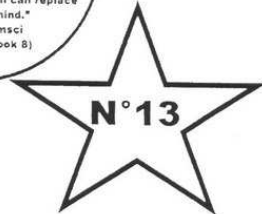


THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT- NEWSPAPER



"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 8)

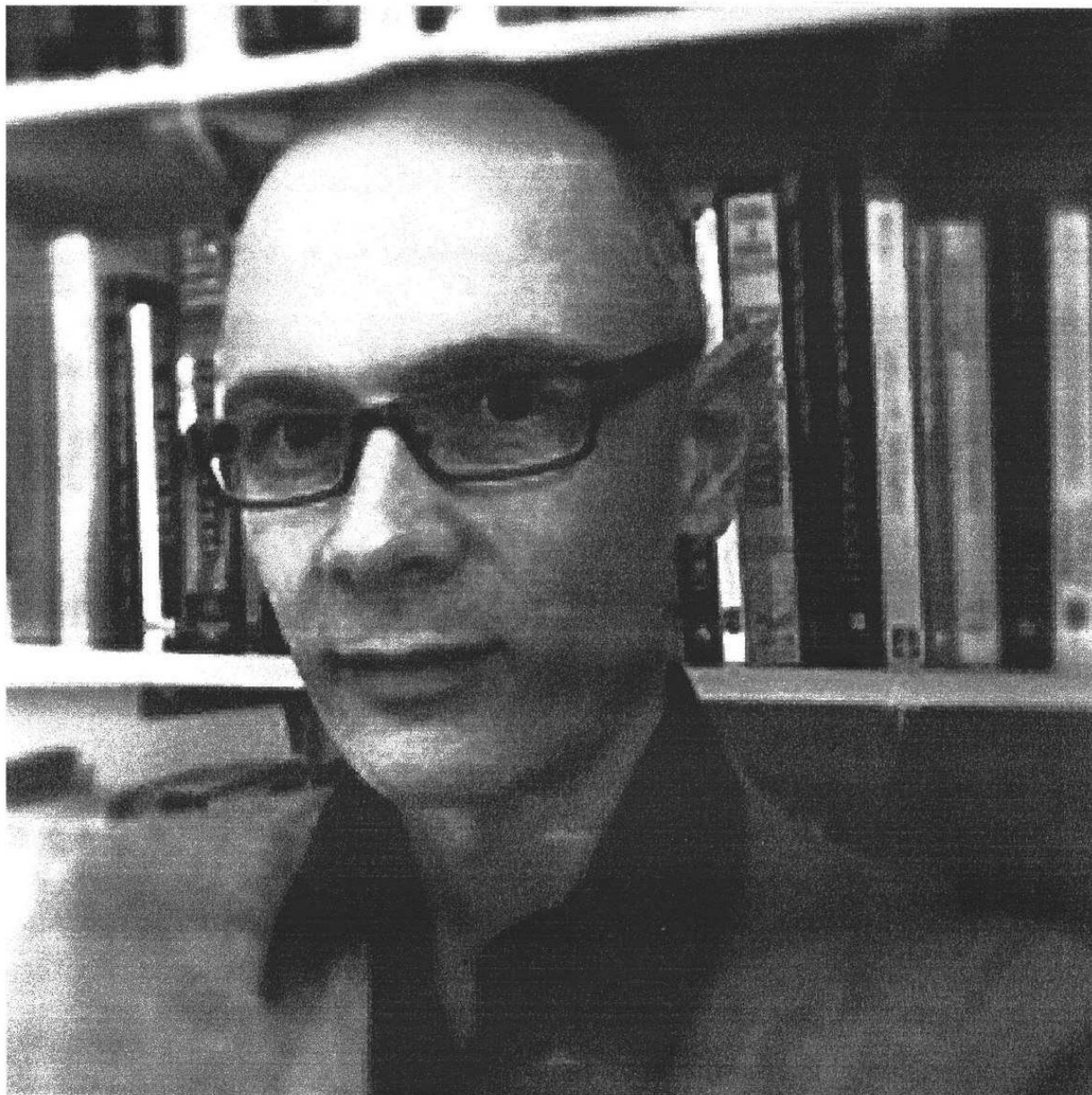


July 13th, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

The Gramsci Monument-Newspaper is part of the "Gramsci Monument", an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, produced by Dia Art Foundation in co-operation with Erik Farmer and the Residents of Forest Houses

RETHINKING GRAMSCI

EDITED BY MARCUS E. GREEN



ENTERING THE WORLD OF MARCUS E. GREEN AND
HIS OUTLOOK ON ANTONIO GRAMSCI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents/ Weather
- 3.-5. Re-Thinking Gramsci
- 6.-7. That's Blaxploitation
8. Ambassador's Note # 8
- 9.-10. A Daily Lecture/ Gramsci Theater
- 11.-12. Gramsci Life
13. Feedback/Poetry
14. Resident of the Day

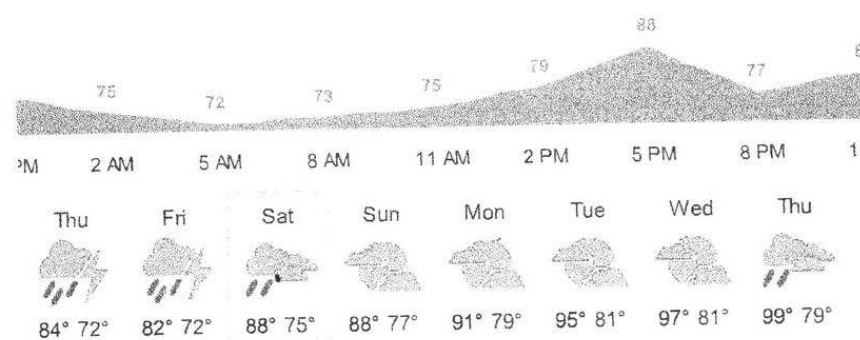
Bronx, NY 10456

Sat
Chance of Storm

 **88** °F | °C

Precipitation: 20%
Humidity: 68%
Wind: 8 mph

| Temperature | Precipitation | Wind |
|-------------|---------------|------|
|-------------|---------------|------|



Introduction

Rethinking Marxism and rethinking Gramsci

Marcus E. Green

This volume brings together twenty-two seminal essays on Antonio Gramsci previously published in the journal *Rethinking Marxism*. Since its founding in 1988, *Rethinking Marxism* has become one of the leading journals of critical Marxist thought in the world. In its project of rethinking Marxist theory from a non-determinist and non-dogmatic perspective, it has paid considerable attention to the work of the Italian Marxist theorist and activist Antonio Gramsci. The journal has published over three dozen articles on Gramsci's writings by leading scholars from around the globe,¹ and the journal's record of broad and critical focus on Gramscian thought is unsurpassed by any other English-language journal.

The project of *Rethinking Marxism* emerged from the work of Professors Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. In their approach to Marxist theory, Resnick and Wolff (1987) call into question the deterministic theories of knowledge, history, and society prevalent in orthodox forms of Marxism. The school of non-determinist Marxist thought that developed out of Resnick and Wolff's work – and out of *Rethinking Marxism* – has emphasized the analysis of the interconnection of economic, political, and cultural processes, along with the exploration and articulation of the philosophical positions that shape Marxist analyses. In the inaugural issue of *Rethinking Marxism*, the Editorial Board (1988) explained that the journal would “serve as a forum for the current resurgence of interest in Marxism,” particularly in the United States (5), maintain a “multi- and cross-disciplinary” focus (8), and contribute to the development of non-determinist Marxism, non-essentialist class analysis, and to the articulation of a distinct Marxist philosophy.

In rethinking Marxist epistemology and methodology from a non-determinist perspective, *Rethinking Marxism* drew upon Louis Althusser's notion of “overdetermination” to bring into focus the intersection of economics, culture, society, and politics. Recognizing that the concept had already received varied interpretations, the Editorial Board broadly conceived “overdetermination” as a way to move beyond essentialist and deterministic conceptions of political economy by emphasizing the multi-relational aspects of economic and social processes (Erçel *et al.* 2008; Ruccio 2009).² Initially, the journal's focus on the interconnection of social processes drew more heavily from Althusser's conception of “overdetermination” than from Gramsci's concepts of hegemony or historical bloc.³ However, in an article that appeared early in the project, which is included in this collection,

2 Marcus E. Green

Richard D. Wolff argues that Gramsci's “profoundly important” contribution to Marxism is the demonstration of “the complex, mutual interaction between philosophy and epistemology, on the one hand, and politics and economics, on the other” (1989, 41). For Wolff, Gramsci's non-determinist epistemology provides the basis for a non-dogmatic methodological approach to social theory and analysis that emphasizes the intricate and multifaceted relations among interconnected social processes. In Wolff's words: “To understand any event means to grasp how it occurs as the effect of all the other events in its environment and how it is simultaneously a contributing cause of all of them. Marxist analysis must be, for Gramsci, the specification of the complex, infinitely sided reciprocity linking and ceaselessly changing all events” (50).

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci carries out a systematic rethinking of Marxism that includes a consistent criticism of positivist and determinist formulations of Marxist thought. In Gramsci's view, positivism and economic determinism deradicalized and distorted Marxism by separating philosophy from practical activity. In Gramsci's view, the philosophical basis of economic determinism was founded upon a method of abstraction that separated social theory from the practical activity of history, in that it developed transhistorical nomological principles external to human practice. In Gramsci's view, abstract formulations that overlook the specificity of history and politics obscure the phenomena of political life and, in turn, inhibit radical political activity. Because of these apparent deformations and deradicalizations of Marxism, Gramsci sought to formulate a historicist method of social research that separated itself from speculative, metaphysical, and objectivist notions and focused on the practical aspects of politics and history. Gramsci conceived the methodology of Marxism as a “philosophy of praxis,” in which abstract concepts and categories are expressed in historical language and account for specific concrete situations and activity. Gramsci described the method of the philosophy of praxis as “living philology,” which signifies “the methodological expression” of ascertaining and specifying particular facts in their unique historical individuality and requires a “systematic exposition” of the practical standards for the research and interpretation of politics and history (Q11§25, Q16§3; Gramsci 1971, 427–30, 414–15).⁴ Following this view of Marxism, Gramsci formulates his theoretical concepts, categories, and generalizations based upon the investigation and observation of particular, concrete, and practical events and pieces of information and how they relate to broader relations, developments, and structures. In other words, Gramsci's concepts and generalizations are “historically determined,” meaning that they are founded on concrete historical practices rather than abstract or speculative notions.

In the current revitalization and rethinking of Marxism, especially after 1989, Gramsci has emerged as an important figure. It is his open, transdisciplinary way of thinking – particularly his refusal to replace concrete social and political analysis with reductionist theoretical models – that continues to generate international and contemporary attention. As Fabio Frosini (2008) recently remarked, given the amount of critical literature published on Gramsci in the last twenty years, it is possible to speak of a “world-wide Gramsci renaissance” (674), and according to Eric J. Hobsbawm (2010), Gramsci is “perhaps the most well-known and

influential Italian thinker of the [twentieth] century” (7). In fact, the international Gramsci bibliography, *Bibliografia Gramsciana*, maintained by the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome, includes nearly 16,000 titles in at least 27 languages on Gramsci's life and work.⁵

The idea of “rethinking Gramsci” in the title of this book is an homage to *Rethinking Marxism* but is also intended to evoke the idea of rethinking Gramsci in various politico-historical contexts, and to the idea of rethinking Gramsci, particularly in English-reading scholarship, in light of Joseph A. Buttigieg's project of publishing the complete English translation of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. Gramsci's contributions to social and political theory continue to draw interest across political and historical contexts due to the insights they generate in understanding the politics of the present. In 1947, when Gramsci's prison letters were first published in Italy, Benedetto Croce remarked that Gramsci attempted “to form a historical and philosophical perspective adequate to the problems of the present” (86). Even though the circumstances in which Gramsci conceived his ideas are far removed from the conditions of the present, Gramsci's method of analysis provides an example of how to think about the complexities of modern politics and society. As Stuart Hall pointed out in his influential article “Gramsci and Us” (1987), it is not that “Gramsci ‘has the answers’ or ‘holds the key’ to our present troubles,” but rather to “‘think’ our problems in a Gramscian way” offers insights in analyzing the nature of political life and the specificity of the historical conjuncture (Hall 1987, 16). However, the point is not – as many chapters in this volume warn – to transfer Gramsci's account of politics directly to our own, but rather to “translate” his philosophical and theoretical insights to the analysis of the changing conditions of the present. The idea of “translating” theoretical language conceived in one context to another is Gramscian in itself and requires a continual rethinking of past and present conditions from one context to the next and adapting one's theoretical perspective according to changing socio-political conditions and circumstances.⁶ The fact that Gramsci's ideas continue to elicit attention and generate analyses of situations that transcend his own context raises the issue of his status as a classic thinker. As the late Antonio Santucci (2010) noted, “it is common to regard as a genuine classic that which resists context-contingency and continues to be the basis of dialogue in subsequent generations, despite being an expression of another time” (165–6).⁷

The publication of the complete and critical English translation of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, although not yet complete, has presented the opportunity to rethink Gramsci in the Anglophone world.⁸ A philologically accurate translation of Gramsci's prison notebooks provides the necessary foundation to see how he worked, to follow the rhythm of his thought, and to see how he reached his conclusions. As I discuss in further detail below, five chapters included in this volume address the significance of Joseph A. Buttigieg's translation of Gramsci's notebooks. Although many commentators have derided the *Prison Notebooks* for their fragmentary, unfinished, and elliptical character, as a text the *Prison Notebooks* are in fact the embodiment of Gramsci's method. Gramsci's scrupulous attention to detail and the particular is apparent throughout the *Prison Notebooks*, and the complexity and open-ended nature of the *Prison Notebooks* attest to Gramsci's

4 Marcus E. Green

methodological commitment. Gramsci's overarching inquiry into Italian history, politics, and culture – which includes analyses of Italian customs, cultural practices, literature, philosophy, common sense, folklore, intellectuals and the relation between state and civil society – demonstrates his attempt to discern the meaning of particular social processes in relation to a broader ensemble of social relations.

As a journal, *Rethinking Marxism* has distinguished itself in Gramscian scholarship by its record of publishing articles on Gramsci from a variety of academic disciplines that follow this methodological approach and demonstrate how particular social processes and events interconnect with a broad ensemble of social relations. The articles that comprise this collection illustrate the emergence of Gramsci's importance in the revitalization of Marxism, the multidisciplinary nature of Gramsci's contributions to Marxist theory, as well as Gramsci's relevance to contemporary debates in political and social theory. The articles were written in the period from 1988 to 2010 and address a variety of issues in Gramsci's work. Rather than arranging the chapters in chronological order, I have organized the book in four sections, according to particular themes and applications of Gramsci's thought.

The first section of the book includes four chapters on cultural studies, literature, and criticism. The section opens with Stuart Hall's chapter “Race, Culture, and Communications: Looking Backward and Forward at Cultural Studies.” Even though he does not explicitly refer to Gramsci's work in this instance, Hall describes his innovative Gramscian approach to cultural studies. As Hall writes, “cultural studies insists on the necessity to address the central, urgent, and disturbing questions of a society and culture in the most rigorous intellectual way we have available.” The chapters by Paul Bové and Daniel O'Connell address Gramsci's observations on literature and criticism. Bové's chapter focuses specifically on Gramsci's reading of Canto X of Dante's *Inferno*. Bové shows that Gramsci's alternative reading of Canto X provides insights into Gramsci's cultural and political concerns regarding representation and leadership. In his chapter, O'Connell contrasts Gramsci's views on Sinclair Lewis's *Babbalanza* with James Joyce's character Leopold Bloom from *Ulysses*. Through an examination of the two characters' national and class positions, O'Connell sheds light on Gramsci's broader comparison of American and European intellectuals, culture, and political economy. Following Stuart Hall's suggestion of thinking our problems in a “Gramscian way,” Marcia Landy rethinks the idea of “socialist education” in capitalist societies, utilizing Gramsci's concept of “common sense” as a basis to examine existing intellectual positions and practices. As Landy argues, it is necessary to “explore, identify, and criticize – not prescribe – the various elements that constitute common sense” in order to initiate the struggle for “good sense” and to explore the possibilities of alternative political formations.

The second section of the book includes chapters that address the explication and application of Gramsci's major concepts. The first chapter in the section by Derek Boothman provides a meticulous analysis of the sources of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which has been a contentious issue in Gramscian studies, especially since the publication of Perry Anderson's article “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci” (1976) and Franco Lu. Bignardi's book “Gramsci's Hegemony” (2004).

in Gramsci (1979). In my contribution, "Gramsci Cannot Speak: Presentations and Interpretations of Gramsci's Concept of the Subaltern," I provide an explication of Gramsci's concept of the "subaltern" within the overall project of the *Prison Notebooks*. In his chapter, Cosimo Zene criticizes the *Subaltern Studies* project for largely ignoring the experience of Dalits in its rethinking of South Asian history. In a somewhat similar approach to Landy, Evan Watkins takes up the Gramscian notion of "common sense" as a way to inventory and begin to demystify the contradictions in everyday economic practices that are reinforced by "capitalist common sense." In "Gramsci's Theory of Trade Unionism," which happens to be the first article *Rethinking Marxism* published on Gramsci, Frank R. Annunziato examines Gramsci's views on trade unionism in relation to his party activity and the factory council movement. As Annunziato points out, the significance of Gramsci's political activity prior to his imprisonment is often ignored or minimized in intellectual discussions of Gramsci's work. In a close reading of the notes "On Some Aspects of the Sexual Question" from Notebook 22, the thematic notebook on *Americanism and Fordism*, Nelson Moe examines "how Gramscian and feminist approaches to the politics of culture might productively feed off one another." In an application of Gramsci's writings to global politics, Adam David Morton shows how neo-Gramscian perspectives in international political economy provide an alternative to mainstream international relations theory by presenting a critical theory of hegemony that focuses on social forces, relations of production, the state, and the global economic order. In response to the criticism that post-Marxism is incapable of producing effective radical politics, Richard Howson argues that post-Marxists must re-engage with the ethical-political foundations of Gramsci's concept of hegemony to develop a national-popular consciousness capable of transcending the pluralism of identity politics that post-Marxism often reinforces.

The third section of the book includes articles on Gramsci's political philosophy and relationship to Marxism. The section opens with Richard D. Wolff's chapter "Gramsci, Marxism, and Philosophy," which I discussed above. This is followed by Carlos Nelson Coutinho's chapter. In considering Gramsci's political thought within the tradition of modern political philosophy, Coutinho argues that "Gramsci was in dialogue not only with Marx and Lenin, or Machiavelli (which is unequivocal), but also, if at times implicitly, with other great names of modern political philosophy – Rousseau and Hegel in particular." Coutinho shows how Gramsci draws upon and overcomes the limits of Rousseau's notion of "general will" and Hegel's notion of "universal will" with the notion of "national-popular collective will" and the concept of hegemony. The chapter by Wolfgang Fritz Haug examines Gramsci's conception of the "philosophy of praxis." Haug argues that Gramsci's interpretation of Marxism as a philosophy of praxis "wipes out [the] fatalistic evolutionisms, objectivisms, and the false guarantees of a philosophy of history, which have residually afflicted Marxian thinking and which grew like mildew on the official Marxisms." Haug argues that by reintroducing a dialectical approach to Marxian thinking, Gramsci was able to develop the philosophy of praxis in coordination with three concrete fields of investigation: the systematic study of political and cultural foundations, the formation of "popular-national"

literature and culture, and the analysis of modes of production, particularly the analysis of Americanism and Fordism. Through an explication of Gramsci's notion of the dialectic and his critique of Benedetto Croce, Steven R. Mansfield responds to the arguments that, on the one hand, Gramsci retains an essentialist understanding of politics that limits the articulation of identity and difference, and, on the other, that Gramsci retained an understanding of the dialectic that did not transcend Crocean idealism. Mansfield argues that "Gramsci's dialectics is fundamentally different from Croce's" and that the dialectic of identity and difference is central to Gramsci's understandings of hegemony, historical bloc, and political struggle. Although there appears to be many similarities between Gramsci's ideas in the *Prison Notebooks* and the ideas of various postmodern thinkers, such as questions concerning knowledge, ideology, and science, Esteve Morera argues that "Gramsci remained a modern thinker" and retained modernist concepts, such as epistemological realism, objectivity, and integral history. Morera notes that his reading of Gramsci differs from Resnick and Wolff's (1987) reading, and his interpretation of Gramsci's epistemology differs from the interpretation that Wolff presents in the first chapter of this section.

The fourth and final section draws together a group of articles on the translation and organization of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. The articles specifically address Buttigieg's critical English translation of Gramsci's complete *Prison Notebooks* (1992, 1996, 2007). When finished, Buttigieg's edition will make available for the first time a complete English translation of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* and provide a philologically accurate representation of Gramsci's work in English. The chapters in this section developed out of a symposium on Buttigieg's translation at the 2003 *Rethinking Marxism* International Conference held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. David Ruccio writes that reading the critical edition of the *Prison Notebooks* presented "the discovery of a new Gramsci" for him, the discovery of new concepts, contexts, themes, and applications. In particular, Ruccio discusses how Gramsci's concept of hegemony "can be utilized to illuminate contemporary issues and problems," such as the global justice movement and the Bush administration's ascendance to power. Joseph W. Childers discusses how Buttigieg's translation revives Gramsci's work and how Buttigieg's critical apparatus allows the reader "to see how intimately connected Gramsci's notes are – how ideas develop and change over time, and in the face of enormously oppressive material circumstances." Peter Ives considers Buttigieg's translation of the *Prison Notebooks* in light of Gramsci's own views on translation. Ives points out that for Gramsci translation is not merely the transmission of information from one language to another but is also a metaphor "for political and cultural analysis, for reading Marx, and for revolution itself." Thus, as Ives argues, translation in the wider sense ultimately includes a political project of cross-cultural analysis and alteration. In his chapter, William V. Spanos focuses on Buttigieg's discussion of Gramsci's method in the introduction to volume 1 of the *Prison Notebooks* (1992) to highlight the importance of the "structural principle" of the notebooks themselves. In following Buttigieg's point that the fragmentariness of the notebooks is not an impediment to be overcome, Spanos points out that the seemingly disparate topics of Gramsci's notes are in fact indicative of his open-ended, aporetic, and

"transdisciplinary mode of inquiry." In elaborating on this idea, Buttigieg explains that the fragmentariness of Gramsci's notebooks does not necessarily distort their meaning, but rather that the incompleteness of the notebooks themselves illustrate the "patently decentered, open, tentative, provisional, exploratory" nature of Gramsci's project. It is Gramsci's openness and attention to particular phenomena, rather than a desire to define a system of thought, that enriches his work. As Buttigieg points out, Gramsci viewed philology as the methodology suitable to the philosophy of praxis, for its insistence on the importance of the particular. In picking up on Ives' observation regarding translation, Buttigieg notes that translation involves a "double move" that implies a rethinking of the text and context: "it brings the translated author into the present conjuncture, and it simultaneously brings to bear on the author the discourse of the current reader and interpreter." As the chapters in this section demonstrate, Buttigieg's edition has marked the beginning of a new phase of Gramscian studies in the Anglophone world, in which scholars have begun to rethink Gramsci, the complexity of his writing, and his interweaving analyses of economics, society, politics, and culture. The incorporation of Gramscian insights into the project of *Rethinking Marxism* demonstrates his importance in the revitalization of Marxism. The chapters included in this volume illustrate the multidisciplinary nature of Gramscian thought in the context of *Rethinking Marxism*, and how thinking in a Gramscian way can produce new understandings of the intersection of economic, political, and cultural processes. As long as Gramsci's writings continue to generate insight into analyses of the present conjuncture, he will remain an important thinker. However, such a process requires a continual rethinking of Gramsci and of the historical materialities of the past and present.

6 Gramsci cannot speak

Presentations and interpretations of Gramsci's concept of the subaltern

Marcus E. Green

Gramsci's concept of the subaltern, like many of his other concepts, is often referred to and appropriated by others but rarely defined or systematically analyzed within Gramsci's own work. In fact, Gramsci's conception of the subaltern is often misunderstood and misappropriated. The main reason for such misunderstanding is that many English-reading scholars and critics of Gramsci's work have relied heavily or exclusively on Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci 1971). The *Selections* include only a few of Gramsci's notes on the subaltern and, because the notes appear in a section with some of Gramsci's notes on the Italian Risorgimento and fall under the title of "Notes on Italian History," it appears that Gramsci's interest in the subaltern, as a concept, is related to his investigation of the Risorgimento, while in fact Gramsci's interest in the subaltern is a part of his overarching inquiry into Italian history, politics, culture, and the relation between state and civil society. From the notes included in the *Selections*, it is not apparent or even suggested that Gramsci wrote many notes on the subaltern or that he devoted an entire notebook to the concept.

Gramsci's notion of subaltern social groups does not immediately appear in the prison notebooks as a clearly defined concept; Gramsci develops the concept over a period of time. In his first notebook (1929–30), Gramsci uses the term "subaltern" in the literal sense, referring to noncommissioned military troops who are subordinate to the authority of lieutenants, colonels, and generals (Notebook 1, §48, §54).¹ In later notes, he uses the term figuratively, in nonmilitary instances, in regard to positions of subordination or lower status. For instance, toward the end of Notebook 1, Gramsci states that the "[Church] is no longer an ideological world power but only a subaltern force" (§139). In Notebook 4, Gramsci makes an interesting entry regarding the issue of how to study Marx's unfinished works and notes edited by Engels after Marx's death. Gramsci does not question Engels's "absolute personal loyalty" to Marx, but raises the issue that Engels is "lacking in theoretical skills (or at least occupies a subaltern position in relation to Marx)" (Notebook 4, §1). It is in this figurative or metaphorical sense that Gramsci uses the term "subaltern" when referring to subordinate social groups or classes. In Notebook 3, §14, Gramsci first uses the term "subaltern" with regard to social class. He writes, "Subaltern classes are subject to the initiatives of the dominant class, even when they rebel; they are in a state of anxious defense." It

is in this sense that subaltern groups are subordinate to a ruling group's policies and initiatives.

Between 1929 and 1930, Gramsci wrote several notes referring to subaltern groups in his notebooks that contained miscellaneous notes. In 1934 he began Notebook 25, which was a "special," thematic notebook devoted exclusively to the subaltern, entitled "On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups)." In this Notebook, he began to copy, regroup, rewrite, and expand the notes from his earlier notebooks.² In Notebook 25, Gramsci identifies slaves, peasants, religious groups, women, different races, and the proletariat as subaltern social groups (Gramsci 1975, 3:2279–94).³ His historical focus includes ancient Rome, the medieval communes, and the modern state as well as a discussion of the bourgeoisie as a subaltern group that transformed its sociopolitical position after the Risorgimento. Many of the notes that comprise the sixteen pages of the Notebook are extensive, while others provide short memoranda and bibliographic references to work that Gramsci most likely planned to read or re-read in the process of his research. Because Gramsci took the time to organize and rewrite the notes in a separate notebook, one can assume that his thoughts and ideas on the subaltern were developing, that he planned to expand his work, and that he was interested in producing an actual history of subaltern groups.

In an investigation of Gramsci's concept of the subaltern, as with most of Gramsci's writings, one must recognize the fact that Gramsci was unable to finish his inquiry. Due to his incarceration, Gramsci did not have access to the books and historical records he required, and when he was able to proceed with the materials that were available to him, he was under surveillance and in poor health. In this sense, Gramsci produced his work in a subaltern or subordinate position; he was subject to the prison authorities and the Fascist government and could not work freely. Therefore, one should keep in mind that Gramsci's notes on the subaltern, as with all his prison notes, are exactly that: they are notes. They are fragmentary, unfinished, and cryptic, but they nonetheless contain great insights. Nevertheless, even though Gramsci did not write his last word on the subaltern, he left a substantial amount of writing that can provide one with a partial understanding of the concept as he viewed it. But since the notes are not complete, one should attempt to understand Gramsci's concept of the subaltern within the totality of the prison notebooks and general trajectory of his thought.

Gramsci's interest in the subaltern was threefold. From his notes, it is clear that he was interested in producing a methodology of subaltern historiography, a history of the subaltern classes, and a political strategy of transformation based upon the historical development and existence of the subaltern. This threefold approach creates a nexus where a variety of Gramsci's concepts converge. History, politics, literary criticism, and cultural practices are all under consideration in his analysis of subaltern history. In his notes, Gramsci is interested in how the subaltern came into being, what sociopolitical relations caused their formation, what political power they hold, how they are represented in history and literature, and how they can transform their consciousness and, in turn, their lived conditions. In this sense, the concept of the subaltern interrelates with Gramsci's other concepts, thoughts, and strategies of radical sociopolitical transformation. In order for one

RETHINKING GRAMSCI

Subaltern (postcolonialism)

In the critical fields of post-colonialism, the term **subaltern** identifies and describes the man, the woman, and the social group who is socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial Mother Country. In describing "history told from below," the term *subaltern* derived from the cultural hegemony work of Antonio Gramsci, which identified the social groups who are excluded from a society's established structures for political representation, the means by which people have a voice in their society.

edited by
Marcus E. Green

70 Marcus E. Green

to understand how Gramsci understood the subaltern, one must understand how the subaltern relates to Gramsci's thought as a whole. In fact, isolating Gramsci's notion of the subaltern as a separate concept from the rest of his thought is a difficult, if not impossible, task. His analysis of the subaltern is interwoven with his political, social, intellectual, literary, cultural, philosophical, religious, and economic analyses.

THAT'S BLAXPLOITATION!



Courtesy of Photofest.



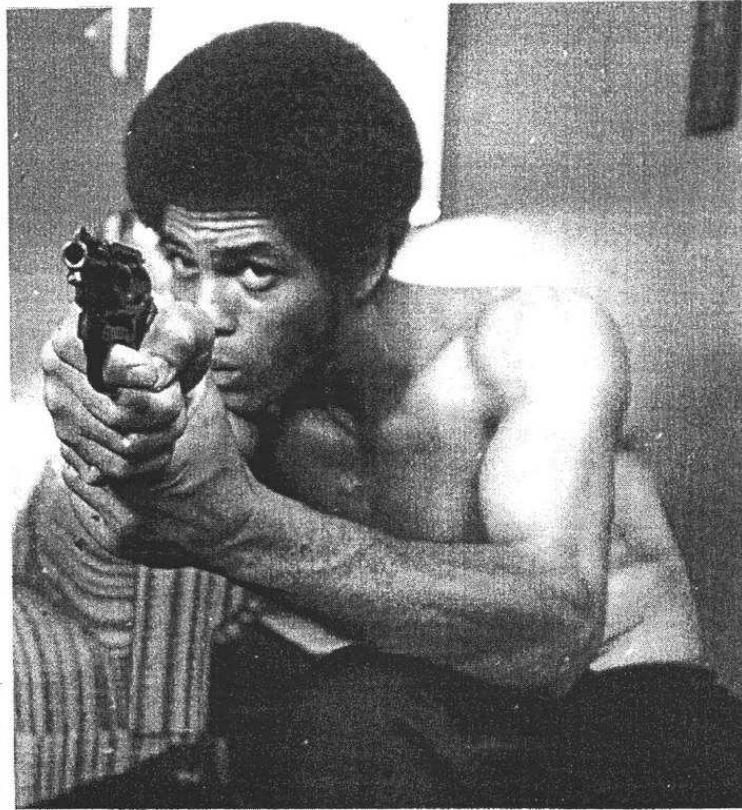
AMBASSADOR'S CORNER NOTE # 8 BY Yasmil Raymond

Arguably, the character of the encounters that I have been experiencing at the monument is partly constructed by the subject of the monument itself. The other day while touring the exhibition with a group of young adults who signed up for internships, we ended up discussing Gramsci's prison sentence. The conversation reached a full stop when I used the word Fascism. The blank expression on their faces anticipated the question from a young woman who asked that I explain the meaning of the word. Leaving aside the difficulty of improvising a succinct definition to the belligerent principles of this political ideology, the greater challenge was to admit that elements of this totalitarian project continue to influence new forms of extreme nationalism and xenophobia today.

DEFINITION OF FASCISM FROM MERRIAM WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY

fas·cism \ˈfɑ-,ʃi-zəm also ˈfɑ-,si-\ n [It *fascismo*, fr. *fascio* bundle, *fasces*, group, fr. L *fascis* bundle & *fasces* fasces] (1921) **1** often cap: a political philosophy, movement, or regime (as that of the Fascisti) that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition **2**: a tendency toward or actual exercise of strong autocratic or dictatorial control (early instances of army ~ and brutality — J. W. Aldridge) — **fas·cist** \-ʃɪst also -sɪst\ n or adj, often cap — **fas·cis·tic** \fɑ-'ʃɪs-tɪk also -'sɪs-\ adj, often cap — **fas·cis·ti·cal·ly** \-ti-k(ə-)lē\ adv, often cap
Fa·sci·sta \fɑ-'ʃē-(,)stə\ n, pl **-sti** \-(,)stē\ [It, fr. *fascio*] (1921): a member of an Italian political organization under Mussolini governing Italy 1922–1943 according to the principles of fascism
fash \ˈfɑʃ\ vb [MF *fascher*, fr. (assumed) VL *fastidiare* to disgust, fr. L *fastidium* disgust — more at FASTIDIOUS] (1533) chiefly Scot: VEX —

JIM KELLY



Courtesy of PhotoFest.

Tournament black-belt karate champ Jim Kelly's first film appearance was in something called *Gas World*. This was followed by *Melinda*, a film on which he also functioned as technical advisor for its karate sequences.

For the role of Williams in Bruce Lee's *Enter The Dragon*, a role that would establish his reputation as a martial arts star, Jim Kelly was not its producers' first choice. Rockne "Black Samson" Tarkington, who was also in *Melinda*, was originally cast but quit because, according to the director, Robert Clouse, in *The Making of "Enter the Dragon,"* he thought either:

1. They weren't paying him enough. Or
2. The script was a piece of shit laden with racial slurs.

Kelly was hired one day before principal cast and crew left for Hong Kong.

As a result of co-starring in the enormously successful *Enter The Dragon* (though, curiously, it didn't perform that well in the Asian market on its release) and the crossover in audiences for black action films and martial arts movies, Jim Kelly emerged as a major box office attraction in *Black Belt Jones* (a film I first saw in Bogotá, Colombia, with a gentleman who learned to speak English by watching American blaxploitation films).

Unfortunately, the remainder of Kelly's short film career in the seventies was left to the likes of Al Adamson, thus leaving a legacy of mostly unwatchable sleep-inducers. In spite of all that, Kelly more than likely continues as a martial arts instructor, a champion in the lives of those he guides; and certainly a champion in my eyes if for no better reason than his prominent sideburns.



Courtesy of PhotoFest.

Black Belt Jones

(1974)

[On Video]

PRODUCERS: Fred Weintraub (Story), Paul Heller; DIRECTOR: Robert Clouse; SCREENWRITER: Oscar Williams (Associate Producer); STORY: Alex Rose; MUSIC: Luchi De Jesus (Music Director); MUSIC THEME: Dennis Coffey (Arranger).

CAST: Jim Kelly (Black Belt Jones); Gloria Hendry (Sidney Byrd); and Scatman Crothers (Pop Byrd).

Heller and Weintraub experienced an unusual stroke of good fortune with their production of *Enter the Dragon*—the legendary Bruce Lee died before the film's release (which, obviously, was part of the same conspiracy that took out Jimi, Janis and Jim). And, as a result of the tons of free publicity garnered by his death, the two producers made almost enough money to buy all the tea in China. So, as their follow-up feature, they contracted black black-belt champ Jim Kelly as Lee's replacement, blended blaxploitation with Kung Fu, hired *Enter the Dragon* director Robert Clouse and gave us another hood-against-da-hoods scenario called *Black Belt Jones*—worth the rental to watch Scatman Crothers finally kick some honkie butt!

GRAMSCI THEATER

WRITTEN BY MARCUS STEINWEG

SCENE 7: ONTOLOGICAL POVERTY

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "LIBRARY.")

Enter: Adorno, Nancy, Derrida, Müller, Nietzsche, Deleuze, Gramsci, Duras, Nancy, Heidegger, Badiou, Hegel, Derrida, First Marxist, Brecht

ADORNO
No man matches the image of man..

NANCY
Man does not own himself.

DERRIDA
He possesses his possessionlessness.
That is not nothing.

NANCY
No more to it than that.

MÜLLER
There is positive nihilism.

NIETZSCHE
Active nihilism.

MÜLLER
Nihilism that activates.

DELEUZE
Spinozism.

GRAMSCI
Activism.

DELEUZE
The affirmation of reality.

GRAMSCI
You take it as it is.

NIETZSCHE
Saying yes to it does not mean that you endorse it.

DELEUZE
Saying yes is not the same as endorsement.

NIETZSCHE
I'm dreaming of a new enlightenment.

DURAS
What is enlightenment?

MÜLLER
Enlightenment is a new look at the world.

DELEUZE
Enlightenment made the mistake of thinking that man is not an animal.

NANCY
Man does not blend into the humane.

GRAMSCI
We mustn't lose hope.
We must concentrate.

MÜLLER
The only hope are the mistakes, the accidents—the things that don't work.

GRAMSCI
The only chance we have is to enlighten the enlightenment about itself.

HEIDEGGER
Fucking enlightenment.

NIETZSCHE
Humanism's mistake was to separate man from animal.

BADIOU
Man is the animal that has ideas.

HEGEL
A terminally ill animal.

DERRIDA
More monstrous than any animal.

MÜLLER
More bestial.

DERRIDA
The man beast.

HEIDEGGER (quoting Sophocles)
There is much that is uncanny, but nothing is uncanner than man.

MÜLLER
Reconciliation with our animality is a requisite of a more humane civilization.

HEIDEGGER
Reconciliation with our uncanniness.

DELEUZE
Becoming animal and becoming man are complementary.

HEGEL
I am not talking about the animal in man.
I am talking about the man in animals.

FIRST MARXIST
What about morals?

BRECHT
First a full stomach, then morality.

MATERIAL 7: FRACTURE

The new thought, which is indebted to *Nietzsche's Revolution*, fractures all humanisms that rely on a stable identity of *homo humanus*. It fractures all those phantasms that promise the finite subject an infinite future and that guarantee an absolute origin. Starting with the fracture in man, it starts to think this fracture itself, and fractures man as such, not in order to make him disappear without a trace but rather in order to define him as a dwindling trace of his self (of that which he never *really* was). "This fracture cannot be eliminated because it is the greatest subject matter of thought: man can neither eliminate it nor patch it up, because in man the fracture is the end of man or the origin of thought. A cogito for the dissolved self..." (Gilles Deleuze). Thought after the death of God must start with the impossibility of man, with an originary, empty subject, and a primally dispersed cogito, whose task, from now on, lies in confronting this emptiness and dispersion, instead of working at a substantial beginning and a grounded finality.

A DAILY LECTURE BY Marcus Steinweg

1) Art exists only as an assertion.

2) Every assertion is headless, blind and exaggerated. To assert headlessness itself demands of art a kind of breathless precision.

3) The subject of art is a subject of this self-assertion. It asserts itself as a subject of breathlessness which leads it to the limit of its being as subject. By subject I denote that which is irreducible to its status as object, to its objective reality. The object-status constitutes the subject's portion of reality. A subject is what transcends, transgresses, surpasses this reality since it is something other than an object codified and represented in the realm of facts. The factual codification of the subject can be neither disputed nor made absolute. It is nothing other than a fact. In relation to this fact, the subject asserts itself as a nameless resistance in order at no time to assimilate itself to the authority of facts.

4) The subject's world is not a universe of familiarity into which it were inserted like an object. The subject is not in the world like *water in water*. It articulates a distance from its world by remaining irreducible to its world-horizon. Therefore, one must insist on its artificiality and its heterogeneity; it is nothing natural, but something made, pure and simple. A theory of art has to make a connection with a theory of the subject, because the subject has the status of something made, of a construction. The subject asserts its subject-form, among other things, through the assertions of form which are artworks.

5) Art is always violent, always over-hasty, always too fast. Art is invention and construction. Art is a-natural: artificial. Its constructivism unites its activity and its technicism. Art owes its progressive character to the will to assert a form that makes chaos precise. Art exists only as an assertion of form which accelerates beyond what is well-known, while refusing to allow itself to be assimilated to any kind of *nature*. The alliance with the *natural* is necessarily regressive. It enters a coalition with a metaphysics of the origin which is at work in all attempts to stabilize the present by recurring to the past. Art is a transgressing and transcending of naturalism and originism. The new in art is too new to be old like an origin.

6) The artwork neither articulates its intimacy with nature and the origins, nor does it declare its solidarity with the *Zeitgeist*. Art exists only as a conflict with its time. Every genuine artwork comes from the future, never from the past. Poor art can be recognized by its sentimentality, nostalgia, admiration of the past, in short, by its inability to make the future precise. Instead of competing with documentation and historical work, it is always a matter of giving a form today, here and now, to the formlessness of tomorrow. Art includes the courage to give answers to questions that do not pre-exist. There is no art beyond the affirmation of something new. No matter how much, as demanded by the Aristotelean perspective, it has to refer to what already exists, no matter how much it remains embedded in the material texture, the new rewrites it so much that in it the new appears as something unforeseen.

7) Art is not a reaction. Instead of responding to a situation, art is a traversal, transgression and transcending of its economic, political, social, cultural determination. The transcending of its relative conditions is the absolute precondition for art. The transgressive transcending of these conditions is affirmative because it holds itself open to the beyond of realities as possibilities. An opening that tears the subject from its embrace with reality.

8) Art was never anything other than an agreement with the fragility of its time. Art does not come from a stable situation; it is the experience of the instability of instituted reality. Art exists only as the experience of the porosity of the system of facts. Therefore, for art there can be no alliance with the facts, which does not mean, however, that it disputes or misrecognizes their power. But art does not exhaust itself by demonstrating this non-misrecognition through the analytical power which it also has. As long as art does not transgress and transcend its knowing, it is not art. It would be nothing other than a form of self-reassurance of the subject within the web of its critically commentated situation. Only an assertion of form, that evades narcissistic self-reassurance by articulating the fleetingness of factual certainties, succeeds in confronting the universal inconsistency which is the subject's genuine, proper time and its genuine, proper place, for, to be a subject means to transgress the horizon of facts in order to give room to the experience of a primordial tornness, which is the subject's truth, by asserting a new form. I call this tornness the incommensurability of a life which, as the life of a subject, accelerates beyond its representation as a subject in the field of aesthetic, social, political and cultural evidence. The subject does not articulate this distance only subsequently. It is nothing other than the distance which it articulates toward the authority of facts. It distances itself from the world of the conceptual and aesthetic codes which suggest to it the illusion of a firm identity, while reducing it to its status as object. Resistance to this reduction means lifting oneself up in view of factual reality, opening up to the

13th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument,

The Bronx, NYC: 13th July 2013

TRANSCENDENTAL HEADLESSNESS

Marcus Steinweg

GRAMSCI'S COMMUNITY



4. *Scorcio della via principale.*

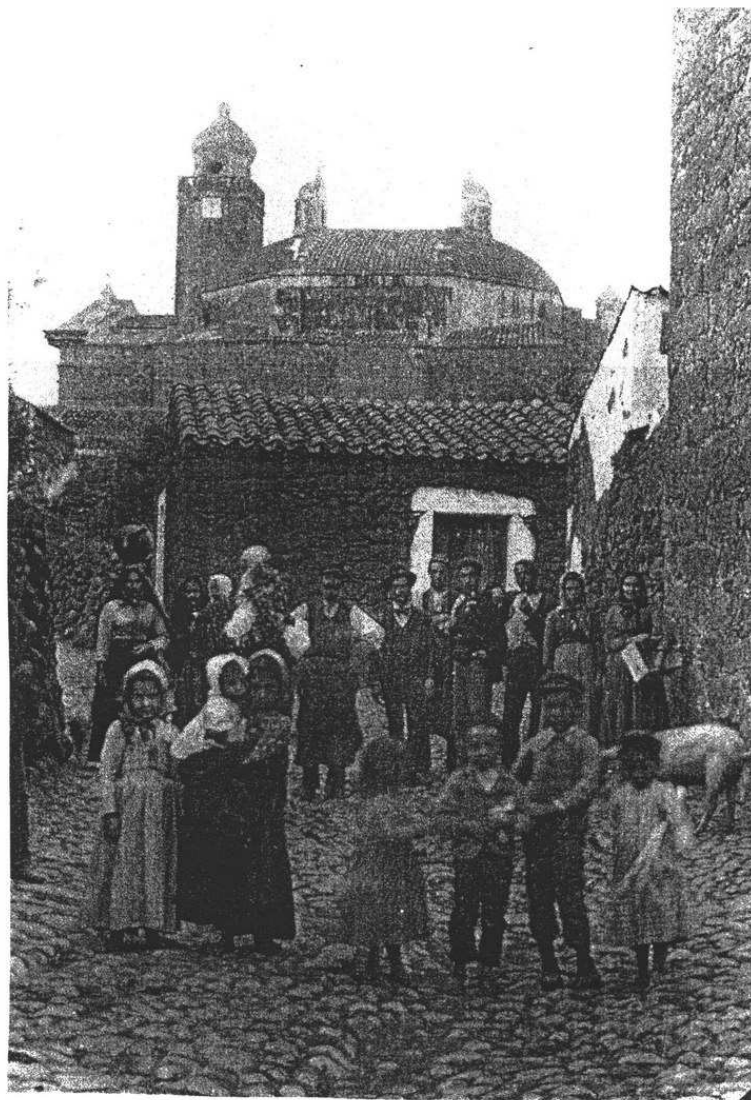
MAIN STREET

5. *Piazza Brancaleone Doria.*



MAIN SQUARE

6. *Testimonianze di vita popolare nella Gbilarza dei primi del Novecento.*



HOW THE TOWN PEOPLE LOOK
AND DRESSED IN THE 1900'S



1. *Panorama di Ghilarza ai primi del Novecento.*

PANORAMA VIEW OF THE TOWN
OF GHILARZA AT THE
BEGINNING OF THE 1900'S

WHATS GOING ON? FEEDBACK

A stag in the middle of the Bronx

By Sacha Verna. Updated on 09/07/2013

The latest work by the Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn is far from dignified of New York's museums in the Bronx. The Gramsci Monument is a community center in an art form.



Factbox

Thomas Hirschhorn: Gramsci monument to 15th September in the Bronx, New York.
www.gramsci-monument.com

Monuments attract not usually with pool and lounge area. But not ordinary guesting also like gigantic monuments garden furniture for one summer in a forest of social housing, such as the recent work of Thomas Hirschhorn. The **Gramsci Monument** is the fourth and last in a series that began the 56-year-old Swiss artist in 1999 with the monument of Spinoza in Amsterdam. Hirschhorn, who has lived in Paris since 1984, became internationally known with his "art engagé." His socially critical installations ranging from street altars for writers to "Crystal of Resistance", a dump of the consumer age, represented at the Venice Biennale in 2011 with which he his home.

The construction of the monument Gramsci, sponsored by the prestigious Dia Art Foundation, began in June. Thomas Hirschhorn recruited for workers from the immediate neighborhood and pulled himself into an apartment of Forest Houses, where he intends to stay until the end of the project in mid-September. The presence of the artist is central to Hirschhorn's conception of art as well as the terms "love", "politics", "philosophy" and "aesthetics." "Love" and "Politics" is because even on signs two basketball hoops near the Gramsci bar.

Gramsci's slippers and one dollar hot dogs

A staghorn Monument is a community center in an art form. Or art in the form of a community center, made of chipboard, tape and plexiglass. Materials from the do-it-yourself department constitute a further feature of Hirschhorn's work. In the Bronx from a library of books by and about Antonio Gramsci have emerged and showcases with the slippers and the dishes that had used the Marxist thinker, he was put into prison under Mussolini. There is a computer room and a workshop for a radio station with a house DJ and philosopher, who at 17 clock gives a talk every day, about Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example, or ontological narcissism. So far, the visitors speak particularly the one-dollar hot dogs at the bar. And float in the computer room, the children in the game nirvana.

He wanted the "Monument" redefine Thomas Hirschhorn explains: "This can not be, if they put it on the Rockefeller Plaza or Park Avenue." There already prevails enough monumentality. However monumental in a ghetto like the Forrest Houses is the misery, the elegant man not encountered in the Chelsea gallery district. He was not a social worker, said Thomas Hirschhorn, his mission is the art. It's art as employment and fun program for the less well that serve as henchmen, object and audience at the same time. Patronizing exploitation of Kunstmessianismus tutu? Not at all. For Gramsci Besserbemittelte the monument is an uplifting alternative to the Bronx Zoo.

RESIDENT OF THE DAY



REGINALD BOONE