, helps to clarify that these goals require much more than a generic application of the early start principle to formal education (see also Gazzola's 2014 analysis of the European Commission 2012 data). In the 2007 ISTAT survey, more than 60% of respondents, aged 11–17 and claiming to know English, considered their knowledge to be below good levels (i.e. placed themselves in the lower two ability levels in Table 7.2). Another 15% claimed not to know English. Although the young age of the respondents calls for great care when interpreting these figures, they seem to provide evidence of a widespread lack of linguistic confidence across a cohort of individuals who, in the majority of cases, did encounter English during primary education.

7.5 Conclusions

Applied to a particular historical context, a Gramscian approach to language policy has produced a series of significant results, both on a general and on a more case-specific level. First, it has helped us to highlight certain inadequacies in the current debate on EGL. In particular, it has reminded us of the importance of linguistic confidence in encouraging democratic participation and in ensuring that all citizens feel capable of scrutinizing the decisions of those who 'know better' (from institutional committees to corporate management). This is especially relevant today because of the risks of passivity and frustration engendered by meritocracy. Our Gramscian approach has thus provided a framework for a critical interpretation of the role of foreign languages in Italy – of English, in particular.

We have looked at the sociological characteristics of those who have reached a confident command of foreign languages and at the ways in which this confidence has developed. Although the data analysed refer to the period before Europe entered the current crisis, our findings show a worrying mismatch between the perceived value of foreign languages and their real role in people's lives, especially as far as EGL is concerned. Amongst those whose material conditions of life and work make advanced usage of English quite detached from everyday practices and priorities, this language is often learnt only as much as the development of economic markets requires (e.g. for online shopping and cheap travel). This poses limits to the liberating value of EGL, even when supported by favourable educational policies. But this general point is probably not as worrying as other inferences that can be made based on the evidence discussed in this chapter. In the current phase of economic crisis and cuts to freely accessible education, abstract claims about the possibility and benefits of learning foreign languages, unaccompanied by egalitarian social and educational policies, may increase the risk of individual insecurity. Rather than fostering tolerance and integration, they may further reduce popular support for European unification, opening up the way to nationalist populism.

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Chapter 8
Teachers as Salaried Intellectual Workers: Are They Part of the 'Pueblo'? An Argentinean Perspective

Flora M. Hillert

8.1 The Latin American Context and Cultural Struggle

> There is a spectre travelling around the world, the spectre of Latin American progressivism. Ignacio Ramonet (2015)

> Latin America has been positioned at the forefront of a struggle against the neoliberal system which has eventually turned into an attack against human rights and democracies. Noam Chomsky (2015)[1]

> It is important to remember that the revolutionary processes, are not permanently ascending, they move in waves, they advance, consolidate, stagnate, regress, fall, rise again, in a continue process of back and forth waves. Finally, the struggle of the people, only the struggle of the people, must define the future. Álvaro García Linera (2015)[2]

We live in a time of clear neoliberal hegemony supported by the United States and other world powers, in which the neoconservative policies that began in the 1980s have seriously undermined labour and grassroots movements. This has caused conflicts of different degrees and kinds, some of which have become full-blown crises. In Europe, protest and counter-hegemonic movements and parties have arisen, but national or international democratic anti-war efforts still have not managed to overcome the assaults of financial capital. In this global context, Latin

[1] Presentations by Ignacio Ramonet (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D8ok4yXX8U) and Noam Chomsky (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qhj9agMvwn8), International Forum for the Emancipation and Equality, organized by the National Department of Culture (www.cultura.gob.ar), Buenos Aires, 12–14 March 2015.

[2] In October and November of 2015, Argentina held elections in which right forces returned to state power after 12 years of a popular government.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_8

America is currently experiencing an identifiable period of deep progressive change and, in so doing, is confronting global economic and military powers (Dussel 2006, 2008, 2011; García Linera 2008, 2015; Quijano 2014; Ramonet 2015; Sader 2008; Sader and García 2011; Santos 2008, 2010a, b; Stiglitz 2015).

In the current political literature, some of these governments are considered socialist, others, revolutionary of different types,[3] and still others, progressive. But there is a wide convergence in regarding all of them as post-neoliberal, democratic and popular.

After decades of terrorist dictatorships, popular struggles ushered into political power these progressive governments. Violent uprisings, like the Caracazo in 1989 in Venezuela and the massive public revolt on 19 and 20 December 2001 in Argentina, were rebellions against neoconservative policies of state cutbacks and economic adjustment. They are also recognised as antecedents of later political changes led by the governments of Hugo Chávez and Néstor Kirchner. In the same vein, the 'Guerra del agua' [water war] in Cochabamba, Bolivia, against the privatisation of water in favour of foreign companies preceded Evo Morales' presidential election victory, and the '*rebelión de los forajidos*' [rebellion of the outlaws] which mobilised middle-class sectors in Quito, Ecuador, into mass street protests, was one of the precursors of Rafael Correa's victory.

The dominant slogan in many of these struggles was '*que se vayan todos*' [go away all of you]. People no longer trusted the governing authorities and the three branches of the state—executive, legislative and judiciary-. In Gramsci's terms, these situations expressed organic crises of power blocs, following ideological and cultural rejections of the neoliberal model, the IMF and the World Bank. The struggles did not stop, nor did they subside following electoral victories. On the contrary, such successes have only assured and guaranteed the persistence of these movements. That is why in Latin America, we say that it is not an era of changes, but a change of era (Correa 2011).

The new governments of many Latin American countries are advancing simultaneously towards the construction of stable and more participatory democracies and the nationalisation and/or state control of natural resources and public interest companies such as gas in Bolivia and oil in Venezuela. In countries like Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, the transformations go deeper when diverse forms of property ownership are recognised and encouraged including state, private, social communitarian, cooperative and mixed. Capitalist economic relations continue to prevail, however, even though the resources on which economies are based are nationalised and new forms of property are acknowledged and promoted.

[3] By using the expression 'revolutionary of different types', I refer to all types of anti-imperialist democratic revolutions. This includes the period of democratic revolution supported by Lenin, the anti-imperialist and national liberation revolutions of third world countries in the decades of the 1950s–1970s and other types of revolutionary democratic efforts. For example, the Republic of Ecuador, one of the most advanced governments in the continent, calls its revolution the 'Revolución Ciudadana' [the Citizens' Revolution].

The neoliberal hegemonic model of the 1980s and 1990s excluded significant proportions of the population from the labour market, consumer market, citizenry, trade unions and the associated rights, such as the right to strike. However, in the last 10 or 15 years, depending on the country, Latin American governments have implemented another model: this time, based on inclusion. For the labour market, the result was the creation of 20 million new jobs in Brazil and 5 million in Argentina and a consequent increase in trade union membership. With regard to consumption, millions rose above the poverty line, a growth phenomenon that swelled the ranks of the so-called middle classes. In terms of social welfare, the *Bolsa Familia* [Family Allowance] was implemented in Brazil and the *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (AUH) [Universal Child Allowance] in Argentina. Further, in Argentina, the number of pensioners grew by 3 million, and the state provided benefits even including, through a moratorium, women of 60 years of age and men of 65 years of age who had not contribute or rarely contributed to the nation's social security fund. As far as citizenship is concerned, Bolivia and Venezuela granted identity cards and the right to vote to millions of undocumented people.

Thus, in Latin America, the 'pueblo' [common people or the working classes, salaried or not] and governments argue that the struggle is between two models: inclusion, solidarity and equality, on the one hand, and exclusion, competition and inequality on the other. The new Latin American governments are involved in a tough ideological and cultural struggle, caught in the extreme antagonism caused by policies involving the inclusion or exclusion of majority groups in their populations.

When dominant classes achieve cultural and political hegemony, there is a correspondence between those possessing economic supremacy and political-cultural influence, in other words, those who control the means of production and the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the state; in classic Marxist terms, that is, between structure and superstructure. It is the harmonic situation referred to by Althusser in his famous work *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1988) in which political and civil society is playing from the same scorecard. But it may happen—as it did in Italy in the 1920s following the First World War—that the dominant socio-economic base or power bloc does not agree exactly with the governing apparatus. A rift occurs, and the interests controlling the economic structure are not precisely those of the state superstructure. This creates, in Gramsci's terms, a contradiction between economic power and political power and can lead to a new organic crisis. In this dispute, diverse hegemonic apparatuses—e.g. news media or the public education system—can intervene in different ways.

The singular circumstances in Latin America that allow access to government power without first defeating the most concentrated capital sectors, nonetheless, follow the path of all great social change in that there is a moment of fundamental cleavage in which control of political power is achieved—even partially—and government structures and systems are used to make changes in other spheres of national life. As discussed above, in this process, popular struggles and cultural and ideological changes pre-exist, and persist beyond, the achievement of political power.

The current Latin American revolutions (García Linera 2015) originally combined moments of Gramsci's 'war of position' (slow, covert efforts to gain power and influence) and 'war of manoeuvre' (open conflict and clashes), without retreating a step in either form of struggle. These movements clearly reject leaving various forms of power intact as they could fall again into the hands of the powerful. The risk is too great that a correlation of military, economic and social power (among others) would prove dangerously strong and could be used to effectively crush any popular effort that dares to raise its head above the parapet (García Linera 2015). Several countries are reforming their constitutions and passing legislation to empower new social subjects—homosexuals, rural labourers, domestic employees, worker cooperatives in factories closed by the owners and indigenous peoples. However, this empowerment of subaltern social groups is significantly diminished by the cultural dictatorship imposed worldwide by highly concentrated mass media: CNN and Fox in the United States, the BBC in the United Kingdom, Grupo PRISA in Spain, Televisa in Mexico, Globovisión in Venezuela, O Globo in Brazil and Grupo Clarín in Argentina, to name a few. The reduction and replacement of their power constitute one of the essential objectives in the battle over cultural hegemony.

In Gramsci's (1971) analysis of the press, with an eye to the fracturing of the dominant classes, the role of the 'intellectual general staff' is not exerted by any fraction, but by another leading force 'above the parties and sometimes…even believed to be such by the public'. If they assume this function, 'a newspaper too (or group of newspapers), a review (or group of reviews), is a 'party' or 'fraction of a party' or 'a function of a particular party' (Q17, §37; SPN, p. 148). As examples, Gramsci points to the *Times* in the United Kingdom and *Corriere della Sera* in Italy.

In Argentina, parliament approved Law 26.522/2009 Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual [Audiovisual Communication Services] in order to de-monopolise mass media.[4] Pursuant to this Law, radio signals have been granted to 278 schools, educational institutions and youth centres and 23 digital TV channels and 55 FM frequencies to universities and for the first time in Argentina, a television channel was granted to indigenous peoples (Wall Kintun TV). Such reforms are grounded in the need to provoke and support cultural and moral change before moving to making more radical changes.

The impact of all these efforts is as yet unknown, and they may lead to progress or failure in the future. Today, however, they demand passionate engagement and critical analysis. According to Boaventura de Souza Santos (2008), we must adopt an attitude concerned with expanding the changes already occurring in the present instead of passively regarding such shifts as fleeting moments on the way towards a desired future.

[4] The law limits private media to a maximum of 35% of the market in terms of public airtime and 35% of airtime to cable television subscribers. Further, it restricts the number of radio licences per group nationwide to 10 and to a maximum of 24 locations in cable TV per group. Someone in possession of a public channel cannot also possess a cable operation in the same area.

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the way teachers position themselves in relation to these transformations and problematise the way they see themselves, particularly whether they consider themselves as part of the 'pueblo' or not.

The use of the term 'pueblo' is controversial because in its translation as 'people' it may impede differentiation between classes and sectors living within a nation state. I follow the use of the term as established by Dussel (2008), who regards pueblo as the inhabitants and citizens of a nation:

> whose needs remain unsatisfied by oppression or exclusion. We […] use the term *plebs* (in Latin) to refer to the *people* when considered in opposition to the elites, to the oligarchs, to the ruling classes of a political order. This term *plebs*, meaning a part of the community, nevertheless tends to encompass all of the citizens (*populous*) in a *new* future order in which their present claims will be satisfied and equality will be achieved thanks to a common struggle by the excluded. (p. 75)

Dussel also offers a reflection by Fidel Castro on this point, in Castro's famous 4-h speech in 1953, 'History will absolve me':

> In terms of struggle, when we talk about people we're talking about the *six hundred thousand* Cubans without work…; the *five hundred thousand* farm labourers who live in miserable shacks…; the four hundred thousand industrial workers and laborers…whose salaries pass from the hands of the boss to those of the moneylender…; the *one hundred thousand* small farmers who live and die working land that is not theirs…; the *thirty thousand* teachers and professors…; the *twenty thousand* small business men weighed down by debts…; the *ten thousand* young professional people…anxious to work and full of hope….These are the people, the ones who know misfortune and, therefore, are capable of fighting with limitless courage! (Castro n.d., p. 24)

National groups such as those mentioned by Castro are equivalent to what Gramsci calls the new historical bloc. As can be seen, it includes employed and unemployed workers, the middle strata and intellectuals.

In *Some Aspects of the Southern Question* (1926), Gramsci (1978) emphatically highlighted that given the conditions in Italy, workers should 'win the trust and consent of the peasant and of some semi-proletarian urban categories' (SPW-2, p. 448) in order to be successful. This invariably required the involvement of intellectuals, not just as individuals but as a group. This, in turn, demanded an opening, some sort of entryway into the interior of this intellectual collectivity that could be used towards the constitution and growth of a new majority of left-wing intellectuals. Due to their subjective position, most intellectuals—among them, teachers—are included in the middle classes (Gramsci 1978).

8.2 Salaried Workers and Public Officers

> The teacher was an apostle and, at the same time, an officer. Tenti Fanfani 2007

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Gramsci (1971) had already argued that, 'The "societies" in which a single individual can take part are very numerous, more than would appear' (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 353). He further noted that some of

these societies are necessary or forced, or involve automatic inclusion, and that others are voluntary (Q1011, §54; SPN, pp. 352–353). Examples can be seen in the family, school, work context, neighbourhood, trade union, political party or scientific, artistic or philosophical organisations. By the end of the twentieth century, Therborn (1980) expressed a similar idea by identifying the different points from which an individual may be 'questioned': as a man or a woman, as young or old, as a citizen, as a worker or as a member of a religious community. Laclau (1996) identifies those different belongings as the individual's 'positions'.

Following this line of thinking, if teachers are considered according to their socio-economic relations, it is possible to simultaneously conceptualise them as salaried workers (based on socio-economic relations), officers of the apparatus of political administration or members of the middle class and intellectuals. These multiple positions demonstrate the complexity of teachers' identity. According to their objective or material conditions, they are salaried workers who carry out their tasks in public and private spheres. Gramsci (1971) claims that specialised categories are historically formed in order to exercise a gradation of intellectual functions (Q 12, §1–3; SPN, pp. 9–12). In this sense, teachers are qualified workers, specialising in the transmission of knowledge.

In Argentina, teachers constitute the largest number of salaried state workers, more numerous than public servants, healthcare workers, workers in the justice system and public transit workers employed on nationalised lines. A study on the social class of teachers by Donaire (2009) of the Instituto de Investigaciones Pedagógicas 'Marina Vilte' (IPMV) from the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina (CTERA)[5] sketches the historical trajectory of the work of teachers, starting from individual and independent employment—the private tutor or professor—through a progressive transformation into salaried workers that took place from the nineteenth into the twentieth century. This ran parallel to the universalisation of education[6] and has cumulated in today's pressures to standardise, subordinate and control the work of teachers.

Donaire (2009) describes the following features of a tendency towards the proletarianisation of teaching:

- The profession changed from providing a complementary income within the family to a specific and principle activity of a considerable part of the population.
- It has a standardised training period.
- Teachers are no longer recruited only from the upper or middle classes, but also from the poor petite bourgeoisie and even from proletarian classes.

[5] This Institute bears the name of the Secretary of the Educational Labour Association in the Province of Jujuy, who disappeared and kidnapped by the dictatorship.

[6] According to the National Census, primary school enrolment increased from 20% of the population aged between 6 and 14 in 1869 to 48% in 1914, to 82.6% in 1960 and to 98.9% in 2010. Illiteracy decreased from 78.2% in 1869 to 37.9% in 1914, to 8.5% in 1960 and to 1.9% in 2010 (Di Pietro and Tófalo 2013).

- The creation of a new concentration of working materials (the confluence of teachers in the same building concentrates teaching resources and resource production and brings them under the same authorities).
- Salaries were universalised.
- There has been a feminisation and impoverishment of the profession to make the adaptation to poorer working and living conditions easier.
- There is increasing regulation of working conditions and salaried work.
- The attempted implementation (in the second half of the twentieth century) of educational reforms that introduced and measured productivity and efficiency criteria.

Given these material conditions, it is still necessary to analyse the subjective positions of teachers as salaried workers: in the past, teachers resisted considering themselves part of the working class. In Argentina, it was only in 1973, and after decades of discussion, that the *Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina* (CTERA) [Confederation of Education Workers of Argentine Republic] was created.

As Donaire has noted, if we observe the workings of teachers' organisations and the forms of protest they employ, it confirms that teachers express themselves as part of the working class: they are organised in unions and adopt the strike as their principal form of struggle (Donaire 2009, pp. 107–109). In fact, over the last two decades, teachers have staged one quarter of the strikes that have taken place in Argentina (Instituto de Investigaciones y Estadísticas, AGMER, 2012). In the City of Buenos Aires, nearly six out of ten teachers consider specialised workers part of their same social class, and a similar proportion believe the interests and problems of both teachers and the working class were alike or very similar since both groups were salaried workers (Ibid.).

However, as state workers, teachers also became officials, because the 'educational institutes and, with them, teachers' work, are part of the state and an organizational pattern in which the government is responsible for formulating policies to determine the direction and nature of the state education system' (Pantolini and Vitar 2013, my translation).

In Argentina, public and state education overlap: there was no public education before the state took it on as a primary function, conceived of as the imperative to educate the republic's sovereign, the citizenry. The founding moment of public education was Law 1420 of General Common Education of 1884, which established secular, free and compulsory education for children from 6 to 14 years of age. In general terms, throughout the profession's history, teachers have been invested with state authority, and it has been their duty to transmit the messages of the state, which have been, depending on the specific period: patriotic or subordinate to foreign blocs, supportive or competitive and inclusive or exclusive. The reason for this is that in Argentina, the state adopted distinctly different characteristics and underlying systems from the time of its origins in the late nineteenth century to the present: liberal democratic from 1880 to 1930, populist from 1940 to 1955, terrorist and genocidal from 1976 to 1983 and neoconservative from 1990 to 2003. Clearly,

teachers are not mechanical agents in every kind of state and government: some generate various forms of adherence; others produce complete rejection, opposition and resistance. And on more than one occasion, elements of these contradictory, heterogeneous attitudes are found in the subjectivity of the same teacher.

In the research I have conducted,[7] it became clear that in the 1990s, there was severe opposition to education privatisation policy together with a certain attraction on the part of some teachers to ideas praising meritocracy, the victory of the strong over the weak and consequent inequality, individual and inter-institutional competitiveness, success, excellence and admiration for the 'first world'. However, during those years, resistance also formed: analyses and critiques of the neoconservative scenario gained ground, especially in Argentina and other countries where teachers unions led the struggles to reject the neoliberal model. In Argentina those struggles reached a climax with the installation of the 'White Tent', in which teachers' unions organised the 1000-day hunger strike—lasting through the years 1997, 1998 and 1999—in front of the National Congress. During this period, university teachers in Argentina objected to productivity assessments, rejected meritocratic views and fought against the spread of private universities by defending the idea, both among the emerging nations and in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), that education is a social good and not a commodity.

As a result, education was excluded from trade liberalisation in Argentina in 2006. In the same year, the National Education Law N° 26.206 passed. Pursuant to article 2: 'Education and knowledge are public goods and personal and social rights, guaranteed by the State'. And by the end of 2015, the Superior Education Law N° 24.521 was reformed in the same sense, establishing free tuition throughout the whole public university system.

During this period, teachers promoted salary and collective demands, but they mainly defended schools and public education. This comprehensive defence deepened in later years with struggles for the democratisation of educational content and an emancipatory, national, Latin Americanist (as opposed to Eurocentric), popular and inclusive education system. For teachers, this shift involved practising greater personal and collective autonomy and breaking free of older models in which teachers delivered content designed at a distance from the classroom by people working in the government's educational administrative structures.

Throughout the profession's history, teachers have been made responsible for civic education in order to form the citizenry. In these new Latin American revolutionary times, they are also understood as co-responsible for assuring the right to education, expressed in the extension of its reach and enrolment as high-quality universal public education.

Nevertheless, some teachers express a certain resistance to state policies, not only when these are perceived as negative but sometimes also when they are positive.

[7] Projects UBACYT FI 154 (1995–1998) *'Imbrication of public and private in the processes of curricular design and development'* and TF 70 (1998–2000) *'Jurisdictional processes of curricular elaboration and teaching training'*, both held in the IICE (*Instituto de Investigaciones en Ciencias de la Educación*) College of Philosophy and Letters, University of Buenos Aires.

Inclusive policies are one example of this, since they could affect the material conditions of teachers' work. In certain cases, resistance is expressed as discrimination against the poorest pupils in the classroom, through an excess of requests for work leave and an increase in teacher absenteeism. These attitudes degrade the efforts and professional ethics of the teaching profession; create confrontation between teachers, parents and pupils; and create obstacles to reaching popular unity and the construction of a new historical bloc.

Having analysed whether teachers belong to the working class as specialised salaried workers who have been turned into officials, I now turn to a focus on the controversial question of whether teachers also belong to the social middle strata.

8.3 Teachers as Part of the Social Middle Strata

There is widespread agreement that it is difficult to build a clear conceptual definition of the so-called middle class. However, by considering examples from relevant literature and enumerating on or extending their components, it is possible to construct a workable definition of the concept (Tamarit 2012). It is important to remember that according to Marx, classes refer to groups determined by their place or situation within the relations of production, with a way of life, interests and culture which are hostile and opposite to other classes, against which they mobilise (Marx 1973, p. 359). With regard to the composition of the middle class, the petite bourgeoisie is usually included; however, it should be excluded since this group exploits salaried labour and extracts surplus value. Excluding the petite bourgeoisie, the middle class consists of urban and rural self-employed workers (artisans, shopkeepers, transport workers, farmers, freelance professionals), salaried workers from the private sector with middle to high incomes who are not part of company management (technicians, engineers and other professionals) and salaried public servants in health, education, justice, religious worship, security and public administration who hold qualifications relevant to their positions. In particular, the middle strata comprise every worker, either independent or salaried, engaged in cultural fields—journalists, artists, teachers and educators, researchers, etc.—sectors with huge influence in forming public opinion and changing social mood. In respect to the identity construction for the middle strata, subjective, psychological and ideological elements are more relevant than objective or material ones.

Strictly speaking, the middle class is not a class. Its members possess a variety of relations to the means of production, and they do not have an obvious structural antagonism with another class towards which they manifest an oppositional unity, cohesion or internal solidarity. Further, the middle class does not share homogeneous class interests: spending power varies, ideologies are diverse and there exists a multitude of individual and group projects. This is the reason why the middle class should more accurately be called the 'middle strata', emphasising its practical and observable construction as strata of different social classes. In the origins and early development of capitalism, old intermediate classes existing between the bourgeoisie

and the proletariat and linked to previous means of production were gradually disappearing (i.e. peasants and urban and rural artisans). But Marx notes that as capitalism evolves, new middle sectors appear in the space between the working class (proletariat), on one side, and capitalists and landowners (elites), on the other (Cardoso and Brignoli 1976, pp. 26–28). The formation of new middle sectors, as well as differentiation within the working class according to qualification levels, progresses during the monopoly stage. As Marx demonstrated, throughout the progress of capitalism, the organic composition of capital increases due to the relative and in some cases absolute diminution of industrial workers. Simultaneously there is a growing need for technicians and specialised supervisors, qualified workers, commerce and industry employees and state bureaucracy, all with a variety of relationships to the production process and a changing place in society. There is a tendency towards salaried workers and a permanent emergence of new middle sectors (Cardoso and Brignoli 1976, p. 36).

Laclau questioned the classical Marxist prediction that capitalism would lead to the disappearance of the middle strata and an eventual takeover of capitalist society by the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. In this respect Laclau (2014) wrote:

> The *Communist Manifesto* gave us an image of the class struggle under capitalism as controlled by the increasing centrality of the antagonism between salaried jobs and capital. The proletarianization process was thought to be leading to the disappearance of the middle classes and peasantry, so that the last antagonism in history was going to be a direct confrontation between the capitalist bourgeoisie and a vast proletarian multitude. The theory of a progressive simplification of the social structure under capitalism was the principle of the classic Marxist structure. (my translation)

Cardoso and Brignoli (1976) emphasise that even though the majority of a nation's population can be sorted into social classes, this cannot be applied to the whole. The notion of social strata is used to refer to those whose social status is not related to property or means of production but to the superstructural activities they perform, that is, to their social function as agents, key to the activities of superstructural institutions: military, intellectual, bureaucratic or clerical. This is also quite likely the space occupied by teachers.

What Gramsci calls 'situation' is the place occupied by an individual within the relations of production. The same individual belongs to different partial societies (Therborn 1980) or occupies different positions as an individual (Laclau 1996). This is why when one person participates in several relations of production, they are likely to belong simultaneously to several social classes: a doctor can receive a salary for their work at a hospital in the morning and receive patients in their own office in the afternoon as a freelance worker. These diverse relations will undoubtedly leave marks in his or her identity. Gramsci uses the term 'position' to express how a person is culturally and ideologically located. Which of these relations of production hegemonises subjectivity—ways of life, interests, consumption patterns, culture and tendencies towards collective action—and allows for categorisation into a predetermined social group?

Marxist cultural theoretician Raymond Williams (1977) asserts that from an individual viewpoint hegemony:

> is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world….It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute….It is…a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes. (p. 110)

From these ideas, it is possible to investigate the subjectivity of the middle strata where teachers can be located.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Argentina has been considered a 'middle-class country', differentiating it from other Latin American nations. In a 2012 assessment limited to data related to access to goods and services (either as consumers or by law), the World Bank estimated that in the prior decade, the middle class in Latin America had grown by 50%, whereas in many countries 30% of the population belonged to the middle class (World Bank 2012). In that same vein, Latin American governments frequently talk about the expansion of the middle class. More precisely, they are referring to a rise in spending power among the vast social sectors that used to belong to the lower strata, but which in recent years have been included among the citizenry, the labour market and public education, health and social security systems. It is because of the inclusion of these sectors that consumption and spending power increased. Accordingly, in the last 10 years, in Argentina, the middle class has grown by 17.5%, in Ecuador by 13.4%, in Peru by 10.9% and in Brazil by 10.3% (Pew Research Centre 2015). However, these conditions are experienced by a group of people who do not share the same working environment, way of life or even culture. Therefore, this aggregate does not constitute a social class; rather, as determined by conditions of consumption, this collective 'middle class' serves to conceal the striking social differences coexisting within this mass.

The 'growth of the middle class' identified in Latin America obscures important class differences, and it is not an unprecedented argument. Bourdieu (1998) noted that the neoliberal tradition insists on denying the existence of differences and principles of differentiation:

> This is just what those who pretend that nowadays the American, Japanese, and French societies are each nothing but an enormous 'middle class' do, although in a more paradoxical way, since those who believe this nevertheless preserve the term 'class' (according to a survey, 80 percent of the Japanese say they belong to the 'middle class'). This position is, of course, unsustainable. All my work shows that in a country said to be on the way to becoming homogenized, democratized, and so on, difference is everywhere. And in the United States, every day some new piece of research appears showing diversity where one expected to see homogeneity, conflict where one expected to see consensus, reproduction and conservation where one expected mobility. (p. 12)

Subjectively, middle-class identity is so attractive to most Argentineans that they currently say they belong to it, even though in objective terms, many actually belong to the working class or to more unprivileged or vulnerable substrata like informal workers and domestic labourers. In Argentina, Ezequiel Adamovsky (2014) has observed that between 70 and 80% of people consider themselves part of the middle classes because they are not indigent and/or they do not live in shantytowns—the

so-called *villa miseria*. As such, increasingly, people further and further down the economic ladder identify with the middle class. As for teachers, Donaire (2009) concluded that teachers see themselves as part of the working class based on their forms of organisation and protest. However, if we instead consider their perception as individuals, initial research involving teachers from Buenos Aires suggests that most teachers claim membership in the middle class.

According to Adamovsky (2014), this middle-class identity is built through differentiation from popular and grassroots sectors and even in opposition to them. This identity comprises classist tropes: a middle-class person is not poor; a middle-class person has access to a certain level of consumption, particular cultural attainments and specific corporal, linguistic and moral habitus. A middle-class person is unlike the poor, who are allegedly dishonest and promiscuous, and is instead honest and ethical. Middle-class identity also evokes racist imagery: middle-class people are descended from white, European immigrants, while the lower classes descend from indigenous, black or mixed race populations from rural areas or immigrated from neighbouring countries. It should be noted here, as Adamovsky (2014) has done, that such discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants are not exclusive to the middle strata; such attitudes are very strong in other popular sectors too.

Middle classes are believed to fluctuate between support for popular sectors—as in Argentina in December 2001, when mass demonstrations put an end to both Fernando de la Rúa's presidency and acceptance of the neoconservative model—and support for dominant classes, as in 2008, during the government's conflict with the agricultural sector, when soybean producers objected to a bill to increase taxes on exports and resisted with a long and multifaceted campaign that included withholding export goods. Nevertheless, Adamovsky (2014) observes that similar fluctuations are present in lower sectors as well, and contents that in Argentina, the middle classes in general have not joined forces with the upper classes but have staged or taken part in popular movements, like joint struggles of workers and middle-class youth in the 1970s. It is also worth mentioning the 1918 University Reform, which operated under the slogan 'Workers and students, united and onward'. Notwithstanding, the middle classes backed the coup that overthrew Perón in 1955, though in political terms, middle classes are assumed to be anti-Peronist and the lower classes, pro-Peronist. During the 1980s and 1990s, these sectors were in favour of the privatisation of a great portion of state companies, even when these neoconservative policies in the 1990s directly and negatively impacted them to the extent that part of these 'middle classes' tuned into 'lower-middle classes' or 'lower classes'. Adamovsky (2014) underlines the democratic positions of the middle class towards human rights, security, access to abortion and gender equality in contrast to the heavy-handed policies, chauvinism and patriarchy that are usually associated with lower-class culture.

Our research confirms Adamovsky's latter point[8]: among teachers, there exists a heartfelt rejection of state terrorism, a commitment to the defence of the memory of

[8] Research project 'The Secondary School in a reform context: cultural aspects in performances and practices of teachers and students within school formation spaces'. Secretaría de Ciencia y

the victims of the dictatorship and to human rights. These, however, coexist with discriminatory positions towards lower-class students, their families and their environment. Everything described up to this point clearly shows two opposite positions within the analysis of teachers' social belonging: the teachers are either located as salaried workers on the way towards proletarianisation or they are situated within the middle class, a categorisation that draws a veil over the myriad differences contained in this group.

As with many other intellectual workers, teachers can be identified as salaried workers according to their employment status. They are part of the social middle strata because of their variable ideological and psychological positions: individual aspirations, attitudes towards the lower sectors and way of life. As Gramsci pointed out, studying analytically the characteristics of the middle classes and working with them are essential to cultural battles for emancipation (Gramsci 1978; Buci Glucksman 1978). Nevertheless, throughout the twentieth century, political approaches to the construction of popular fronts—constituted by an ensemble of sectors including the proletariat, the urban and rural middle strata and parts of the bourgeoisie—have crashed against reciprocal prejudices among these different social strata.

8.4 Teachers as Intellectuals

Gramsci offers theoretical tools to analyse the complex condition of intellectual workers. First, he differentiates *traditional* intellectuals—notary publics, accountants, lawyers, judges and clergy—who carry out an ideological-political function. They are characterised by a specific use of language, which Gramsci (1971) calls 'eloquence' (Q12, §3; SPN, p. 10). The great intellectuals, such as philosophers, who create theoretical and artistic movements also fall into this category. Undoubtedly, teachers must also be included in this category of intellectuals, because they work with ideas and language. These intellectuals constitute a significant portion of the middle strata in rural and urban areas, included as much in civil society as in the state, and articulating both of them together. On the other hand, Gramsci identifies *new* intellectuals: the specialised industrial workers who hold highly specific scientific and technical knowledge and who complete their training in the factory in contact with the working class and under its influence. These new intellectuals do not create ideological bonds through language; they create technical-productive bonds instead by organising production.

Técnica. Universidad de Buenos Aires (2011–2014) [Secretariat of Science and Technology. University of Buenos Aires]. Research Project 'Social Subjects in the Education Professional Field: cultural aspects in social performances and in practices of high school teachers'. Secretaría de Ciencia y Técnica. Universidad de Buenos Aires (2007–2011) [Secretariat of Science and Technology. University of Buenos Aires].

In Argentina, the popular and grassroots educators who work in spaces such as companies recovered by their workers,[9] peasant movements[10] or in other social movements[11] may achieve their training in direct contact with the working class or other workers and under their influence. However, the educators who work in the spaces of the public education system receive this influence indirectly, through students and parents. Irrespective of the type of contact with the working class, teachers always develop an ideological and cultural project, not a technical-industrial one. In addition, according to their positioning, intellectuals can be organic to the dominant bloc or organic to the new historical bloc if they identify with the interests of workers and the pueblo and if they ideologically and psychologically consider themselves part of this sector. Whether intellectuals are salaried or not, they have such an important social role that attracting them on a collective basis, not individually, and bringing them into alliance with other workers are crucial to successful and significant social transformation (Gramsci 1978). Teachers, as well as other intellectuals, contribute to the formation of common sense, public opinion and national ways of thinking. In Argentina, out of a population of 44 million, 12 million are currently in education (at some level), and there are 1.2 million educators. In Argentina, therefore, every family has some relationship to education.

Although Gramsci (1971) believed that every human being is an intellectual, he focused his attention in particular on those who engage in intellectual work as part of a trade. For this reason, in strict or limited terms, he defined intellectuals as a ‘group of people “specialized” in the conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas’ (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 334). Within this sector, there exist, in turn, different levels in the exercise of intellectual functions. In this stratification of the intellectual field, Gramsci includes those who apply knowledge (e.g. operators), those who make knowledge public (journalists, teachers, actors, performers) and those who create new knowledge (authors, founders of theoretical or philosophical schools). The most extensive intellectual sector is the one comprising teachers. In Argentina, about four of every ten salaried intellectual workers are teachers (Donaire 2009).

The particular nature of this intellectual work is that its raw materials are ideas and knowledge, and its instruments are intellectual operations. In education, science is an object of work, more real than a board of wood. In education, however, not only do we work with science but also with knowledge more holistically. We work with every kind of knowledge—technical, artistic, artisanal, philosophical and ethical, to name but a few—and especially with the full suite of cultural fields. José

[9] Companies abandoned by their owners during the crisis at the end of 1990s, then taken over by workers and now operating as cooperatives. Many of them created ‘Bachilleratos Populares’ [Popular High Schools] for the children of workers and the neighbourhood.

[10] El MOCASE (Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero [Rural Movement of Santiago del Estero]—an Argentinean province) has a Secondary School and a Universidad Campesina [Rural University] opened to the whole of Latin America. In Brazil, the Movimiento de los Trabajadores Rurales Sin Tierra (MST) [Landless Workers’ Movement] and in Mexico, the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) [Zapatista Army of National Liberation], carry out broad educational and systematic activities.

[11] Some territorial movements have created popular high schools.

Martí's call that 'to be cultured is the only way to be free' suggests that in the field of education, training is not the only objective. We can thus affirm that teachers are both intellectual *and* cultural workers.

Pedagogical activity involves the re-elaboration of culture, so that the transmission of cultural heritage is carried out in a way that is more complex than straightforward transfer. This process has been conceptualised by terms such as 'didactic transposition' (Chevallard 1997), 'reformulation of pedagogic discourse' (Bernstein 1993) or the 'selection and curricular adaptation process' (Díaz Barriga Arceo 2006). Choices, selections and adaptations constitute the basis of teaching work. These are not exceptional elements, and they can be performed with a more or less critical sense, but when the teacher is not restricted to repetition or following a strict handbook, these are necessary and usual.

The complexity of teaching as intellectual work is shown in the following excerpt taken from an interview with a high school teacher of fourth year Civics Education (2009)[12]:

Interviewer: …is your syllabus rigid or are you free to choose the topics for the pupils?

Teacher: …I was a substitute, a substitute, then I became temporary until the completion of the selection processes and, well… it's the syllabus of the school.

Interviewer: So you have to stick to that syllabus.

Teacher: I do not stick to any syllabus. I mean, I follow a syllabus but the syllabus…you know? According to your theoretical perspective, you adapt that syllabus to your personal view….I've also got some difficult groups, where I can't get that connection from my students, nothing is attractive to them; actually, I wouldn't say 'nothing appeals to them,' they are ruled by different codes,…the effects of the 1990s policies were devastating, and now, I don't know, we can see it here; the kids are using some kind of gang slang, and it's very, very hard for teachers to connect with them, you know?

The teacher mentions there is a small neo-Nazi group in the school and explains:

Teacher: …the problem is that we have different kinds of xenophobic demonstrations.…and there is another kind of xenophobia, it is an internal xenophobia. There are groups talking about (she lowers her voice) 'negros de mierda' ['f***ing Blacks']].

Teacher: …I find it interesting from the human rights point of view; I want my students to know their rights and those guaranties represented by the State, …what to do when the police arrest them; actually, most of the kids coming to this school have great chances of getting arrested by the

[12] Project UBACYT F 010 [2007–2011] 'Social subjects from the Education Professional Field: cultural senses in the social representations and in the practices of the high education teachers'. IICE (Instituto de Investigaciones en Ciencias de la Educación) College of Philosophy and Letters, University of Buenos Aires.

> police. Some of them, just because of their appearance…and the other thing that concerns me is gender equality, violence towards women, because we are seeing many problems related to this.…so, well, last year we worked on song lyrics, what they say about women, and some interesting things came out.

Based on considerations of the group's problems, this teacher adapted the syllabus of her lessons and prepared contextualised teaching materials: songs, videos, etc. She did not place herself as a subjected subject—in Althusser's terms—but as a leading subject. What do this teacher's opinions and practices contain but deep and complex intellectual work about knowledge and culture?

Cases like this are not exceptional. On the contrary, they increase and multiply under democratic conditions and can be recognised by teachers in many Latin American countries. In education, at the different levels of formalisation and institutionalisation, there are individual educators, groups of teachers and even educational institutions that deploy emancipatory and transformative critical praxes. In so doing, educators and organisations risk their individual or collective intellectual autonomy. They play a leading role for other teachers who may not prepare their teaching material with the same objectives or the same depth and autonomy and for other institutions that have not advanced in the formulation of their ideology in a liberatory sense. Hence, to quote Gramsci (1971) again:

> every leap forward towards a new breadth and complexity of the intellectual stratum is tied to an analogous movement on the part of the mass of the 'simple', who raise themselves to higher levels of culture and at the same time, extend their circle of influence towards the stratum of specialised intellectuals, producing outstanding individuals and groups of greater or less importance. (Q11, §12; SPN, pp. 334-335)

These vanguards cannot act as repositories of absolute and definitive thought; they can only advance step by step, as other strata of educators advance step by step along with them.

8.5 Inclusive Education Policies, the Pueblo and the New Historical Bloc

Facing exclusion due to globalisation, the new governments of several Latin American countries have applied inclusive economic, social and educational measures. The Universal Allocation per Child in Argentina (mentioned earlier) is a mechanism by which a monthly subsidy for each school-aged child (ages 4–16) is given to families if the parents are unemployed and cannot receive a family allowance, so long as the children attend school regularly and comply with the childhood immunisation schedule. Other subsidies target teenage pregnancy and provide incentives for pregnant teens to attend high school; there are re-entry programmes for elementary and high school students who had previously left school; systems

within schools to help students who are falling behind to take exams on special dates, without interrupting their education; and several scholarship programmes for university students.

These types of inclusive measures are met, in many cases, with resistance by teachers. This is in part because the attendance of individuals and groups less qualified than the usual school population may imply extra work. It is also common for high school teachers to blame elementary school teachers for the poor training of new high school students and to refuse to take on the extra work required to compensate for differences in student skill and training. This leads to the predictable failure of this part of the student population; the same occurs in universities.

Tenti Fanfani (2007) notes that for many teachers, the goal is to provide equal opportunities and possibilities to children with unequal points of departure so that they are able to reach equal points of arrival. As such, these teachers do not want to 'lower the standard' of education, and this is the reason they oppose inclusive school policies. Among teachers who work with the popular sectors 'there is a tendency to express a negative and pessimistic opinion about students and their interest and ability to learn' (Tenti Fanfani 2007). Beyond those mentioned above, there are other negative reactions to students that derive from prejudices held by teachers based in physiology, hygiene, cuisine, culture and knowledge systems. To be clear, these 'reactions' are more correctly understood as discrimination. This reveals that some teachers seek to differentiate themselves ideologically and psychologically from the motley map of popular sectors. The fundamental aim of the modern public education system to 'enlighten the pueblo' and the goal of teachers who join the teaching profession as a means of social climbing conspire against the identification of teachers with the pueblo.

We must now ask: do teachers think and feel like part of the pueblo? When they define themselves as a part of the middle class, do teachers intend to differentiate themselves from the popular classes—the pueblo? Are teachers willing to join a new historical bloc?

In the present circumstances, it is necessary to study how new situations affect the ideology and psychology of different teaching groups, their current aspirations levels, their use of free time and their cultural life. A limited view of teachers' economic horizons might explain the excessive weekly working hours required and accepted, along with a certain desire for distinction in respect to the population with whom they work. Therefore, from the perspective of equality—the aim of a society for radical equality (Rancière 2006; Mouffe 1999)—it is important to know whether teachers consider themselves part of the pueblo or not.

As a category, pueblo is not easy to define. The diversity of new social actors that have emerged creates a shifting historical landscape in which the notion of pueblo cannot (and should not) be defined in a fixed way. However, it always includes the lower, subordinate classes and sectors that are targeted for discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, generation, class or educational attainment. Dussel puts the ideas of pueblo and social bloc on the same level when reflecting on the new realities in Latin America:

> as Gramsci used to say, the 'pueblo' constitutes a social bloc comprising oppressed individuals, and, I would add, excluded individuals. It is a social bloc which became a political actor, but it is a social bloc that may be scattered…I could relate it to the emancipation process, and a connection joining many movements occurs, even those traders who cannot trade due to oppression by monopolies, slaves by slavery, peasants, natives… This is what is happening in Latin America…The category of 'pueblo' is not the opposite of the category of class, because the working class may be one of the actors in that process. (Dussel 2010, my translation)

Laclau (2005) described the formation of the pueblo as a process by which equivalences are established and a plurality of unsatisfied democratic demands from different social subjects are symbolically unified. Through this process, an antagonist inner frontier between popular sectors and their common enemies is emerging. Laclau emphasises that the pueblo requires an increasing political mobilisation to maintain its coherence and unity.

In the last years, the attempt to replace the idea of the pueblo with others concepts such as the 'multitude' or 'crowd' arose (Negri and Hardt 2004), but the chant 'the people (pueblo) united will never be defeated' continues to spread to the remotest boundaries of our planet.[13] Considering that the pueblo is not limited to the working class, the social and political forces that intended to create change in the twentieth century always advocated for the formation of broad popular fronts. But in the short twentieth century, the concept of class prevailed over the idea of popular unity, and certain false economic and anti-cultural unionism fostered prejudices in the working class towards the middle and intellectual sectors. At the same time, individualistic ideas of social promotion, the insidious 'every one for themselves' mantra of neoliberal times and the consumerism encouraged by mass media, fanned the flames of fears of being poor in the middle and intellectual sectors, which was then combined with elements of class- and race-based discrimination. These subjective factors are now imperative and lead the challenge of constructing the pueblo as a more general concern and not just a problem for teachers.

As for the plurality of social subjects that lead change, it is worth mentioning that the 1959 Cuban revolution was not led by the working industrial class. In Bolivia, current political transformations are being led by indigenous peoples' movements. These facts, among others, demand an urgent reconstruction of social theory based solely on class conflict.

On this point, Laclau (2014) agrees: '[we] do not live anymore in days when the emancipating political bases were confined to class identities' (p. 12). On the same topic, Sánchez Vázquez (2011) adds:

> among the theories and concepts of Marx and classic Marxism that must be abandoned, by being refuted today by the real movement, there is the one related to the subject of history. Today the working class cannot be considered the main and unique subject of history, when

[13] The phrase, included in a song of the Chilean group Los Quillapayún, first appeared in protests in the 1970s in Argentina and Uruguay. It was chanted in Portugal during the Revolution of the Carnations. It was sung in French by Manu Chao. It was used during the revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 and by Syriza in Greece. It was shouted at Occupy Wall Street in 2012 and so on.

reality shows and demands a plural subject, whose composition may not be unalterable or determined in advance. (p. 58)

This situation raises the need for both a theoretical reconsideration and the undertaking of urgent practical tasks in the cultural and educational fields. These changes are required in order to deal with the ideological and cultural subjective aspects critical to the construction of a new historical bloc within the frameworks of each nation, capable of stopping the warlike and sacrificial plans of international financial capital. Today, the survival of the planet and humanity depends on this task.

On account of their traditions of struggle and their intellectual role, teachers will undoubtedly be in the forefront of a new historical bloc, but it this will not occur spontaneously. To get from the current situation to that point, we need a better understanding of the working conditions and subjectivities of teachers.

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Part III
Key Gramscian Concepts and Pedagogy

Chapter 9
Hegemony as Pedagogy: The Formation of a Collective Will and of Individual Personality According to Gramsci

Andrè Tosel

The formidable question of the relationship between the individual and the social is central to Gramsci's well-known understanding of the pedagogical nature of hegemony. Gramsci blended two theoretical approaches in his *Prison Notebooks*: one approach relates to macro-problems, defined by historical, social, economic and political themes; the other approach pertains to individual micro-problems. He tries to bind them by latching one onto the other and by linking them in a reciprocal translation. What he rejected is the opposition of these dimensions as belonging to separate spheres and to distinct realities. On the contrary, the displacement from the individual to the social is conceptualised through a twofold theoretical and political objective: to think and to operate at the same time for the construction of a collective will of the subaltern masses to become hegemonic as well as for the construction of a human personality that attunes the mass with the individual. The first dimension has been better studied than the second one. In both cases this construction involves the action of an educator who is a master and the action of a pupil or an apprentice: it involves the progressive dissolution of the distance that separates these two poles of the pedagogic relationship, the active appropriation by the latter of the resources of civilization, the capacity to create new dispositions and the creation of a socialisation according to a 'conformity' achieved through the struggle between conceptions of the world in reciprocal tension and in hegemonic struggle.

What is political hegemony or, rather, 'active hegemony' in its simplest, and earliest, formulation in the *Notebooks*? We read in Q1, §44 that:

> a class is dominant in two ways, namely it is 'leading' and 'dominant'. It leads the allied classes, it dominates the opposing classes. *Therefore, a class can (and must) 'lead' even before assuming power; when it is in power it becomes dominant, but it also continues to 'lead'…. There can and there must be a 'political hegemony' even before assuming government power,*

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_9

> *and in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony one must not count solely on the power and material force that is given by government.* (PN1, pp.136–137, my emphasis)

The organic intellectuals of this class, if it is progressive, create the conditions of public education and administration. The working class and the subaltern masses, from their positions in production, may become such a class, because the dominant capitalist class exhausts its function and suffers the breakdown of its 'ideological bloc'. The latter has to resort to coercion rather than to an attractive 'spontaneity'. The new class aspiring to become hegemonic is 'truly progressive' to the extent to which it 'pushes the whole of society ahead; not only satisfying its existential needs, but continuously enlarging its compass through the continual appropriation of new spheres of industrial-productive activity' (ibid; PN1, p. 138). Driving society forward in its spheres of industrial-productive activity involves social actors acquiring specific techniques and knowledge as well as modes of participation in the immanent political management of production, a questioning of its dominant and leading hierarchies and a maximum universalisation of the active participation of the individuals involved in this process.

A pedagogical relationship is the driving force of the leadership in these activities. Reflecting on the experience of the Factory Councils in Turin from 1919 to 1920, which he had supported and theorised about as chief editor of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, Gramsci endorsed that experience; he did not reject it. It has been said that the theme of the party, the modern prince, replaced the theme of the Councils, but it is incorrect. The former builds on the legacy of the latter and overcomes its limits by posing directly the question of the State. In the Councils workers gained consciousness of their economic and political position through the occupation and the self-management of the factories. They learned to behave like productive citizens and potential leaders of a new State. They learned to translate their confused spontaneity into a discipline they agreed to: they criticised through action the elements of common sense, which led them to gain awareness of themselves as subaltern and passive individuals bound, by the relations in the factory and in the state, to the execution of tasks under wage exploitation. They gained awareness of their reality as producers, inscribed in a contradictory way in this common sense, and they started to act and understand themselves as historical agents. The Councils taught them self-education, and they anticipated in their struggle for a city of workers, the formation of a hegemonic collective will, by transforming, for a significant moment, their consciousness and their work environment. Hegemony is a pedagogic relationship in that spontaneous movements, far from being dismissed, can and must undertake a conscious direction, 'be elevated to a higher plan by entering politics'. To those who accused, and still accuse, the Turinese movement of being 'spontaneous' and 'voluntarist', even 'Bergsonian', Gramsci replied that this charge actually shows the richness of the movement and the justness of its goals; that is, its effective pedagogy.

In Q3, §48, Gramsci makes explicit this pedagogy:

> This was not an 'abstract' leadership; it did not consist in the mechanical repetition of scientific or theoretical formulas; it did not confuse politics—real action—with theoretical

> disquisition. It devoted itself to real people in specific historical relations, with specific sentiments, ways of life, fragments of worldviews, etc., that were outcomes of the 'spontaneous' combinations of a given environment of material production with the 'fortuitous' gathering of disparate social elements within that same environment. The element of 'spontaneity' was not neglected, much less disdained: it was *educated*, it was given a direction, it was cleansed of everything extraneous that could contaminate it, in order to unify it by means of modern theory but in a living, historically effective manner. The leaders themselves spoke of the 'spontaneity' of the movement, and they were right to talk about it: this assertion was a stimulus, a tonic, an element of unification in depth; it was, above all, a denial that anything having to do with the movement be reckless, fake [or not historically necessary]. It gave the masses a 'theoretical' consciousness of themselves as creators of historical and institutional values, as founders of states. (PN2, pp. 50–51)

One can measure the spread of the pedagogical relation on the whole field of social activities and the shift that made Gramsci discover the ramifications of hegemony, which goes from the individual to the social, and vice versa, as in the famous quote from Q10II, §44. Hegemony begins in the factory; it translates or transmutes (catharsis) in ethical-political hegemony, investing and transforming the state that broadens into civil society. Finally, it modifies its hegemonic devices, among which is the school apparatus, and it results in a 'cultural moment in practical (collective) activity':

> An historical act can only be performed by 'collective man', and this presupposes the attainment of a 'cultural-social' unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world, both general and particular, operating in transitory bursts (in emotional ways) or permanently (where the intellectual base is so well rooted, assimilated and experienced that it becomes passion). Since this is the way things happen, great importance is assumed by the general question of language, that is, the question of collectively attaining a single cultural 'climate'. (SPN, p. 349)

A 'cultural climate' is similar to a language, in conjunction with language in its strict sense, which represents its structural vector and its necessary medium, with the various poignant forms of folklore, of common sense, of artistic practice, of religion and of philosophy, the latter understood as plurality of conceptions of the world in struggle with each other.

One of these conceptions becomes the hegemonic one: always in a dynamic balance, it has as its foundation the set of power relationships which make a 'historical bloc', around which a dominant and ruling social force, from a fundamental class, faces multiple contradictions linked to a series of modern dichotomies between managers and managed, rulers and ruled and intellectuals and simple-minded. Culture is such a manifold language, arising where an historical form of civilisation with its dominant class is affirmed and constituted. Culture becomes a glue between individuals and social strata, which have different degrees of contact in relation to the power of formation and assimilation of the hegemonic social force. From this follows the shift from language/culture to politics/pedagogy:

> It seems that one can say that 'language' is essentially a collective term which does not presuppose any single thing existing in time and space. Language also means culture and philosophy (if only at the level of common sense) and therefore the fact of 'language' is in

> reality a multiplicity of facts more or less organically coherent and co-ordinated. At the limit it could be said that every speaking being has a personal language of his [sic] own, that is his own particular way of thinking and feeling. Culture, at its various levels, unifies in a series of strata, to the extent that they come into contact with each other, a greater or lesser number of individuals who understand each other's mode of expression in differing degrees, etc. It is these historical-social distinctions and differences which are reflected in common language. (Q10II, §44; SPN, p. 349)

Language/culture can be learnt and is the subject of an explicit pedagogy in the specialised apparatuses of hegemony—the school, the press, the institutions of research and the training. The cultural moment is structured through the collective practices of formation of individuals in view of achieving conformity to norms, behaviours and representations of a 'collective man'. This is achieved by a mix of coercion and consent of individuals who submit to a process of schooling in industrial work and its techniques so that they identify themselves in the roles set by the hegemonic goals. They do so in a society where the structures of economic and social domination, and of political direction and scientific and philosophical training, are marked by divisions and inequalities. The sociohistorical order actively assimilates these individuals into a certain stage of civilisation in the process of becoming universal. The modern capitalist and bourgeois society, in a novel way compared to the previous ones, has put at the centre of its own activities productive work, the body of technological sciences and natural sciences. It has set in motion the masses by recognising political rights and the dignity of personhood. However, this assimilating force stumbles on the class limits of its hegemony: after the 1917 Communist revolution, according to Gramsci, the subaltern masses in the West were, in turn, pursuing and transforming the hegemonic struggle by questioning the dichotomies which structured power relationships. They conditioned the pedagogy of the, then hegemonic, social reproduction.

At this point Gramsci veered from the question of hegemony in its dimension of language/culture to 'the modern way of considering educational doctrine and practice, according to which the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher' (Q10II §44; SPN, pp. 349–350). This shift is undertaken as a double translation because, on the one hand, the pedagogical relation is applicable in some form to all the activities of society, adapting to the specificity of each of them; on the other hand, it varies with the different, and opposite, types of hegemony in which the modern society and the future ones concern themselves.

The hegemony of subaltern classes is comparable to the one of the actual ruling classes in that it implies a certain type of collective human. However, the collective human pertaining to the subaltern masses defines itself in an asymmetric way by a greater collective dimension and excluding any disassimilation; thus, by a greater universalisation and by challenging the great cleavages that divide humans while unifying them, divisions are maintained and reproduced by modern capitalist society:

> [T]he educational relationship should not be restricted to the field of the strictly 'scholastic' relationships by means of which the new generation comes into contact with the old and

> absorbs its experiences and its historically necessary values and 'matures' and develops a personality of its own which is historically and culturally superior. This form of relationship exists throughout society as a whole and for every individual relative to other individuals. It exists between intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between the rulers and the ruled, *élites* and their followers, leaders [*dirigenti*] and led, the vanguard and the body of the army. Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilisations. (Q10II, §44; SPN, p. 350)

This operation of displacement and of translation from the pedagogic to the hegemonic in all its aspects can move from the individual to the social, while the notion of hegemony appears as the opposite movement, from the social towards the individual, springing from the set of power relationship forming a hegemonic historical bloc. The pedagogical relationship allows for the reversal of this approach and to complete it by adding a movement *a parte subjecti*. First, from the social to the individual. The latter is considered not as someone reduced to a separated psychological reality, no longer someone elevated to a speculative principle. An individual can be conceived as the *ensemble* of social relations. 'Moreover, since man [sic] is…the *ensemble* of his conditions of life, one can provide a quantitative measurement of the difference between past and present, since one can measure the extent to which man dominates nature and chance' (Q10II, §48ii; SPN, pp. 359–360).

Thus, individuals can be considered as active possibilities in that they have a measure of freedom in relation to objective possibilities, and they especially can be considered as opposite starting points in that they might want to exploit these possibilities. The function of the school in the perspective of a hegemony of subalterns is to provide access to these possibilities. They take the shape of labour that builds a *societas hominum* by embedding it in a *societas rerum*, the society of things extended by scientific and technical knowledge.

And now the opposite movement from the individual to the social. We need to know and to be able to use these available objective conditions. 'And to want to use them. Man [sic], in this sense, is concrete will, that is effective application of the abstract will or vital impulse to the concrete means which realise such a will. Men create their own personality' (Q10II, §48ii; SPN, p. 360). Individuals educate themselves and are educated by the hegemonic apparatus of the school system, which realises its function while taking into account power relationship and while organising its levels according to a dual network. The bourgeois school keeps the division between primary, secondary, higher education and professional schools.

On the contrary, Gramsci conceived the school that aims to be the hegemonic apparatus of the subalterns as a unitary school and its structures, its specialised levels, in a different way. It provides subalterns a place that is linked to industrial work, to sciences and to techniques, but not separated from the formation provided by the active knowledge of historical, social, economic and political transformation. It integrates them into a conception of the world that is both coherent and responsive to the contradictions in action. Gramsci initiated the study of the mode of

subjectivation of people through the production of their personality within a new social 'conformity' that criticised liberal individualism while presupposing a responsible individuality. In this instance, it is the macro categories of hegemony that shift and undertake a translation in order to conceptualise the microprocess of the production of individualities in the passage from the individual to the social. In this way, Gramsci introduced the remarkable concept of the human personality defined as an 'historical bloc', traversed by the hegemonic struggles between conceptions of the world.

Gramsci continues:

> 'Men [sic] create their own personality, 1. by giving a specific and concrete ('rational') direction to their own vital impulse or will; 2. by identifying the means which will make this will concrete and specific and not arbitrary; 3. by contributing to modify the *ensemble* of the concrete conditions for realising this will to the extent of one's own limits and capacities and in the most fruitful form. Man is to be conceived as an historical bloc of purely individual and subjective elements and of mass and objective or material elements with which the individual is in active relationship. To transform the external world, the general system of relations, is to potentiate oneself and to develop oneself. (Q10 II, §48ii; SPN, p. 360)

Of course, these considerations relate to personality in general but would need a more specific determination in the individual. Surely, however, the pedagogic relationship consists of self-transformation through the production in oneself of the needs of the 'collective man' by the mediation of teachers working under the auspices of a political-ethical state and following a determined curriculum. One can think of personality as an historical bloc if its subjective elements are transformed and detached from the archaic content of folklore and from a common sense that reflects the dominant social and political norms. These elements undergo a *catharsis* under the weight of educational content reflecting the material situation of the individual in the production process and making it possible for the individual to become an actor and protagonist. We can call this ability to understand and transform the world while becoming oneself and vice versa as politics:

> 'That ethical 'improvement' is purely individual is an illusion and an error: the synthesis of the elements constituting individuality is 'individual', but it cannot be realised and developed without an activity directed outward, modifying external relations both with nature and, in varying degrees, with other men [sic], in the various social circles in which one lives, up to the greatest relationship of all, which embraces the whole human species. For this reason one can say that man is essentially 'political' since it is through the activity of transforming and consciously directing other men that man realises his 'humanity', his 'human nature'. (Q10 II, §48ii; SPN, p. 360)

The analogous identification between hegemony and the pedagogical relationship demonstrates how the originality of the Gramscian project lies in a unique affinity between, on the one hand, the macro-level formation of the collective hegemonic will as well as the conformity of the modern collective human and, on the other hand, the micro-level formation of personalities and of conformity freely chosen by the will in reference to this collective human. This second aspect is not the effect of the first, but it is conditioned by it. This dynamic conformity cannot be

realised without the effort of conforming individuals who in this way build a personality by *making themselves* (‘*fabbro di se stesso*’).

This becomes a ‘*prassi di sè*’, a praxis of oneself. This is the territory of ‘ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out’ to reprise the words of Marx in the preface to the *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, a text that Gramsci never ceased to comment on, displace and translate from one context to another. The goal and aim of schooling are analogous, relatively speaking and taking into account the different circumstances, to the educational activity of the firm, of the Party, modern prince, and of the State that is to be transformed. In any case, different actors—on one hand the pupil, the worker, the militant and the citizen and on the other hand the teacher, the businessman, the manager and the legislator—have to shape this personality while understanding and moving in the direction of the hegemony of the subaltern masses, the set of power relations and the social groups in which they exist. Their active subjectivity is required. In this case, every active human being is an intellectual, a philosopher and a politician, in that they can and must position themselves as agents of criticism, knowledge and action.

Thus, one must displace and translate the question ‘what is each individual man [sic]’ into another question not metaphysic and not essentialist but historicist and practical: ‘What can man become? That is, can man dominate his own destiny, can he ‘make himself’, can he create his own life? We maintain therefore that man is a process and, more exactly, the process of his actions’ (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 351). This question is substantial and intersubjective, and it is rooted in reflection on our experience. ‘We want to know, in relation to what we have thought and seen, what we are and what we can become; whether we really are, and if so to what extent, ‘makers of our own selves’, of our life and our destiny’ (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 351). This question reveals that, as individuals, we are both relationship and subjectivity and, therefore, contradictory beings, inscribed in contradictory groups and characterised by a contradictory consciousness that is a site of hegemonic struggle. We are not limited by our individuality. ‘It is on this point that it is necessary to reform the concept of man. I mean that one must conceive of man as a series of active relationships (a process)’ (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 352). Gramsci understands that a theory of personality and individuality within historical materialism is lacking. He frames it around the argument that individuality is a heterogeneous and unrealised composite entity.

It is important to analyse the content of personality as a historical bloc in parallel and in connection with the macro-level historical bloc, the sum of power relations. A particularly important component is religion in its historical dominant form but also in a wider sense (taken from Croce) of views of the world and their corresponding conforming behaviour. The categories that are applicable to a macro-level conception of the historical bloc and of the formation of the hegemony of a fundamental class are similarly translatable to the historical bloc of the personality. This translation takes the form of a new mass personality in hegemonic struggle with the personality currently dominant that of liberal individualism challenged by the Catholic worldview. In reality, there exists a plurality of conceptions unevenly coherent and

elaborated. They have as a referent the social group of which the individual is a member and they are articulated in relation to a hegemonic struggle of opposition under the direction of one among them, always in a dynamic balance. Let us return to the previous quote in its entirety:

> It is on this point that it is necessary to reform the concept of man [sic]. I mean that one must conceive of man as a series of active relationships (a process) in which individuality, though perhaps the most important, is not, however, the only element to be taken into account. The humanity which is reflected in each individuality is composed of various elements: 1) the individual; 2) other men; 3) the natural world. But the latter two elements are not as simple as they might appear. The individual does not enter into relations with other men by juxtaposition, but organically, in as much, that is, as he belongs to organic entities which range from the simplest to the most complex. (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 352)

From the above, there follows a number of essential consequences that are at the core of a theory of personality where, in addition, a theory of the unitary school and its pedagogy finds its place and function. This project of school reform is one of Gramsci's rare political proposals for immediate reform, linked to the pedagogical experience then in place in the Soviet Union and in contrast with the then current pedagogies in Italy, whether the elitist and old humanist pedagogy of idealism (Gentile) or the 'liberal' pedagogy (Montessori).

Human or personal individuality, the base of a new conformism, must be conceptualised within the framework of the introduction of the human element in the relationships defined by nature. These relationships are built by industrial work and its corresponding techniques and understood through the natural sciences, which, contrary to the prevailing assumption, Gramsci did not underestimate, though he rejected their positivistic overestimation as a unique model of judgement:

'Thus man [sic] does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself…but actively, by means of work and technique' (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 352). The collective human or 'mass human' is a worker and a producer. It is on this territory that it is necessary for a new hegemonic force to produce its organic intellectuals and for the new individuality to become subjectivised. In the same way as the hegemony of the new historical bloc begins in the factory, the individual personality in hegemonic struggle is rooted in the figure of the producer. This is why the educational principle of the unitary school is based on work, conceived as a specific intellectual activity, and a work of the self on the self, producing of one's own self. Notebook 22, titled *Americanism and Fordism* focuses on this theme, one that is adapted from *L'Ordine Nuovo*.

Personality, or individuality, defined as historical bloc, functions also as *catharsis*. This represents the translation of the figure of the producer into one of the citizen of an ethical-political state and of the active militant in a party able to educate popular spontaneity in a democratic way and through effective discipline. An appropriate balance of spontaneity and discipline is required to lead the historical bloc of allied classes with the least possible coercion. This spreads through the multiple networks that constitute civil society and through its hegemonic apparatuses. The producers-citizens-militants constitute themselves as active subjects of different practices, and each one in their own individuality is a relational nexus in this

interconnected fabric. Every individual transforms the historical bloc of their own personality by educating themselves as producers as well as by producing the dimensions of militant citizen and creator of the State. In various degrees, in individual and relational physical structures, people make hegemonic this activity of creator of the State, of intellectual and philosopher, able to conceptualise in a critical way a view of the world, which is a necessary step in the production of that world and of a superior civilisation:

> Man [sic] does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself part of the natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique…[T]hese relations are not mechanical. They are active and conscious. They correspond to the greater or lesser degree of understanding that each man has of them. So one could say that each one of us changes himself, modifies himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub. In this sense the real philosopher is, and cannot be other than, the politician, the active man who modifies the environment, understanding by environment the *ensemble* of relations which each of us enters to take part in. If one's individuality is the *ensemble* of these relations, to create one's personality means to acquire consciousness of them and to modify one's own personality means to modify the *ensemble* of these relations. (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 352)

Education and pedagogy constitute but one aspect of this change that occurs in the hegemonic apparatus. They imply a reciprocity in the distinction of functions and roles between the pupil and the teacher and a relationship between spontaneity and discipline.

These relationships that constitute the personality as hegemonic bloc are distinguished by the fact that some are necessary, others voluntary. This distinction does not amount to a dual nature, in an ontological sense, of these relationships but to a pragmatic difference, according to which these relationships are (1) a given outcome at a given time of a synchronic process or (2) a diachronic movement of an unachieved genesis, an act in which some individuals, who share a common historical condition, may want to join together in order to change it in a more rational direction, indicative of configurations of social life that have been suppressed but still potentially present. In this case, one has to consider the point of view of the freedom and responsibility of these individuals who take on as free necessity the task of actualising in themselves the collective and trans-individual will, based on a new conformism that exists necessarily in some 'molecular' individual transformation but never concretises in a priori substance, in a metaphysical reality:

> The necessary relations, in so far as they are known to be necessary, take on a different aspect and importance. In this sense, knowledge is power. But the problem is complex in another way as well. It is not enough to know the *ensemble* of relations as they exist at any given time as a given system. They must know genetically, in the movement of their formation. For each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations, but of the history of these relations He is a précis of all the past. It will be said that what each individual can change is very little, considering his strength. This is true up to a point. But when the individual can associate himself with all the other individuals who want the same changes, and if the changes wanted are rational, the individual can be multiplied an impressive number of times and can obtain a change which is far more radical than at first sight ever seemed possible. (Q10II, §54; SPN, p. 353).

An individual personality is an internal multiplicity of relationships and can develop, if one can impose an internal structure and direction of growth onto this dialectic conglomerate.

The nonhomogeneity of human personality as historical bloc and its openly composite character are inalterable and constitute the condition of any hegemonic change and of the predominance of some active elements in passive layers, within a new conformity. From the perspective of the hegemony of a new fundamental class, the active elements are the consciousness of the producer, of the specific intellectual, the responsible will of the politician as citizen and civil servant of the ethical-political State. The analogy between a pedagogic relationship and the formation of an individual personality clarifies these two interconnected aspects:

> The child's consciousness is not something 'individual' (still less individuated), it reflects the sector of civil society in which the child participates, and the social relations which are formed within his family, his neighbourhood, his village, etc. The individual consciousness of the overwhelming majority of children reflects social and cultural relations which are different from and antagonistic to those which are represented in the school curricula: thus the 'certain' of an advanced culture becomes 'true' in the framework of a fossilised and anachronistic culture. (Q12, §2; SPN, p. 35)

The use of the distinction between the 'certain' and the 'true', borrowed from Vico, demonstrates that the traditional school ossifies the true and that the unitary school advocated by Gramsci must consider this given 'true' as being a given 'certain, thus determined and present, which must be criticised and replaced by a truer content. This 'true' is related to the problems of the culture that manifest in the work, in the sciences and in the elements of the new conception of the world. This conception includes praxis in its historicity of the relations of power and in the perspective of a new historical bloc assuring the hegemony of the subaltern masses.

This transformation of the 'certain' into 'true', of the common sense of the pupil in 'good sense' and into a coherent worldview, conditions the formation of a collective will divided into in a multiplicity of singular wills, truly identified by the critical appropriation of the 'progressive' elements of the culture. Far from drowning people in a mythical, monstrous collective consciousness, the educational process individualises them through the realisation in each one of them of a new conformity. Finally, the pedagogical relation reveals two new determinations that characterise, mutatis mutandis, the process of forming the collective human, a collective will, and individual personalities. On one hand, it is about the need for a source of direction capable of conducting the process of formation of wills and, on the other hand, the contradictory nature of this process that is reflected on the internal structural contradictions of individual consciousness.

Let's start again from the pedagogical relationship:

> In the school, the nexus between instruction and education can only be realised by the living work of the teacher. For this he [sic] much be aware of the contrast between the type of culture and society which he represents and the type of culture and society represented by his pupils, and conscious of his obligation to accelerate and regulate the child's formation in conformity with the former and in conflict with the latter. (Q12, §2; SPN, pp. 35–36)

We have here the 'new educational principle' of a school linked to a life that presupposes the priority of the active development of students not through the exaltation of spontaneity but though education towards an accepted and rigorous discipline. Analogously, the political party and the State encounter the same problem in directly political activity. These differences would be worth analysing, but it is important to remain within the framework of the formation of the individual personality linked with the production of a superior conformity, which Gramsci defines as dynamic. Gramsci specifies that since the personality is an historical bloc of composite elements, this bloc is structured through 'a struggle of hegemonies' between these elements. The new personality must identify the leading element—that which is found to be hegemonic because it is already active—specifically anthropological, of the new historical bloc and conform to its direction.

This structuration begins from an inventory of individual consciousness as the nexus (*annodamento*) of social relations:

> The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'know thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. [It is necessary to compile such an inventory from the outset]. (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 324)

This inventory is not a catalogue of equivalent discoveries: it constitutes a list of elements that have internal relations and different reciprocal importance in their social contexts.

The macro-social theory of conformity fits well with a micro-social theory of individual personality, without which it could not be realised. It is no longer a theory of humans in general but a theory of individuals who develop and change their own personality starting from this 'bizarre compound'. The dynamic element is the one to develop, the one of 'intuitions of a philosophy of the future that will be the one of globally unified mankind'. At least, through 'a critique of the entire philosophy as it existed until now', this implies the creation of system of thought and a personality commensurate to actual possibilities. One needs to free them from the contradictions that contrast them with the 'sedimentation consolidated in the popular philosophy', manifest in the language of folklore, in the common sense of the subaltern and in the outdated dominant philosophies. It is the contradictory consciousness and the personalities of individual contradictory people, tied up in their relation to contemporary history, itself contradictory, that are both the subject and the object of pedagogical, philosophical and political analysis. They are also the place for the application of a cultural and political strategy that is aligned to an intellectual and moral reform of the common sense of the subaltern masses. Thus, Gramsci individualised a level that is neither obviously social nor obviously political—a dialectics between consciousness and individual personality. The category of individual personality as historical bloc and the site of political struggle for hegemony is the argument put forward by this pedagogy. One can complete the Gramscian equation as: history = philosophy = politics + pedagogy.

This long citation sums up this connection:

> The active man-in-the-mass [sic] has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed....Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political 'hegemonies' and of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of politics proper, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force (that is to say, political consciousness) is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one. (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 333)

The role of consciousness manifests itself in changing forms of perception of situations and of attribution of meaning that is not directly political but ethical. It manifests itself in a shift from the ethical to the political, and from the political to the philosophical (a coherent conception of the world), which concerns the individual as well as the collective and that works from the bottom and by lateral osmosis. This moment is indispensable to establish the necessary processes of social leadership.

Thus, the question of pedagogy raises a question seldom addressed within Marxism: is it possible, and how, to establish forms of congruence between the thinkability of the individual and the thinkability of the society? Dario Ragazzini (2002) is one of the few scholars to have recognised this—the idea of pedagogy at the interface among forms. Individuality begins from a perception of the self and of other individuals. It exists in tension with the different societies of which the individual is part of (including the education system and its various layers) as well as the ideologies of which the individual is a participant. This participation shapes the individual in a dynamic admixture within which folklore, common sense, good sense, operational rationality and practical responsibility collide. Individuality is a specific historical bloc in that it is linked to contradictory social relations. The pedagogical principle is based on the sum of these contradictory elements and of their critique. It presupposes the demonstration of a positive core in a critical relationship with the ideologies that produce passivity. This core provides individuality the ability to realise its own contradictory nature by putting it in relation with social dynamics. This theory of personality is relational in an analytical way and strategically oriented towards the understanding of the possibility of hegemonic interaction that parallels the social approach of power relations. It highlights the formation of personality as a form of transformation of the social.

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Chapter 10
A Pedagogy of the Subalterns: Gramsci and the Groups 'on the margins of history'

Pietro Maltese

Within a theory of education, Gramsci's concept of subalternity is undoubtedly one of major interest; nevertheless, Italian pedagogical studies attempting to deepen Gramsci's thought have neglected this concept. As with other disciplines, Italian pedagogy has occasionally produced incomplete and partial insights. Moreover, due to the lack of a critical edition of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* until 1975, Italian pedagogy missed the importance of the principle of *reciprocal translatability* tied to the philosophy of praxis. Italian pedagogy was mainly focused on the idea of education as hegemony (Angelo Broccoli); on *industrialism* as a key to interpret rigor in Gramsci's pedagogy (Mario Alighiero Manacorda); on the letters to his children in the USSR and those about the grandchildren in Sardinia; on the criticism of Gentile's Reform, and how he consequently prefigured a common school, especially in Notebook 12; or on his basic anti-activism (or anti-Rousseauism). All of his considerations of subalternity—that must also be seen in close affiliation with the concept of folklore which, in the past, had a remarkable influence on the pedagogical imagination of many theorists of education—are indeed full of educational implications. They prefigure mass intellectual progress and a path towards emancipation in which, and that is what I will try to demonstrate, the political is always linked to the pedagogical and vice versa. The aim of this chapter is, in this sense, to highlight by means of secondary, not strictly pedagogical, literature those elements of Gramsci's work which are related to the groups at the margins of history and that contribute to the elaboration of a plan and a discursive order that pull the subalterns away from a condition of being a minority. From the perspective of Guido Liguori, which is relevant for the purposes of this chapter, we will learn that it is possible to identify in the *Notebooks* and in the *Letters from Prison* at least three different notions of

The original version of this chapter was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_12

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_10

subalternity, each one carrying numerous suggestions and pathways for the blossoming of a pedagogical theory.

Thanks to the work of a group of South Asian scholars led at first by Guha, who in the 1980s was a pioneer of *Subaltern Studies*, 'subaltern' has become one of Gramsci's most famous and *used* categories. Guha and his associates adopted and developed some of the Sardianian's reflections on the working class, the Risorgimento and the subalterns in order to depict a counter-narrative of the decolonisation processes in the South Asian subcontinent and, in general, of the history of that area (Guha 2011; Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2012; Capuzzo 2014; Arnold 1984). However, considering the lack of complete translations, their use of Gramsci has been at times philologically incorrect. Even if this branch of research deepened the concept of subalternity, subaltern studies based their analysis on the 1971 English *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (SPN), which subsumed the notes on the subalterns in a section containing other prison writings on Italian history, risking, in this way, the weakening of the concept's global and tactical features (praxis-oriented), confining the role of subalternity and the 'methodical criteria' that define its key features, and the steps to get rid of it, to a historiographical matter—when it is, instead, a matter of political praxis and planning—which is exclusively Italian. On the other hand, Anglo-Saxon scholars followed the Platone-Togliatti anthological-thematic edition of the *Prison Notebooks* (1948–1951) that combines Gramsci's notes by topics and macro-themes, precluding (until the 1975 critical edition) any chance of having a global approach to the complex and fragmented prison writings, and where nearly all the notes originally included in the Special Notebook 25 on the subaltern groups were positioned in the anthology entitled *The Risorgimento*. The choice of publishing an original edition of the *Notebooks* structured in thematic anthologies was part of a political-pedagogical large-scale strategy intending to promote, in Italy, Gramsci's writings, and, albeit questionable, it was by no means strange. In fact, in all the reflections on the Risorgimento, as well as in several on the subalterns, Gramsci insisted on, among other things, Italian intellectuals' lack of any pedagogical function, and denounced the incapability of the élites to reach the masses and contribute to their emancipation.

Guha's group meant, as mentioned above, to map out a new and alternative historiography in opposition to the mainstream one. Influenced by the theory of praxis, Guha developed the analogies with the Risorgimento and post-Risorgimento processes, coming to the conclusion that in India, the postcolonial élites had created dominance without hegemony (Guha 1998), contributing to the 'historic failure of the nation to come to its own' (Guha 1982, p. 43). In this analysis, Gramsci was used to claim the existence of an autonomous political space for the subalterns, ignored, underestimated or distorted from the official historiography which had instead interpreted Indian nationalism 'as a sort of spiritual biography of the Indian élite' (Guha 1982, p. 38) and, in this way being, a mirror image of colonialist and neocolonialist historiography. To the contrary, Guha aimed to value grassroots

peasant movements which were too hastily and surreptitiously identified, by Marxists as well, as prepolitical (Filippini 2011; Capuzzo 2009).[1]

If the reference to Gramsci accomplished the creation of an alternative historiography in southern Asia, the further global diffusion of the category of subaltern led, nevertheless, to even more simplistic (Liguori 2011) uses and translations or appropriations of the term, which eventually drove subalternity to become a postmodern signifier (Mellino 2013), good for every condition of subjugation. Hence, the rescuing of Gramsci’s *lectio* by some cultural currents (Del Roio 2007) should take into account its orientation towards a richer and broader interpretation of the diverse conditions of dominance, without overlooking a possible economic enslavement. So, the notion of subalternity can surely include multiple phenomenal forms of social subordination and, at the same time, maintain a materialist analysis which is not economist or determinist. It will suffice to quote a famous passage from the *Notebooks*: ‘Intellectual and moral reform has to be linked with a programme of economic reform—indeed the programme of economic reform is precisely the concrete form in which every intellectual and moral reform presents itself’ (Q13, §2; SPN, p. 133). Even if this use of Gramsci helps to *broaden* the conception of subalternity, it does not represent a breach with historical materialism, but is in fact an effort to reach a deeper understanding and ‘comprehension of how the marginalization of the […] subalterns in the society is not only reflected but also determined by their exclusion from historiography and culture’ (Buttigieg 1999, p. 29). This certainly means that Gramsci stood on the edge of anti-economism but never neglected the importance of the relations of production; for these reasons, it is my opinion that the concept of subalternity can enter (or re-enter) the vocabulary spoken by a contemporary militant pedagogy with a profound consciousness of rights, minorities, and marginalization (thought of from multiple points of view, e.g. economic, social and cultural).

While developing a method to rebuild the history of the subalterns, Gramsci supported a political process of education-oriented liberation (but not only) and advocated for conscious leadership towards intellectual progress of the masses, pointing out that the subaltern is not able to spontaneously free itself from its minority condition. Gramsci’s subalternity can thus be consider a concept which, starting from a particular historical conjuncture, provides a more comprehensive form of analysis suitable for an understanding of the present and for the development of a programmatic vision of the future (Ragazzini 2002).

That said, scholars claim that it is possible to find different uses of the term subaltern in the *Notebooks*.[2] Liguori, for example, correctly, identifies three of them: the industrial proletariat, the subalterns groups depicted in Q25 (and others) and the

[1] In addition cfr. Pazé (2014), according to whom ‘[*Guha’s revolting subalterns*] look more like the factory workers than the farmers studied by Gramsci’ (pp. 86–87, my translation) and Mellino (2013: 125), who considers some of the ‘theoretical premises’ of Guha such as *the autonomous political space* of the subalterns ‘in open contradiction with Gramsci’s thought’ and with the class *grand récit* that the Sardinian would be a part of (p. 125, my translation).

[2] Chatterjee (2008), for example, talks about ‘at least’ two meanings: on the one hand, the factory proletariat, and on the other, the ‘subaltern classes in the pre-capitalist social groups’ (pp. 201–202, my translation).

subaltern as a singular figure. Based on these considerations, I will now try to shed some light on the main features of the category of subalternity in Gramsci.

In the *Notebooks,* there is a recurring definition of the industrial proletariat as a subaltern group. This does not imply that the term—as it appears in postcolonial literature—is a 'euphemism', as a result of an early auto-censorship, used to name the working class, and later filled with new meanings (Apitzsch 2012; Green 2009b, 2011, 2013). Even when referring to the *factory workers*, subalternity is connected to the system of hegemony and its cultural factors through which the labour-capital conflict dynamics can be explained using noneconomistic criteria.

In Notebook 25, Gramsci observes how the subaltern classes 'by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a "State"' (Q25, §5; SPN, p. 52), in its integral meaning of 'political society + civil society' (Q6, §88; PN3, p. 75). The fact that Gramsci the prisoner mentions the possibility of becoming state suggests that he had in mind, given the historical tendencies, the industrial proletariat as *the* subject with the best odds of changing the balance of the relations of power (Liguori 2011). Liguori cleverly analyses a 1932 note where the identity between the proletariat and the subaltern class is even more visible. In the rationalized conditions of production, Gramsci says that the workers in the factory should think of themselves as a 'collective worker'[3] (Q9 §67; SPN, p. 202) objectively subaltern because their (the collective worker's) work is subsumed under vicious abstract labour, i.e. when 'the requirements of technical development' meet 'the interests of the ruling class'. But he adds: 'this junction' is 'transitory' and 'can be dissolved; technical requirements can be conceived … separately from the interests of the ruling class, but in relation to the interests of the class which is as yet still subaltern' (Q9, §67; SPN, p. 202).

Nevertheless, a 'new synthesis' is not possible on some purely objective basis because it has to be born from the class consciousness of the historical period's subordinate class. This consciousness seems to be crucial since it is not propaedeutic to put an end to the subalternity but, rather, it itself is the essence of the emancipation process (Q9, §67; SPN, p. 202). A process of education and learning—which comes from the desire to 'educate themselves' (Q10II, §41xii; FS, p. 396)—happens to be the main way for creating new ways of life.

Eventually, in Notebook 27, the people are defined as 'the sum total of the instrumental and subaltern classes' (Q27, §1; SCW, p. 189). In Gramsci's vocabulary, the instrumental classes are one with the factory workers and that 'sum total' can be explained: either as pure, highlighting the difference between subalterns and instrumental classes, such that the first were excluded from productive activities, or, 'many-sided' considering the productive classes as a subgroup, a specific group, of the wider range of subalternity (Baratta 2007, p. 89). Based on the above, I prefer the second interpretation in which the concept of subalternity subsumes the category of the factory-based working class without, however, being exhausted by it. Below, we will see how this has a relevant impact on pedagogy.

[3] On the origins and, also, differences between Gramsci's *collective worker* and the Marxian *Gesamtarbeiter* cfr. Catone (2011).

In Notebook 25 we find a *broad* use of the term subalternity. The *Notebook*'s title is *On the Margins of History. History of Subaltern Groups*, where the margins of history have a double meaning: the subalterns are not only *objectively* marginal, because they are economically weaker than other social classes, but they also stand 'on the margins of historians' attention'. This second definition refers to the introduction of the history of subalternity 'in the History of culture…and intellectuals' (Monasta, 1985, p. 57). This should be understood as the beginning of Notebook 25, dedicated to the (rural) movement of Lazzaretti[4]—a combination of millenarianism and egalitarianism inspired by socialism and republicanism with magic and heretic religiosity—and to its analysis by Italian intellectuals. In regard to the Lazzaretti phenomenon, Gramsci refers to sources such as an article by Bulferetti which draws on Verga's Lombrosian approach to Lazzaretti calling it a 'case of sensorial madness' (Mattone 1981) and Barzellotti, who wrote a caricatured biography of Lazzaretti in which he referred to him as the Prophet of Monte Amiata, stressing 'individual' and folkloristic elements. In Gramsci's view, these sources, in which 'the protagonist was singled out' and written up as a 'pathological biography' hiding the causes of the malaise, failed in 'studying the origins of a collective event' that, in the second half of the Nineteenth Century in Italy, raised, unsuccessfully, mass dissent such as the Lazzarettian movement. Barzellotti, for instance, passing over the connection between lazzarettismo and mass discontent, caused also by the unification of Italy (taxes) and the inclusion of the Amiata territory into the 'modern capitalism economic network' (Hobsbawm 1959), insisted on the religious motives of that movement and its distinctiveness. Gramsci argued that Barzellotti's work could be seen as an expression of literary patriotism (Q25, §1; FS, p. 51). If Barzellotti had more effectively linked lazzarettismo and social issues, it would have oriented his attention to the Risorgimento and post-Risorgimento problems and dynamics; he would have also implicitly come to a critique of what Green (2009a) called the 'metanarrative' (pp. 67–68) that linked brigandage, rural *subversivism* and palingenetic utopia, as lazzarettismo was, reading them through the lens of deviant individual's biology (Q7, §30; PN3, p. 181), or nature. In short, Gramsci here stigmatizes the hermeneutic approach born of traditional pedagogy models. In regard to this, see a note in Notebook 21 where, in opposition to Manzoni (Green 2009b),[5] Gramsci criticizes the use of humble to signify the popular masses: 'For the Italian intellectual the

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[4] Davide Lazzaretti (1834–1878) was a visionary Italian preacher. His origins were very poor; he was born into a peasant family. After having some mystical visions, he started a religious movement called 'giurisdavidismo' which became quite popular mostly among the rural population of Tuscan Apennine, especially near Monte Amiata. The movement had socialistic, egalitarian and utopian political traits. After he was excommunicated and declared heretical by the Roman Holy Office, on August 18, 1878, Lazzaretti lead a peaceful march from Monte Labbro which ended up dreadfully. The march was stopped by the Savoy police whose orders were, without any apparent good reason, to open fire. Among the four people killed in the shooting was Lazzaretti himself; another 50 people were injured. Cesare Lombroso later examined Lazzaretti's body because he was looking to find the signs of conspicuous criminal insanity. Gramsci focuses his attention on the Lazzaretti case in the first note of Notebook 25.

[5] In addition see Q23, §51: 'in *The Betrothed* there is not one common person who is not teased…. They are depicted as wretched and narrow people without an inner life' (SCW, p. 289). On the subject see Zene (2010).

expression 'the humble' indicates a relationship of paternal and divine protection, the 'self-sufficient' sense of his undiscussed superiority. It is like the relationship between two races, one considered superior and the other inferior, like the relationship between adult and child in the old schools (Q21, §3; SCW, p. 293).

In a note in Notebook 11, we find an argument about what Labriola (told by Croce) said of 'the moral education of a Papuan' (an extremely archaic metaphor): he would have enslaved him for generations before adopting, for his descendants, the methods of modern pedagogy. Gramsci understood this to be pseudo-historicism, akin to Gentile's actualism, and an example of the tendency among Italian intellectuals to misunderstand the masses and not even try to educate them (Q11, §1; FS, pp. 157–158). The problem of the alleged Labriola metaphor was not really, in Gramsci's view, the need to delay the moment when the Papuan could have finally been educated by the tools of modern pedagogy—in an Activist perspective and in relation to notions such as autonomy, self-education, active and creative education, etc.—but the lack of possible procedures to let the subaltern out from under their condition of minority, so, thereby, they would always be like children in need of a guide. This assumption about the subaltern probably was the result of an intellectualistic, anti-democratic and, we could say, vaguely aristocratic view, whose custom was to consider the masses as eternal children under the tight control of an enlightened élite.

What would be, then, the right way to approach the humble and their common sense? Both the methodologies of historical reconstruction and praxis are involved here, for they are the basis for each other. The answer could lie in the first note of Notebook 27, which ends with some considerations of the different attitude teachers should have towards folkloristic lifestyle and behaviour in the schools. Gramsci condemns the point of view which treats folklore as a 'picturesque element', for it is a 'conception of the world and life' even if not systematic and the result of 'determinate (in time and space) strata of society' shaped by the '"official" conceptions of the world' (Q27, §1; SCW, p. 189).[6] After enumerating other opinions of the period on how to *attack* the matter of folklore inside the schools and 'in the institutions where future teachers are trained', Gramsci concludes that 'for the teacher…knowing 'folklore' means to know what other conceptions of the world and life are actually active in the intellectual and moral formation of young people, in order to uproot them and replace them with conceptions which are deemed to be superior'. For Gramsci, this would entail changing 'the spirit of folklore studies'. Folklore would have to no longer be seen as 'an eccentricity', but rather as something 'to be taken seriously'. Only then would the teaching of folklore 'be more efficient and really bring about the birth of a new culture' (Q27, §1, SCW, p. 191). In other words, folklore and common sense must not be ignored or treated condescendingly, nor seen as *exotic* 'icons' symbolizing the people, given that 'the condition of the subaltern goes or can go through an education that falsely idealizes popular values' (Pagano 2013, pp. 104–105).[7] This idea should not to be confined to the educational system in Italy at the beginning of 1900s, because several topics from the *Prison*

[6] In addition cfr. Pinto Minerva (1980, p. 75).

[7] In addition cfr. Boninelli (2007).

Notebooks, which prima facie concerned just that period (Hall and Mellino 2007, pp. 35–43), prove themselves useful for the present and the future.

In Gramsci's Prophet of Mount Amiata note, there is another area of pedagogical interest in which he claims the subalterns compensate for their lack of a conscious leadership by following people like Lazzaretti, people who *spontaneously* stand out from the mass (Q25, §1; FS, p. 52). Here we find a critique of spontaneous political action which, in the *Notebooks* (but in other pre-prison writings too), goes hand in hand with the critique of a 'spontaneity' oriented education. Suffice it to say that most of Gramsci's criticism, traceable in the letters concerning the education of his children Delio and Giuliano, points at the Rousseauian and activist pedagogical models and their regressions (so it was in his view) which can be found in Gentile's and Lombardo Radice's Italian actual neo-idealism. It would be wrong to think the latter as descending from the former, considering that the hegemonic relationship—the supreme political relationship—is mainly a pedagogical one. The Lazzaretti case shows how the political problem of incorrect leadership is only the other side of a pedagogical problem concerning the education of 'organic' intellectuals—education, not spontaneous germination. Gramsci does not believe the 'subalterns will be able to get out…from the state of subalternity on their own' (Liguori 2011, p. 36). This distrust requires as its direct equivalent a political-pedagogical effort which is not to be interpreted as an anti-spontaneity belief or a severe dirigisme. In order to clarify the point, Liguori refers to the note titled 'Spontaneity and Conscious Leadership' where we read 'spontaneity is…characteristic of the 'history of the subaltern classes' and, nonetheless, the possibility of a 'pure spontaneity' is denied, for that would imply 'pure mechanicity' and consequently lack of will, of the subjective and subjectivity (Q3, §48; PN2, pp. 48–49). After clarifying the essence of spontaneity, Gramsci states that not every single element of spontaneity has to be disdained per se. Spontaneity has to be educated, directed and purified (and, therefore, valued), as it was, he says, during the years of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, when the Factory Council context allowed for the implementation of a spontaneous 'mutual education' (Gramsci 1954, p. 37; SPW-1, p. 100)[8] among adults. Neither would it be helpful to stand, on principle, in the way of the '"spontaneous" sentiments of the masses', where spontaneous means 'not due to…systematic educational activity' (Q3, §48; PN2, p. 51). There should not be any organic opposition here, because that would be akin to the mistake made by the post-Unitarian bourgeoisie with the consequence being a deeper gap between the intellectual and the people and the risk of neglecting the task of educating the masses. This task requires, instead, to 'study and work out the elements of popular psychology, historically…, actively (that is, in order to transform them, by means of education…)' (Q3, §48; PN2, p. 49) and to reinforce moments of 'active and conscious co-participation… which one could call living philology' (Q11, §25; SPN, p. 429). As part of this metaphor, the leader must put into action a 'hermeneutical' practice whose 'essential content' (Burgio 2014, p. 52) is to embrace with empathy the subaltern class. The purpose of this practice is certainly not a mere reading exercise: for the new intellectual-leader, educator and 'permanent

[8] On the subject cfr. Mantegazza (1998, pp. 141–142).

persuader' (Q12, §3; SPN, p. 10), to understand the subalterns' existence, means to contribute to the development of their own will, with all the risks occurring in any pedagogical relationship, such as being forced to face the antinomic dialectic of authority and freedom (Cambi 2000). There might be a 'process of self-pedagogy' at stake, characterized by a 'lack of awareness and critical thinking' and also by a leadership that must not slip into a 'constraining relationship' (Burgio 2014: 53). In other words, it is important not to 'indulge passively in the 'spontaneous' sequence of events, but to interfere [*in them*] in order to realize previously determined projects', fuelled by processes immanent in the historical trajectory. The leadership in the hegemonic-pedagogical relationship carries the responsibility to accelerate the historical trajectory, so as to anticipate 'scenarios' that otherwise, spontaneously, could take a very long time to happen (Burgio 2014, pp. 81–82).

If for the traditional intellectual it is possible to know without 'understanding' and 'without feeling the elementary passions of the people', for Gramsci a fruitful relationship should be, on the contrary, marked by an 'organic cohesion' (Q11, §67; SPN, p. 418) which is difficult, though, because 'the history of the subaltern social groups' is 'fragmented and episodic' (Q25, §2; SPN, pp. 54–55). This assertion has a double significance, similar to the one we find in the title of Notebook 25: *On the Margins of History. History of Subaltern Groups.* Considering that the subalterns rarely leave direct testimonies, and the reconstruction of their participation in history is often made by intellectuals who tend to give just a partial interpretation of it, accounts of their history are scattered and not organic. Having no internal organization nor their own organic intellectuals to make sense of a collection of events, at first sight heterogeneous, the subalterns' history is inevitably episodic and fragmented. In this second meaning, the prison reflections can be related to Gramsci's manuscript of 1926 on the Southern Question. In this context, it is important to also consider Gramsci's opinion that the subalterns 'are always subject to the activity of ruling groups even when they rebel and rise' (Q25, §2; SPN, p. 55). Going deeper into this argument, we could say that these statements help to explain phenomena like racism or contribute to the clarification of some typical issues in intercultural relationships (Apitzsch 2002). As Hall wrote, 'Gramsci helps us to comprehend one of the most common characteristics… of 'racism': the subjugation of its victims to those…ideologies…that ensnare and define them' (Hall 1997, p. 226; Hall 2006). At the same time, Gramsci helps us read the folkloristic lifestyle of the subalterns that can possibly create alternative cultural systems or systems with a sublimating purpose foundational to a counter-response to 'epistemic violence' (Spivak 2004) of which the subalterns are victims. And because the subalterns allegedly introject the rulers representations of them (Pala 2011), 'every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should…be of incalculable value for the integral historian', who is the opposite of the traditional intellectual. Unlike the latter, the integral historian should take a multidisciplinary approach to the subject of the subaltern which, given the fragmented documents and testimonies, can only be dealt with 'monographically' (Q25, §2; SPN p. 55).

This reasoning leads us to the fifth note of Notebook 25 titled, *Methodological Criteria*. On this matter, Green's thesis is that Gramsci's historiographical interest,

which is not born from a purely intellectual urge but also from a political-pedagogical one, is based on a framework where 'historical analysis' 'shapes theory' and theory does the same for 'practice'. There is, then, for Gramsci, a unity made of 'historical analysis, theory and praxis' (Green 2009b, p. 93). Gramsci theorizes six phases of subalternity, which are very important, and not only for the integral historian. They also represent a path towards autonomy and progressive awareness,[9] not just a line drawn 'from subalternity to citizenship' (Capuzzo 2009, pp. 50–51) as that would be a misleading interpretation flawed by a teleological historicist trust. As Gramsci says, what has to be studied is:

> 1. the objective formation of the subaltern social groups, by the developments and transformations occurring in the sphere of economic production; their quantitative diffusion and their origins in pre-existing social groups, whose mentality…they conserve over time; 2. their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, their attempts to influence the programmes of these formations in order to press claims of their own…; 3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups, intended to conserve the assent of the subaltern groups and to maintain control over them; 4. the formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce, in order to press claims of a limited and partial character; 5. those new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups, but within the old framework; 6) those formations which assert the integral autonomy. (Q25, §2; SPN, p. 52)

Thus, it is more than likely that this list does not purely concern the building of 'principles of historical research' (Q25, §2; SPN, p. 53), but rather portrays stages of a process which can be, if necessary, refined and modified (Q25, §2; SPN, pp. 52–53); a process that carries pedagogical implications and is by no means distinguished by culturalist traits alone.

Liguori describes a third meaning of subalternity, which is the conjugation in the singular form of the word subaltern and the lexical change 'from the adjective to the noun' (Liguori 2011, p. 39). He refers to a note where Gramsci talks about the 'subaltern' becoming 'directive and responsible', no longer a controlled object, but an active and conscious subject, that is, 'an historical person, a protagonist' (Q11, §12; SPN, pp. 336–337). This could be the final goal of a personal journey of emancipation that has several things in common with the integral autonomy described in the note on methodological criteria. To quote Ragazzini, becoming a 'historical person', seems to be the same idea as to *create one's own personality*. To become, like Gramsci wrote in a letter to his wife Julca about his son Delio's education, a 'modern type of Leonardo da Vinci who has become a mass-man or collective man while nevertheless maintaining his strong personality and originality as an individual' (*Prison Letters*, August 1, 1932; LFP2, p. 195). Would it be possible, then, to trace in the *Notebooks* a theory of personality or, even more, a personalism (Gerratana 1997) through an investigation of the concept of subalternity? It is maybe no coincidence that, as Versiero (2011) has noted, Leonardo appears in a note previously mentioned above (Q3, § 48; PN2, p. 52). While disapproving of the a priori

[9] Cfr. Buttigieg (1999, p. 31), where the author recalls how Guha mistakenly assumes the six stages as a 'project planned' by Gramsci in his *Note sulla storia d'Italia*. The mistake, recently repeated (cfr. Louai 2012), is probably due, as we said, to the anthology *used* by Guha which included Q25, §5 in a section regarding the history of Italy.

contempt of spontaneous movements showed by the intellectuals, Gramsci also thinks of a reality 'teeming with the most bizarre coincidences' (as folklore is), which the theoretician must 'translate…into theoretical language' and adds: 'Leonardo knew how to discover number in all the manifestations of cosmic life, even when the eyes of the ignorant saw only chance and disorder' (Q3, §48; PN2, p. 52). Using a process of self-education, everyone should have the chance to work on themselves, in order to develop a personality. After all:

> when one's conception of the world is not critical and coherent but disjointed and episodic…[t]he personality is strangely composite….To criticise one's own conception of the world means…to make it a coherent unity….The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 324)

Escaping subalternity and creating one's own personality would involve a *maieutic* effort *à la* Leonardo, which maybe the Sardinian already had in mind before his incarceration, seeing that in 1918 he wrote: 'one 'is' only when…one is 'conscious' of one's own being' (Gramsci 1958, p. 328), id est of one's own 'historical identity' (Q3, §46; PN2, p. 45). And it is definitely 'hard to think of a more powerful statement regarding the constitutive function of self-consciousness' (Burgio 2014, p. 15).

Liguori points out another illuminating excerpt on the conjugation in the singular form of the subaltern. In a letter to Julca, Antonio questions the reasons why Delio decided to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; a book filled, in his opinion, with 'emotions' and 'religiosity', whose understanding by a young boy should be guided by someone interpreting those emotions and religiosity 'historically'. Since Gramsci believed this to be such a difficult task to accomplish, he did not trust Julca to be the right guide because she put herself:

> in a subaltern rather than a dominant position. That is,…someone incapable of historically criticizing ideologies by dominating them, explaining and justifying them…; of someone who, brought into contact with a specific world of emotions, feels attracted or repulsed by it, remaining always within the sphere of emotion and immediate passion. (*Prison Letters*, August 8, 1933; LFP2, p. 318)

There is in this letter, says Liguori, an 'anthropological model'. The point being, since the letter is addressed to Julca, we are not dealing with a situation of effective dominance; in fact, the subaltern dimension faces the leadership dimension and not that of the rulers. It seems like what matters is to own those 'subjective requirements to confront the ideologies… the conceptions of the world, the cultures, with consciousness, a historicist approach and contextualization and comprehension skills'. Subalternity has here a 'cultural… accent' (Liguori 2011, pp. 39–40) (Spivakian if you will), and the question pertains to both a project of whole personality development and to the issue of the educator's education. This third meaning is completely and fully part of the contemporary debate (pedagogical, philosophical, bioethical) on the disposition of the person as the point around which the discussions about the human, his or her education, his or her protection,[10] must revolve. It gives us, finally,

[10] For a critique cfr. Esposito (2007).

direction in which to configure the, uncertain, outcomes of a pedagogy of the subalterns and the subaltern: the development of a historical personality.

Within Gramsci's thought and pedagogy of the philosophy of praxis, the concept of subalternity can ultimately be considered the first step in the development of a theory of personality. Dario Ragazzini himself stressed, not so long ago, the importance of this topic as one of the most fruitful (and less debated) in all the studies and research on Gramsci.

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Chapter 11
Catharsis: Antonio Gramsci, Pedagogy, and the Political Independence of the Working Class

John D. Holst and Stephen D. Brookfield

In discussing how to approach a writer's body of work, Antonio Gramsci (1971) famously argued for the importance of finding an author's leitmotif or guiding thread. Gramsci made this remark specifically in reference to his own approach to Marx, and not surprisingly many scholars have found it appropriate to take up Gramsci's methodological suggestions in approaching Gramsci's own body of work. For almost every one of Gramsci's major concepts such as hegemony (Cammett 1967; Borg et al. 2002; Thomas 2009b), civil society (Bobbio 1979), intellectuals (Santucci 2010; Vacca 1982), historic bloc (Portelli 2011), the state (Showstack Sassoon 1987), culture (Crehan 2002; Giacomini 2001), and some lesser known concepts such as popular creative spirit (Holub 1992; Ives 2004), education (Greaves 2009), and dialectical philosophy (Boggs 1984), one can find a Gramscian scholar who identifies it as the leitmotif or core concept running through Gramsci's writings and, in particular, his *Prison Notebooks*.

We are following Gramscian scholars in identifying a leitmotif, but we are doing so with a few caveats. First, we do not draw on one of Gramsci's key concepts as a leitmotif, but rather on his major political project which, while a goal of all Marxist revolutionaries, also has many affinities with ideas at the heart of social justice-oriented education. The goal that Gramsci shared with all communists and which we believe is the leitmotif of his theory and practice is the political independence of the working class. All Marxist revolutionaries, beginning with Marx and Engels themselves, understand and work toward the goal of working-class political independence as part and parcel of the struggle for a revolutionary transformation of capitalism.

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_11

As Nimtz (1999, 2000) makes clear, coming to an understanding of the necessity of working-class political independence was a major milestone in the political evolution of Marx and Engels. The concept was originally and succinctly captured in the 1864 Provisional Rules for the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), later to be known as the First International. In the Rules, Marx (1964) wrote: 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves' (p. 288). Self-emancipation requires both independent organization and consciousness. Since this concept was the opening line of the Rules of the First International, it spread around the world and became a hallmark of revolutionary working-class politics.

The idea and goal of working-class political independence share much in common with basic principles held by many educators and particularly educators explicitly oriented toward social justice. Most educators hope that students will leave their classes as critical, independent thinkers. Educators strive to provide their students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be able to think for themselves and to be able to assess situations and draw their own conclusions, so that they will not fall victim to the imposition of others' ideas which may not be their own. As educators, we strive to help students see things and people in their broader contexts, in their interrelatedness, and to understand their growth and change overtime. Social justice-oriented educators hope that their students will become change agents in their own lives and in the lives of those with whom they live and work. Social justice educators strive to create educational spaces in which students increasingly set the agenda or curriculum for our educational work. We want our teaching and our students' learning to be based in their needs and interests to the greatest extent possible. All of these goals and aspirations align with Gramsci's idea of working-class political independence.

These goals are embedded in the much-quoted adult educational notion of 'empowerment'. Although this concept is contested and often appropriated by the Right (Inglis 1997), we believe it retains great traction as an organizing idea for educators on the left (Foley 2001). Empowerment is, after all, the claiming of power, a class becoming in and for itself by becoming politically independent. Deconstructing and clarifying the notion of empowerment is a route from adult education into Gramsci's particular project. Gramsci, however, as a revolutionary communist took this further to understand that the existing educational institutions could provide useful and essential knowledge, skills, and some dispositions for working-class independence, but, ultimately, full independence could only come through educational institutions developed and controlled by the working class itself. Moreover, these institutions need to be both educational and political institutions; they have to educate while also being vehicles for working-class political struggle and power. The educative dimension of Gramsci's project is a more politicized interpretation of the notion of student empowerment alluded to earlier. We will have more to say on the nature of working-class political independence below.

Before continuing, we want to highlight what we mean by working class for this also has direct relevance for educators. In Gramsci's (2007) early twentieth-century Italian context, he was concerned for the political independence of the 'vast majority of the Italian people, the workers and the peasants' (PN3, pp. 784–785); to capture all oppressed sectors, he often used the term subaltern in the *Prison*

Notebooks. For the purposes of this chapter, given our US context, we will just use the term working class, realizing that in some contexts there exist significant peasant populations. We draw our definition of working class from the work of Zweig (2012) and Jonna and Bellamy Foster (2014). Summarizing their definitions and setting aside some minor differences, all three of these researchers consider the working class to consist of those people, who when they are employed, work for a boss or bosses and have little control over the nature of their job, in other words, people who work for someone else with little say over the what, when, and how of what they do to earn their wage or salary. Zweig calculates that about 63% and Jonna and Bellamy Foster calculate that about 68.9% of the US population belongs to the working class. It is also important to highlight that the working class is multiracial and multinational, and it is disproportionally made up of women and people of color. These data mean that many educators spend their time in classrooms and other educational settings with mainly working-class people.

Our second caveat is that we do not pose the political independence of the working class as a leitmotif in opposition to Gramscian scholars who have identified other key concepts as the leitmotif in Gramsci's work. Since we understand Gramsci's key concepts as interrelated and a part of a conceptual totality, we think one can identify almost any of his central ideas as foundational or at least fundamental to his conceptual totality. For example, one cannot understand the key concept of hegemony without considering the role of intellectuals in building hegemony nor civil society as the terrain over which hegemony is constructed and deconstructed by opposing social forces; so, within this particular example, it is difficult to distinguish which of these concepts is more important than the other. Many Gramscian scholars also recognize the interrelatedness of Gramsci's key concepts. Thomas (2009b), for example, identifies hegemony as a key Gramscian concept. He calls hegemony an integral part of a 'constellation of concepts' (p. 134). He makes the point that 'the guiding thread that organizes all of Gramsci's carceral research can be succinctly characterized as *the search for an adequate theory of proletarian hegemony in the epoch of the "organic crisis" or the "passive revolution" of the bourgeois "integral state"*' (p. 136). Here we see Thomas linking several key Gramscian concepts together in identifying a leitmotif with hegemony at its center.

Our third caveat is that the goal of working-class political independence, while in fact central to Gramsci's theory and practice, also allows us to demonstrate how pedagogy plays a key mediating role in the interrelatedness of his major concepts. Educational action is at the heart of Gramsci's major concepts and also is the conceptual glue that binds them together. For example, Gramsci believed that people's adhesion to prevailing commonsensical notions or hegemonic thinking was the product of a pedagogical process. He said that 'every relationship of "hegemony" is necessarily an educational relationship' (Q10II §44; SPN, p. 350). When grassroots protest breaks out in spontaneous ways showing embryonic resistance to prevailing hegemony and social injustices, Gramsci insisted that education was essential for these forms of spontaneous action to lead to lasting change. Reflecting on his own educational and political work in the context of spontaneous working-class rebellion in Turin in 1919 and 1920, he said 'this element of "spontaneity" was not neglected and even less despised. It was *educated*, directed' (Q3, §48; SPN, p. 198).

This education of spontaneity was not the individual act of Gramsci even though he was one of the popular educators involved. Rather, this educational work in order to be effective, in Gramsci's opinion, had to be the work of a political party. For Gramsci (1971) 'parties can be considered as schools' (Q7, §90; SPN, p. 268). It is educational work organized by political organizations organically rooted to the working class and its communities, work places, and organizations that can build political independence. In the United States, a few historical examples of this type of educational work would include the numerous party schools organized by the Communist Party USA (Gettleman 1993), the Industrial Workers of the World's (IWW) Work People's College near Duluth, Minnesota, (Altenbaugh 1990), and the nonformal educational work of the Black Panther Party (Williamson 2005). Contemporary examples would include the nonformal educational work of revolutionary organizations such as the Freedom Road Socialist Organization and the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (Holst 2004).

In this chapter, based on a philological investigation of Gramsci's pre-prison and prison writings in the context of his political practice, we will make four major arguments. As already stated, we will argue that the major leitmotif of Gramsci's writings and political practice was the struggle to achieve the political independence of the working class. Second, we will demonstrate how the leitmotif of working-class political independence provides for a revolutionary understanding of the interrelatedness of Gramsci's major concepts such as intellectuals, the state and civil society, hegemony, and war of position, as well as his insistence on and continuous work in revolutionary political parties. Third, we will assert that the leitmotif of working-class political independence demonstrates the centrality of revolutionary pedagogy at the heart of Gramsci's political practice. Fourth, based on the assessment that precarity or dispossession is actually the historic development of an objectively revolutionary class, we will propose that Gramsci's revolutionary pedagogical practice is increasingly relevant for development of the subjective conditions for revolutionary practice by the growing masses of dispossessed.

11.1 The Political Independence of the Working Class

As mentioned above, political independence of the working class has been a central goal of the socialist tradition since at least the time of Marx and Engels. Scholars (e.g., Joseph 2002; LeBlanc 2006; Shandro 2014) have demonstrated how this was also central to the theory and practice of Lenin and the Russian Revolution. In the summary list of the ten major components of Lenin's thought, between dealing with diversity in the working class and the working-class struggle against all forms of oppression, LeBlanc lists the political independence of the working class. This is important given the significant influence Lenin's theory and practice had on Gramsci. While keeping in mind the long history of this goal in the socialist tradition, we think it is also helpful to consider more contemporary examples.

The Brazilian sociologist Michael Lowy (1987) saw the formation of the Brazilian Workers Party in 1979, of which Paulo Freire was a founding member, as expressing 'the political independence of the working class and working people' (p. 454). In the broader and more recent Latin American context, Chilean sociologist Marta Harnecker (2015) argues that despite the massive social movement protest and activism of the last decade, there has generally been a lack of a political organization through which popular sectors can 'undertake an apprenticeship in forms of self-government' (p. 173). She believes a reading of history teaches us that 'in order to not waste popular energy and instead transform it into a force capable of bring about change, a political organization is needed' (p. 166).

A US example can be found in the organization called the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA) (2015). A recent report from the organization's central body provides an analysis of recent upsurges in social movement activity and insight into the role of revolutionaries. The League makes the argument that 'workers are beginning the process of separating from the political system' (p. 6) and that they see this as important because 'revolution cannot proceed until the workers separate their thinking from their rulers and begin to think independently along class lines' (p. 6). For both LRNA and Gramsci, the role of revolutionaries is to foster and educate the spontaneous and growing political independence of the US working class. In fact, both see education as the main function of revolutionary organizations since without this, independent thinking cannot grow.

In the LRNA example, we can identify the two interrelated senses in which Gramsci and revolutionaries have conceptualized political independence. Political independence is a question of consciousness and thinking and is developed and educated through organization. Moreover, one expands the other. If working-class people are going to think independently of the social, political, and economic institutions of a given society, they must have their own organizations within each of these spheres. Working-class political parties, worker-run and controlled economic institutions such as cooperatives or workplace councils, and working-class social and cultural organizations are all foundational to and necessary for working-class political independence. An interesting example of this can be found in the occupied and worker-run factories which emerged in Argentina after the economic crisis of the early 2000s. With no work and no wages, workers began returning to their workplaces which had been abandoned by their owners. The workers, on their own, restarted production and distribution of products without any owners or supervisors. As one worker recounted, one of the hardest hurdles to overcome in the beginning was to convince fellow workers that they could actually run their workplaces without bosses or, in other words, that they could think and act independently as workers (The Lavaca Collective 2007). A very similar situation arose at the Republic Windows factory in Chicago, Illinois, during the US financial crisis beginning in 2008. As the workers succinctly put it on the website of their now worker-run factory: 'In 2008, the boss decided to close our windows factory…and fire everyone. In 2012, we decided to buy the factory for ourselves and fire the boss. We now own the plant together and run it democratically' (New Era Windows Cooperative n.d.).

In Gramscian scholarship there is not a lot of sustained discussion of his emphasis on the political independence of the working class. We think that one reason for this may be the serious pedagogical and organizing implications involved in achieving political independence. We would argue that Gramscian scholarship, with its emphasis on the *Prison Notebooks* written when Gramsci's activist work was over, tends to focus on Gramsci the theorist and thinker (see Coutinho 2012 and Santucci 2010 for recent exceptions) to the detriment of Gramsci the pedagogue of revolution (Freire, in Freire and Macedo 1987) and political party activist and leader. On the other hand, the educational scholarship on Gramsci which does focus on his pedagogy tends to downplay Gramsci as revolutionary, as Italian Socialist Party and Italian Communist Party militant (see Kachur 2002; Morgan 2003 for exceptions). Therefore, between these two bodies of scholarship, not only is there little two-way dialogue; there is also a gap in terms of understanding the pedagogy of revolutionary party militancy, which has as its goal, the political independence of the working class.

11.2 Catharsis as Gramsci's Pedagogical Conceptualization of Political Independence

If Gramsci's leitmotif was the political independence of the working class, the Gramscian concept most clearly aligned with this leitmotif would be 'Catharsis'. According to Thomas (2009a), Gramsci used the term only eight times in the *Prison Notebooks*; nevertheless Thomas emphasizes that it is a central term in Gramsci's political theory. He adapted the term from Benedetto Croce but used it for very different purposes. We will generally avoid long quotes, but since the term catharsis is a centerpiece of our argument, we will provide the full excerpt from Gramsci's 10th *Prison Notebooks* written in 1932 where he defines what he means by catharsis.

> The term 'catharsis' can be employed to indicate the passage from the purely economic (or egoistic-passional) to the ethico-political moment that is the superior elaboration of the structure into the superstructure in the minds of men. This also means the passage from 'objective to subjective' and from 'necessity to freedom'. Structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive; and is transformed into a means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives. To establish the 'cathartic' moment becomes therefore, it seems to me, the starting-point for all the philosophy of praxis, and the cathartic process coincides with the chain of syntheses which have resulted from the evolution of the dialectic. (Q10II §6i; SPN, pp. 366–367)

This is a rather typical quote from the *Prison Notebooks* in that it is packed full of rather difficult concepts implying multiple layers and avenues of analysis. We will provide a pedagogically oriented 'translation' or interpretation of this quote and then show how combined with the idea of political independence it allows for a pedagogical presentation of the interrelatedness of Gramsci's major concepts.

If we begin at the end of Gramsci's definition of catharsis, we can see the significance of the concept for him. He says that to establish the cathartic moment is the starting point for all the philosophy of praxis. If we consider that Gramsci used the phrase philosophy of praxis to label the form of Marxism he was developing in the *Prison Notebooks*, then catharsis is the starting point for Marxism itself. Moreover, when Gramsci says 'to establish the cathartic moment', he is referring to the point in political struggle when a class become hegemonic in a given society. So, for the purposes of this chapter, this means when a class has not only become politically independent in its own thinking but has also consensually established its goals and aspirations as those of the society as a whole, in other words, when a social class has taken political power and become both subjectively (in its own consciousness) and objectively (in terms of holding political power) independent. Gramsci developed a lot of his thinking on this process by studying the ascendance to power of previous classes throughout Italian history, but this study of history was for the purpose of conceptualizing how the working class and peasantry could achieve political independence. To understand how Gramsci conceives of this process taking place, and to consider how pedagogy is at the center of it, we should now return to the beginning of the quote.

For Gramsci, the passage from the purely economic to the ethico-political is in large part a pedagogical act because he links this passage with the elaboration of the structure into the superstructure in the minds of men [sic]. Here Gramsci is referring to the pedagogical process of making poor and working-class people understand that what are commonsensically considered merely economic (structure) demands for safe jobs, living wages, decent and affordable housing and healthcare, etc. are actually political demands as well. This is because they cannot be resolved without a transformation of the political institutions, relations, and ideas (superstructure) which help maintain the unjust sociopolitical economic relations. In significant and hard-fought labor or union struggles, there often comes a time when striking or protesting workers come up against not only their employers but also politicians, government agencies, and the police, National Guard, or military. John remembers making a solidarity trip to Austin, Minnesota, in the spring of 1986 to show support for striking meatpacking workers at the Hormel meatpacking plant. The strike was militant and went on for several months. At one point in the strike, the Democratic governor authorized the use of the Minnesota National Guard to quell strike activity in the name of safety and security.

This was a classic moment when workers were confronted not only with the bosses of Hormel but also with the state and local politicians, law enforcement, and the relationship between these government agencies and their bosses. It was a 'teachable moment' that led some of the workers to understand that what seemed to be a 'purely economic' struggle was actually at the same time an 'ethico-political' struggle. We would argue along with Gramsci that these moments are teachable and must be so. What we mean, and what Gramsci insisted upon, is that these are not just learning moments, but animating moments requiring teachers or revolutionaries to work pedagogically and collectively with people to help them see and understand the interconnectedness of the economic, the social, and the political.

In educational scholarship, Paula Allman (2001) has captured the essence of the pedagogical process of moving from the economic to the ethico-political when she discusses reproductive, acritical practice, and revolutionary critical praxis. The purely economic struggle and efforts to make improvements within prevailing relations is a form of reproductive and acritical praxis. Coming to an understanding of the dialectical relationship between the economic and the political is a form of revolutionary critical praxis. Since, as Allman argues, we experience the social totality of our lives in fragmented ways, we need a pedagogical practice to critically understand how phenomena like economics and politics, which we generally experience as separate entities, are actually dialectically related. Therefore, as Allman argues, a revolutionary critical praxis and the dialectical understanding which comes from it, lead to challenging not just the conditions produced by prevailing relations (reforms), but the very relations themselves (revolution).

For Gramsci the passage from the economic to the ethico-political went beyond single struggles like the one we mentioned above in Austin, although single cases can highlight elements of it. For Gramsci the cathartic moment, the achievement of hegemony, was a part of longer-term historical transformations. This is only clear when we consider the parenthetical note he wrote at the end of his definition of catharsis, which also sheds light on his comment about the 'evolution of the dialectic'.

> One must keep permanently in mind the two points between which this process oscillates: that no society poses for itself problems the necessary and sufficient conditions for whose solution do not already exist or are coming into being; and that no society comes to an end before it has expressed all its potential content. (Q10II §6i; SPN, p. 367)

The dialectic Gramsci is referring to is the contradiction which develops overtime between a society's forces and relations of production or, more simply put, a given society's technology and the way people organize themselves around it. This reference to political economy refers to Marx's claim that the technological basis of a new social order is always already present or emerging before revolutionary transformation can or does take place. Nelson Peery (2002) helps us understand this when he discusses the three interrelated stages of revolutionary processes. The first stage is fundamental changes in the economic sphere (economic revolution) which create tremendous social disruption (social revolution) and which provide the objective conditions for the realization through struggle of fundamental political transformation (political revolution). Peery provides the example of the US Civil Rights Movement. The mechanization of southern agriculture in the early to mid-twentieth century drove hundreds of thousands of African Americans off the land and into the cities causing major social disruption. This economic revolution in agriculture set the objective conditions for the potential realization of the longstanding political demands for freedom among African American people; the stage was set for the overthrow of the Jim Crow political structure by the Civil Rights Movement. As Peery says, before the mechanization of agriculture, African Americans were isolated on plantations all across the South with the same longstanding desire to end Jim Crow, but they had no way of physically coming together to organize. The economic revolution sparked the massing of African Americans in southern cities

whereby they could launch the political revolution. Similarly, in Turin in the early twentieth century, the mass production revolution brought tens of thousands of workers together in a space of only a few thousand square meters (Schwarzmantel 2015) among the automobile industry factories, thus providing the objective conditions for the emergence of the factory councils.

When Gramsci says that structures cease to be external forces which crush people and instead become instruments of freedom, he is referring to the idea that when people gain economic and political power, institutions such as workplaces and state agencies can be transformed into instruments which liberate rather than oppress them. Gramsci witnessed this himself in the Turin factory councils when workers occupied the factories and began to run them democratically without the bosses. Gramsci saw how he, his comrades, and the workers together made workplaces both sites of production and learning and liberation. In the US Civil Rights Movement, one can think of how African Americans created their own educational institutions to counter the schooling institutions which, paraphrasing Gramsci above, crushed them, tried to assimilate them into the status quo, and made them passive. It is not by chance that the Civil Rights Movement schooling institutions were called Citizenship Schools, Freedom Schools, and later Liberation Schools (Payne and Sills Strickland 2008). What never did take place in Turin in 1920, however, was the passage from the economic to the ethico-political; in other words, the Turin workers were never able to transform the political structures (the state) like they temporarily transformed the economic structures (workplaces). Understanding the failure of the Turin Factory Council Movement, by trying to understand the process of and the road to the cathartic moment and political independence of the working class, was a major goal in Gramsci's reflections in the *Prison Notebooks*.

11.3 Gramsci's Major Concepts as Interrelated Elements of a Revolutionary Pedagogical Project

11.3.1 Intellectuals as the Pedagogues of Hegemony and Independence

In presenting the interrelatedness of major Gramscian concepts, we can begin with a 1931 letter by Gramsci (1994a) from prison in which he summarizes his research on intellectuals:

> The research I have done on the intellectuals is very broad....My study also leads to certain definitions of the concept of the State, that is usually understood as political Society (or dictatorship, or coercive apparatus meant to mold the popular mass in accordance with the type of production and economy at a given moment) and not as a balance between the political Society and civil Society (or the hegemony of a social group over the entire national society, exercised through the so-called private organizations, such as the Church, the unions, the schools, etc.), and it is within the civil society that intellectuals operate. (LFP2, pp. 66–67)

Here we have Gramsci 'connecting the dots' between many of his central concepts.

Let's begin with *intellectuals*. Gramsci says his research on intellectuals was very broad. His research did not necessarily begin with the question of intellectuals per se but, rather, and related to the central point of this chapter, with trying to understand how classes achieve or do not achieve political independence and power in given historical periods and, in particularly, periods of social upheaval or transformation. What interested Gramsci was to understand how individuals played decisive roles in the emergence of ruling classes. Educational scholars of Gramsci often miss this point in terms of Gramsci's conceptualization of intellectuals. For example, when Gramsci says that everyone is an intellectual but not everyone plays that role in society, educators often take this to show Gramsci's faith in the intellectual capacity of the oppressed. Gramsci had a critical faith in the capacity of the oppressed, yet his point was really about the extent to which people help consolidate the power and self-awareness of social classes; those who do that are intellectuals regardless of whether their jobs require a lot of mental or manual labor.

Gramsci's historical research and his political practice showed him that social classes, in order to become ruling classes, must have people—organic intellectuals—who strive to teach the class about its own identity. Such intellectuals make the class aware of its own interests and build a class's organizational and intellectual independence. Organic refers to the role these intellectuals play in the sense that their activities are tied to the emergence and leadership of a particular class. As new classes emerge, they find intellectuals already in place, who while implicitly or explicitly partisan to a class, due to their class' dominance, appear to be rather neutral; these are what Gramsci referred to as traditional intellectuals. For a class to become a leading and dominant class, it needs its own organic intellectuals and it must also win over or at least neutralize the impact of existing traditional intellectuals.

We will provide some more concrete examples to help explain Gramsci's conceptualization of intellectuals. An example related directly to adult education would be workplace professionals whose primary functions have to do with the physical organization of workers, their work, and their experiences in the workplace. For the latter element, human resource departments and the professionals who work in them would be examples of intellectuals. In terms of the former, David Noble's (1977) book *America by Design*, while not specifically drawing on Gramsci, provides a historical analysis of the role of engineers in the reorganization of work and workplaces in the United States in the twentieth century. In what is almost a copy of Gramsci, Noble says that engineers not only used technical skill to design the technology of modern capitalism, but they also acted as 'managers, educators, and social reformers' (p. xxiv) in restructuring work and the role of workers.

We raise these examples to highlight the fact that for Gramsci, the role of intellectuals is not just directly in the realm of ideas but also in the world of production. In fact, Gramsci (1971) begins his discussion of intellectuals in *Prison Notebook* 12 with a discussion of the organic intellectuals of the then emerging industrial capitalist class and in particular those who operate in the economy. 'The capitalist

entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organizers of a new culture' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 5). The capitalist, for Gramsci, is not just a moneymaker but 'an organizer of men [sic]' (ibid.) in all spheres of society with the purpose of creating 'the conditions most favorable to the expansion of their class' (ibid. pp. 5–6). Since Gramsci was writing toward the beginning of mass industrial expansion in Italy, these intellectuals were a relatively new phenomenon, and, therefore, he saw them as organic, as emerging alongside the new emerging industrial capitalist. Today, the capitalist class has long since established the state educational institutions which produce these intellectuals as traditional intellectuals.

In contemporary US society, other examples of this type of traditional intellectual would be the countless 'talking heads' one sees and hears on mainstream news media who comment on government or corporate actions and policies. Generally, the expert justifies or explains these actions within the confines of the rationale already established by these institutions' spokespeople. If an expert challenges the actions or policies, it is normally based on the ideas of a rival mainstream political party (McChesney 2015). So, within the confines of political debate established by mainstream political parties and reflected in mainstream media, experts appear neutral whether they agree or disagree with the government or corporations. There are countless universities, research institutes, and think tanks which produce and sustain traditional intellectuals who make careers out of creating, justifying, and explaining mainstream politics and policies. The end result of this work of intellectuals is to further the political independence and power of the capitalist class by making it appear as if its interests were the nation's interest, as if all classes benefitted and shared equally in the interests of the nation. This, for Gramsci, was precisely the hegemonic role of these intellectuals. Their work is not of a profoundly educational nature, but rather of a profoundly miseducational (Woodson 2000) nature, to convince all classes into thinking the interests of the capitalist class are also their own. In current parlance, these intellectuals work to convince the 99% that when the government or corporations act to protect the interests of the 1%, they are acting on behalf of the 100%.

In the example above about the talking heads, it is important to point out that many of these talking heads move frequently between government agencies and private entities such as corporations, universities, or think tanks. If we refer to Fig. 11.1, they move between political society and civil society and operate at times as agents of hegemony and at times as agents of coercion. Here, we can see the interplay between the two sides of the integral state and the active role intellectuals play in the dialectical relationship between coercion and hegemony. Gramsci (1971) made this point most explicitly in a comment in *Notebook* 14 on legislators where he indicates how legislators not only create laws which regulate the thought and actions of others (hegemony) but also have at their disposal the 'legal coercive powers of the state' (Q14, §13; SPN, p. 266). This is why Gramsci (1971) said his definition of intellectuals was broad and that it also caused him to broaden the traditional Marxist definition of the state. In fact, one of his most commonly cited definitions of the state where he says 'what we can do for the moment, is to fix two

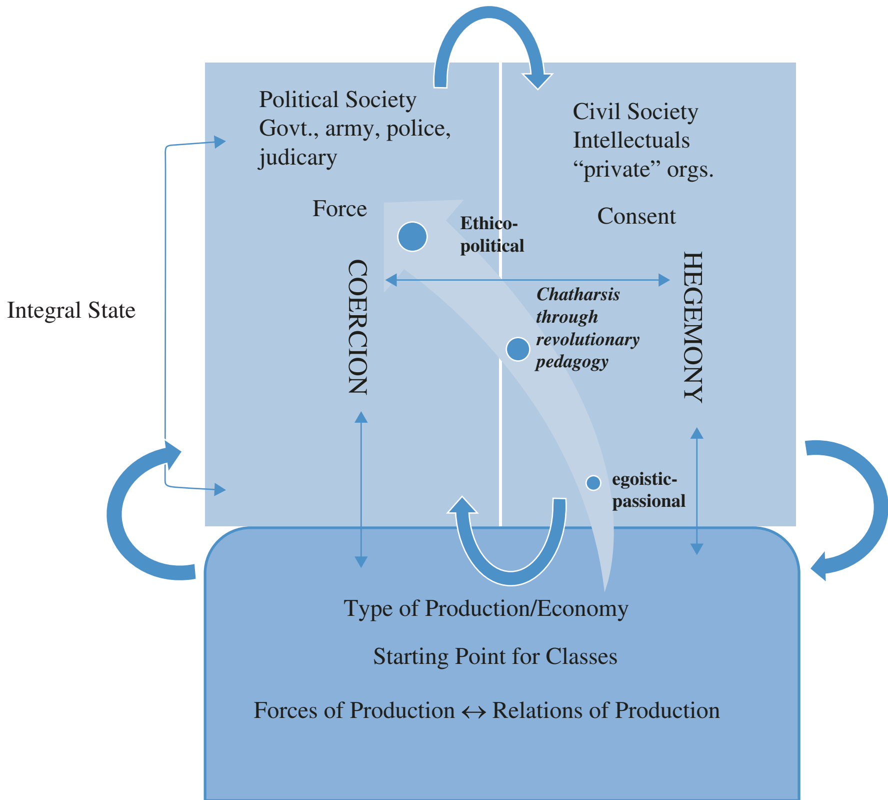

Fig. 11.1 Gramsci's historic bloc including integral state and the pedagogical process of catharsis

major superstructural levels' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 12), one being civil society and the other being political society, was in *Notebook* 12 in his extended discussion of intellectuals. Of this dual role for intellectuals, Gramsci said that they 'are the dominant's group's "deputies" exercising the…functions of social hegemony [civil society] and political government [political society]' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 12).

For Gramsci, intellectuals are the key agents of building class independence and class dependence. As we have shown above, current-day intellectuals help make the working class dependent on the interests of the capitalist class; they make the 99% ideologically dependent on the 1% through miseducation. So this is both a process of dependence and independence. The more ideologically dependent the working class is on the capitalist class, the more independence the capitalist class has to achieve its own ends and to argue that those ends are to the benefit of everyone. This is why it was so important for Gramsci that the working class create its own organic intellectuals. Working-class organic intellectuals must not only counter the ideas of the capitalist class—what many people refer to as counter-hegemony—but also through catharsis build the hegemony and independence of the working class. This

is a political project created by and for the working class based on the day-to-day needs and aspirations of the class as defined by the class itself.

We think for a lot of people it is hard to conceptualize the idea of working-class organic intellectuals because, unlike traditional intellectuals above who we see on TV or in our workplaces, we seldom encounter working-class organic intellectuals. Moreover, in the United States, social movement activity of the last 60 years has not been of a specifically class character but rather a mix of class with more dominant issues such as race, gender, sexuality, or peace. We can identify academic radicals as organic intellectuals but then we fall into the trap Gramsci asks us to avoid by focusing on the intellectual activity of a person and not on whether they help develop the independence and power of the working class. So, writing books or doing formal research does not make one a working-class organic intellectual, although there are working-class organic intellectuals who do this type of work. To be concrete about this concept, here is a short list, in no particular order, of people we consider to be examples of US-based working-class organic intellectuals: Woody Guthrie, Angela Davis, Willie Baptist, Lucy Parsons, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, General Baker, Meridel Le Sueur, Nelson Peery, and Luis J. Rodriguez. What all of these people have in common is that they are or were based in organizations of the working class dedicated to the class's organizational and intellectual independence. Their work, whether intellectual, cultural, or organizational, is or was oriented toward building the capacity of working-class people to achieve independence and ultimately political power. Moreover, at the heart of all this work is teaching and learning with the multiracial and multinational working class of the United States.

11.3.2 The Political Party as an Essential Site of Revolutionary Pedagogy

We have mentioned above that the capitalist class' intellectuals are produced by state and private institutions such as universities, research institutes, and think tanks among others. The working class, has access to these institutions to a much lesser degree, yet cannot count on these institutions to create its own intellectuals because it does not control them. Of those we listed as working-class organic intellectuals above, many of them attended or even worked in institutions of higher education and gained important knowledge, skills, and some dispositions from them. It was not, however, the universities that made them organic intellectuals but rather the training they received in working-class organizations such as unions and most particularly revolutionary working-class political parties and party schools. Gramsci (1994b) was adamant on this point. He believed that nonformal education was essential for the working-class movement. But nonformal educational institutions had to have a 'scope and aims defined by class' (PPW, p. 36). A working-class nonformal school had to be 'an institution of the proletariat' (PPW, p. 36). Education had to be about enhancing and refining 'the capacities for struggle' (PPW, p. 266).

Anything less than an institution by and for the working class and controlled by a working-class organization would not sufficiently advance the movement or the class's independence. Even higher education institutions oriented toward the working class could not produce organic intellectuals of the class if they were not fully controlled by the class itself. In Gramsci's time, there were popular universities which catered to the working class. Gramsci felt these institutions were 'best ignored' (PPW, p. 36) because they were 'bourgeois in origin' (PPW, p. 36) and did not respond to the needs of the working-class movement.

For Gramsci the key institutions for the creation of working-class organic intellectuals were the political party and its affiliated organizations. Gramsci made this clear in his writing, but also from his active membership and leadership in the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties throughout the whole of his adult life. Gramsci (1971) argued that political parties 'can be considered as schools of State life' (Q7, §90; SPN, p. 268) and that there are two elements of this schooling role of parties. First, parties build the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their members as part and parcel of building the political independence of the class of which they are a part. By 'state life' Gramsci is referring to the cathartic moment in which people develop a new consciousness in which economic demands are seen as political issues entailing resolution at the level of the state. If we refer back to Fig. 11.1, the cathartic process moves from the economic realm to the integral state. Moreover, for this resolution to take place, the working class must learn what is necessary to both understand the political nature of economic issues and what is necessary to actually become a leading class of a given society. Second, parties also educate the wider society and in particular classes with similar interests as those of working class; for Gramsci in the Italy of his day, the major alliance needed to be between the working class and the peasantry. Gramsci argued that in order for a class to take and hold power, it must be both a leading class in that it wins over as broad an alliance as possible to its cause and a dominant class in that it uses state power to defeat the previous ruling class to ensure it cannot return to power.

In the section on intellectuals in *Prison Notebook* 12, we have already shown how Gramsci linked his conceptualization of intellectuals to the realms of civil society and political society in the integral state and to the ideas of hegemony and coercion. In this same section, Gramsci also links intellectuals to political parties and, most importantly for him, to revolutionary working-class political parties. Gramsci (1994b) understood that the dominant classes of his day had the institutions at their disposal for creating their own intellectuals. The working class and the peasantry were at a distinct disadvantage for two main reasons. First, they did not control the universities and other institutions which created the intellectuals of the dominant classes. Entering into these institutions made the working class dependent on 'anti-proletarian forces and ideologies seeking to influence the working class' (PPW, p. 265). Second, they also did not have the experience of what Gramsci (1971) called 'a long independent period of cultural and moral development on their own' (Q8, §130; SPN, p. 268), since they have historically lived within bourgeois hegemony 'subjected to the influence of bourgeois education, the bourgeois press and bourgeois tradition' (PPW, p. 316).

Therefore, Gramsci felt that the creation of organic intellectuals of the working class fell to revolutionary political parties like his own socialist and later communist party. If we refer to Fig. 11.1, the areas of operation of political parties include the economy, civil society, and eventually political society. In Gramsci's formulation, political parties play a key role through all three of these areas in the stages of catharsis. First, political parties advance the demands of the working class stemming from its subordinate position in the economy. This is reform-oriented work which takes up the 'egoistic-passional' issues in a pedagogical way. In other words, the effort of the party is to show how these demands find partial resolution through changes in economic relations and power in the workplaces and their ultimate resolution in changes in political power in political society. Taking power, or becoming the dominant class in political society, can only happen, however, once the working class becomes the hegemonic or leading class in civil society. For Gramsci, dominance was about political power and the use of the institutions of political society, while hegemony was about gaining consent and winning people over to one's side in and through the institutions of civil society. It is organic intellectuals formed by a political party which play a key role in building working-class hegemony by winning over the vast majority of a society to the idea that the resolution of the demands of the working class means the resolution of the demands of a society's majority.

Political parties form organic intellectuals through multiple and pedagogically interrelated activities. First, working pedagogically on basic economic demands and showing how they require political resolution is a long-term and ongoing pedagogical project. It requires working on the day-to-day demands both in terms of organizing protest and in terms of theoretically summing-up activist work by organizing time for reflection on what is working and what is not working and teaching about the relationship between the economic demands and broader issues of political power. Gramsci (1971) described this work of organic intellectuals as 'active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, permanent persuader' (Q12, §3; SPN, p. 10). Second, Gramsci insisted that in this educational work, traditional intellectuals who join working-class parties could and should play a key role. In the pedagogical work of political parties, traditional intellectuals could finally realize practical and truly meaningful use of their knowledge and skills by making 'coherent the principles and the problems raised by the masses in their practical activity' (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 330), or, in Freirean, terms by creating a problem posing curriculum. Third, Gramsci was a strong advocate and organizer of informal education of parties through the formation of party schools. These schools had to be controlled by the party, and, therefore, the working class, and have a curriculum based in the problems and issues facing the working-class movement, but they had to engage this curriculum with serious and profound theoretical study.

For Gramsci (1971) there could be no 'formation of leaders without the theoretical, doctrinal activity of parties, without a systemic attempt to discover and study the causes which govern the nature of the class…and the way in which it has developed' (Q3, §119; SPN, pp. 227–228). Ultimately, the goal of the educational work of organic intellectuals was political independence and hegemony of the

working class. Gramsci saw a direct relationship between political independence, activism, organization, and intellectuals. All of these were key elements since 'a human mass…does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organizing itself; and there is no organization without intellectuals' (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 334). From an ontological and an epistemological perspective, the development of organic intellectuals, who work pedagogically to build the political independence of the working class, was the practical realization of the dialectical relationship between theory and practice. The educational and theoretical work of organic intellectuals rooted in the practical realities of fellow working-class people was the embodiment of praxis.

11.3.3 Civil Society, Hegemony, and Revolutionary Pedagogy and Strategy

Gramsci's (1971) political activism taught him that the process of developing organic intellectuals of the working class was 'long, difficult, full of contradictions, advances and retreats' (Q11, §12; SPN, p. 334). He came to this realization from his own experience with the Italian working class and peasantry and from his experience in the Communist International which linked together communist parties from around the world with its headquarters in the Soviet Union. The idea of the Communist International was to share and coordinate experiences in the effort to extend socialist revolution beyond Russia and the affiliated nations of the Soviet Union. Member parties and individuals of the International, including Lenin, and in particular Gramsci grew increasingly aware that the revolutionary experience in Russia could not be simply copied and pasted to other contexts. Gramsci's later writings before imprisonment and his prison writings reflect a profound understanding of and an effort to theorize the particular differences between the context of Russia at the triumph of the revolution and other countries of Europe and in particular western Europe. These differences between East and West were the foundation for his conceptualization of hegemony in civil society and the distinction between the political strategies of war of position and war of maneuver. This long and difficult struggle facing Italian and other western revolutionaries such as Gramsci had to do with the more difficult process of building working-class independence in societies, unlike pre-revolutionary Russia, which had more developed civil societies and, therefore, stronger relations of hegemony.

Probably, the most succinct definition which Gramsci (1971) provides of hegemony is that of the 'spontaneous consent given by the…masses… to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige…which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in…production' (Q12, §1; SPN, p. 12). Gramsci puts spontaneous in quotes to highlight the fact that this consent comes to appear as spontaneous only because it is the result of a broad process of miseducation which we

discussed above. This miseducational process takes place in civil society and through the work of intellectuals found in all the various institutions of civil society. Moreover, this miseducation also takes place in the workplaces and, in particular, in workplaces with advanced divisions of labor.

When considering how to extend the process of socialist revolution which triumphed in Russia to his own Italian context, Gramsci came to realize that there were fundamental differences, and these differences had to do with the level of development of civil society and hegemony. There is an oft-cited quote of Gramsci's (1971) which is relevant here: 'In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial…; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed' (Q7, §16; SPN, p. 238). It is important to point out, as others have (e.g., Coutinho 2012), that the West/East distinction Gramsci is making here has to do with the level of capitalist development and not necessarily with geographic or cultural East and West. Moreover, Gramsci's links his reflections on the level of capitalist civil society development and hegemony to strategies for building working-class hegemony or as we are arguing the political independence of the working class.

In the 'West', where the civil society and hegemonic aspects of the integral state are well developed, Gramsci argues that a war of maneuver like that of the Russian Revolution will not work. The working class cannot simply launch an assault on the citadel of governmental power and hope to triumph. In the West, Gramsci argued that a war of position was necessary. This was the long and difficult pedagogical struggle we referred to above in the formation of working-class organic intellectuals and working-class hegemony. In *Notebook* 6 where Gramsci (1971) makes several reflections on the idea of war of position, he says that this 'demands enormous sacrifices by…masses of people. So an unprecedented concentration of hegemony is necessary' (Q6, §138; SPN, p. 238). While this may make people question whether all of this is worth it, he goes on to say that with a war of position 'we have entered a culminating phase in the political-historical situation, since in politics the "war of position", once won, is decisive definitively' (Q6, §138; SPN, p. 239).

As a way to loop back to the original concept of catharsis, note in the quote above on the war of position that Gramsci refers to entering the political-historical situation. Here he is referring to the ethico-political phase of catharsis, in other words, when a movement and those involved in it come to realize that the ultimate or 'decisive' resolution of their demands can only happen when the political society aspect of the state no longer finds consent from a society's majority. In the ethico-political phase when working-class hegemony prevails in the minds of the majority, then, and only then, can the working class move to a war of maneuver and look to successful take power in political society. In the quote above, we left out the section where Gramsci (1971) says that in conjunction with an unprecedented concentration of hegemony, a 'more "interventionist" government, which will take the offensive more openly against the oppositionists' (Q6, §138; SPN, pp. 238–239), is necessary. For there to be a successful transition to socialism in the West, the working class must become the leading or hegemonic class in civil society through a war of position, and it must ultimately take control of the political society through

a war of maneuver and become the dominant class in order to prevent capitalist forces from re-exerting their control over society. In the United States, we have never really witnessed this phase of revolutionary transition. The closest we have come to this would be in the immediate wake of the Civil War in the period of Reconstruction. David Roediger (2014) refers to this as the ‘revolutionary time of Jubilee’ (p. 21) when the self-emancipation of the slaves spurred mass action by American Indians, immigrant Chinese and Irish workers, a broad movement for the 8-h day, and the movement for women’s suffrage. In today’s climate we have several movements which have ebbed and flowed from the Occupy Movement to Black Lives Matter and the movement of low-wage and immigrant workers. As we will mention below, seasoned activists are currently grappling with the challenge of organizing this spontaneous rebellion into a sustained and broad movement for change; achieving this sustained movement and making it ever more board in its appeal is the process of catharsis.

11.3.4 Pedagogy, Spontaneity, and the Path from Commonsense to Good Sense

A particular challenge Gramsci identified in the process of catharsis was moving popular consciousness from what he called common sense to good sense. Earlier, we referred to Gramsci’s faith in working-class people and we said it was a critical faith. Like all revolutionaries Gramsci believed in the ability of the working class and the peasantry to be the leading classes, to be the leaders in the political, social, and economic spheres of a future socialist society. Without this faith, there was no point in joining the struggle for socialism. Gramsci’s faith was critical in the sense that he, like revolutionaries more generally, did not think that working-class people or peasants were inherently socialist or were born with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be leaders. In other words, he did not have a romantic notion of the masses, but rather he had an attitude of an educator. He was convinced that working-class people, through revolutionary, participatory pedagogy could become the future leaders of a socialist society and could and had to be the leaders of the movement which would achieve such a society. Political independence could not be won by a vanguard outside of the working class acting on its behalf, rather working-class people themselves had to be the central protagonists in their own emancipation. Political independence, therefore, is both a pedagogical process of moving from commonsense to good sense and a goal.

In what ought to be a familiar principle to educators, Gramsci argued that the pedagogical work at the heart of political struggle must begin, as educators often say, where people are at and not where we may want them to be. In Gramsci’s (1971) terminology, he said that ‘the starting point must always be that common sense which is the spontaneous philosophy of the multitude’ (Q11, §13; SPN, p. 421). Gramsci believed that given the unequal power dynamics of given societies and the terrible and unjust living conditions for the multitudes resulting from these

relations, the oppressed generally have a commonsensical understanding that they are on the bottom rungs of society. Yet, given the prevailing hegemony of the oppressor which poses their interests as the natural interests of all, and the fragmented ways in which we experience the social totality, the oppressed generally do not have a robust understanding of why they are oppressed. Popular wisdom goes a certain distance in describing prevailing conditions but does not necessarily explain them. How often, for example, do we hear, 'the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer'. Or you ask someone at work how they are doing and the reply is something like, 'musn't grumble'. Gramsci cherished and loathed popular wisdom and prevailing commonsensical notions. He knew there were kernels of brilliance in the culture of workers and peasants but he also knew that they were too often layered over with pessimism, resignation, and miseducation from the prevailing hegemony. Equally, Gramsci cherished and loathed prevailing philosophical and intellectual thinking. In an oft-cited quote, Gramsci (1971) said 'the popular element "feels" but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element "knows" but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel' (Q11, §67; SPN, p. 418). For Gramsci, a working-class political party was the most viable organizational entity to weld traditional intellectuals who join the movement to the working class. He described this process as 'an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge' (Q11, §67; SPN, p. 418). The epistemological ramifications of this idea for educators are that scientific knowledge is and must be and engaged (feeling-passion) scholarship in the service of human emancipation.

A working-class political party was also the most viable organizational entity to generate working-class intellectuals. In a 1925 pre-prison article on the Italian Communist Party, Gramsci (1994b) said that workers enter the party as 'political activists…as theorists of socialism….[a]nd, in the Party, through its discussions, through its readings and through the Party schools, they develop continually as leaders' (PPW, p. 271). As a pedagogue of the revolution, Gramsci knew that a political party worthy of the working class had to work pedagogically with and alongside workers to raise the level of sociopolitical economic knowledge of their own reality and that of all social classes and groups in society in order to change society. Any divergence of this close link between the masses of working-class people and a working-class political party were unacceptable to Gramsci. As he rose to leadership within the Italian Communist Party, he criticized the party precisely for its insufficient pedagogical work alongside workers. In a 1924 letter to fellow party leaders, Gramsci (2014) expressed his concern that the party needed to be conceived of and organized as a 'convergence of the spontaneous movement of the revolutionary masses and the organizational and directive will of the center [party]' (p. 226).

Without this convergence, the spontaneous movement of workers and peasants could win reforms, could better the classes' positions within the inherently unequal relation between workers and capitalists and landlords and peasants, but could not transform these relations to ones based on equality. Nevertheless, the history of working-class and peasant resistance taught Gramsci, and revolutionaries generally,

that pedagogy and educational work are necessary for the working class to move beyond spontaneous rebellions to systematic change. Today, in the United States, we see this same idea emerging around the Black Lives Matter Movement. Civil Rights Movement veterans (e.g. Nash 2015) and African American scholars (e.g., Alexander 2015) have argued that the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, have raised the nation's awareness and have led to important reforms in Ferguson, but for fundamental change to take place, spontaneous protest must be transformed into long-term movement building.

11.3.5 Catharsis as Revolutionary Participatory Action Research

The process of catharsis is educational and also requires research and analysis of prevailing conditions or what Gramsci calls relations of forces. For Gramsci (1971) there were three main levels of analysis in determining the conditions for social change in concrete contexts, the economic, the political, and the military. First, Gramsci uses the term 'relation of social forces' to describe the level of economic development of a given society. As this is an objective condition in the sense that it is about demographics and economic data which detail the state of a society's economy and the development and size of social classes and groups, quantitative social science methodologies are appropriate for this level of analysis.

Second, Gramsci (1971) uses the term 'relation of political forces' to describe the level of cohesiveness and social awareness or consciousness of social classes and groups. Here Gramsci breaks this into sublevels of analysis which correspond very closely to the levels or phases he identified in the process of catharsis. The first level of consciousness he identifies as economic-corporative where, for example, workers of a particular trade such as carpenters feel and understand the need to stand together and organize around their common interests. This consciousness of solidarity, however, does not extend to all workers. The second level of consciousness corresponds to the moment when workers across all trades or professions begin to see common class interests and the need to organize as a class. To the extent that organized workers understand the political nature of their struggle, it is, at this point, only to gain legal authorization to form organizations; in other words, they appeal to the state for legal rights to form unions. The third level of consciousness corresponds to the cathartic moment. Here Gramsci says consciousness transcends narrow economic interests and reaches the 'purely political phase' (Q13, §17; SPN, p. 181). Stated slightly differently and echoing the quote at the beginning of this chapter on catharsis, Gramsci says this is the 'decisive passage from the structure [economy] to the sphere of the complex superstructures [integral state]' (Q13, §17; SPN, p. 181) where there is full consciousness of the interrelationship between economic and political demands and power. The example of the Civil War we mentioned above is the closest the United States has come to this purely political

phase. In what W. E. B. DuBois called the 'general strike of the slaves' (as cited in Roediger 2014), African Americans, both enslaved and free, used their own political, economic, and military knowledge and skills, in combination with the Union Army, for their own emancipation. In Gramscian terms, they turned the egoistic-passional struggle against slavery into a full-blown ethico-political transformation of themselves and the nation itself. As Roediger highlights, in less than 10 years, they went from slaves to having codified into the laws of political society their status as 'free, equal, voting citizens' (p. 44). This 'second American Revolution' had its limits, particularly in terms of the lack of land distribution, but it did mark the world's greatest revolutionary confiscation and redistribution of property (the slaves themselves) until the Russian Revolution.

The last level of analysis Gramsci identified was that of the relations of military force. Here he is highlighting the definitive role that military force has generally played in deciding the outcome of revolutionary change. A social class may reach the point of catharsis and understand the need to transform not only the prevailing economic relations but also the prevailing political relations and institutions, but if it faces a military siding with those currently in power, generally the side with the military prevails. The example of the Chilean working class and peasantry during the Popular Unity government of 1970–1973 is a classic example of social classes reaching a moment of catharsis and being defeated by a capitalist class with the military on its side; the culmination of this struggle was the military coup of September 11, 1973, followed by 17 years of military dictatorship. A counterexample in the US context would again be the Civil War where enslaved and free African Americans were able to put an end to chattel slavery in military alliance with the union Army. The revolutionary reconstruction of the former slave South lasted until the withdrawal of the union army in 1877.

If we draw on Gramsci's initial level of analysis of the relation of social force, we can come to some preliminary assessments of the prospects for social change today. First, let's look at how Gramsci himself did this during the revolutionary upsurge of the Italian working class in the 1919–1920 'Red Biennium'. Here Gramsci and his comrades were making their own analysis of the relation of social force. For Gramsci (1994b), revolution was not about fiery declarations of self-proclaimed radicals, but rather 'an extremely long-term historical process that manifests itself in the emergence and development of….new productive forces [that] are no longer able to develop…within the official framework' (PPW, p. 163). The revolutionary upsurge of that period was a result of and a response to the emergence of mass industrial productive forces and relations transforming the Italian economy and society at that time. The working class was beginning a process of developing factory councils with the goal of taking over and running factories on its own. The factory councils were organized in individual factories and geographically across city wards. The idea was to develop democratic institutions through which the working class and peasants in the countryside could direct production and politics from the factory, farm, and ward level with higher level coordinating bodies at the regional and national level. These institutions as both economic and political institutions were an

expression of the cathartic moment and the working class and peasantry's growing political independence.

Gramsci (1977) understood that one had to analyze the relation of social forces in tandem with the relation of political forces. He argued that the working class was creating new institutions of economic and political power because 'the traditional institutions for the government of human masses' (SPW-1, p. 175) were becoming increasingly moribund and dysfunctional. The new mass industrial technology was at odds with the prevailing institutions in the realm of the economy and in the integral state. For this new technology to fully develop, new institutions needed to be created. These insights could only be found, however, through an engaged scholarship as we outlined above. This would constitute a participatory research project based wholly in the lived realities of a society's majority.

11.4 Conclusion

So today, if we follow Gramsci, starting points for an analysis of the relation of social and political force would have to be the emergence of computer or microchip-based productive forces and the corresponding growing class of economically dispossessed and precariously employed working people. The introduction of these fundamentally new technologies is at one and the same time producing marvelous innovations and enormous social disruption when one considers the growing economic polarization we see all around us domestically and globally. Prevailing institutions of production and distribution of goods and services necessary for human life are based on relations which no longer correspond to new technologies. With microchip-based technologies, increasing amounts of production take place without the need for the presence of human labor precisely because of the growing ability of the new technologies to replicate human movement. Nevertheless, we still continue to distribute the necessities of life based on the idea that people have paid employment from which they receive wages to buy what they need or think they need. As Gramsci indicated above, the prevailing institutions no longer correspond to the nature of the new forces of production increasingly prevalent across all sectors of the economy. We are witnessing, as Gonzalez and Katz-Fishman (2010) argue, a growing sector of society which cannot survive without a distribution based on need rather than the ability to pay. They make the argument that this is a new class and that it draws its ranks from nearly all sectors of current society; it is a class whose basic needs are in direct conflict with prevailing economic and political institutions. Gramsci (2007) said that 'a revolution can only be based on a new class' (p. 789). The tasks, then, of revolutionary pedagogy today are to undertake an ongoing participatory analysis of the living realities of this new class and to outline the steps forward to resolve the growing problem that 'the old is dying and new cannot be born' (Q3, §34; SPN, p. 276). In other words, the objective conditions for fundamental transformation are increasing in place, and it is time for a revolutionary pedagogy of the moment of catharsis.

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Erratum to

Chapter 10
A Pedagogy of the Subalterns: Gramsci and the Groups 'on the margins of history'

Panos Macheras

© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2017
N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3

DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_12

The original version of this chapter reference for Green, M. E was inadvertently published with incorrect publication year of 1999. The reference is updated in the reference list as: "Green, M. E. (2009a). Subalternità, questione meridionale e funzione degli intellettuali. In G. Schirru (Ed.), *Gramsci le culture e il mondo* (pp. 53–72). Roma: Viella."

The updated online version of the original book can be found at http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_10

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N. Pizzolato, J.D. Holst (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*, Critical Studies of Education 5, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40449-3_12

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