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Pizzolato, N., Holst, J.D. (eds) *Antonio Gramsci: A Pedagogy to Change the World*. Critical Studies of Education, vol 5. Springer, Cham.

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"Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship." (*Quaderno* 10:44; in the text, p.17; p.37; pp.176-7; p.199)

This book about Gramsci and education presents 11 chapters of intensive writing that argue for the continued relevance of the Sardinian intellectual. The contributions are from English-speaking and Italian authors, especially introducing the latter to Anglo-Saxon readers. The themes attract specific research interests and include what those familiar with Gramsci would expect, among others, hegemony, politics, praxis, power, language, teachers, subalterns. Interestingly, the most direct references to actual groups (and to social class discourse) are from Latin America.

The framework

The thematic map of the book - pedagogy, politics, culture – emerges from the first couple of pages. There, editors Pizzolato and Holst's intention is aptly phrased as, "reading Gramsci pedagogically" (p.2), with the related proviso that, "politics bore down on everyday life" (p.1). This resonates with Showstack Sassoon's *Foreword* argument, that keeping in touch with what there is, is not necessarily a condition of our choosing. It is wise to take all this into consideration when embarking on a Gramsci-inspired (pedagogy to) change (the world).

The economic system is not given much space. It can be subsumed within Showstack Sassoon's above-mentioned 'what there is' and receives fair attention in Tarlau's piece on the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST), and in a couple of other chapters. The rest is mostly superstructural. Thus, the mode of production changes when the social relations of capitalist production

become more democratic (Mayo, p.39) and it 'affects' but does not 'rigorously determine' politics (Fusaro, p.73). Workers are "the dominant factor in history" determining the economy rather than vice versa, once they understand, judge, and adapt it to their will (Tarlau quotes Gramsci, p.111). However, when Mayo describes the integral state becoming the neoliberal state (p.39), and until this is the case, *les jeux sont faits*. The imposition of the two Marios, Monti and Draghi, on Italian democratic politics clarifies. Marx (1859) anticipated this, stating that a social order can only be destroyed, and new superior relations of production replace older ones when *material conditions* for the new are present or in formation (our emphasis).

A book about education offers an opportunity for engaging with subjectivities. It could be less complex than Pagano's quantitative development becoming qualitative, described as the past becoming present, history becoming politics, theory becoming practice. Also questionable is the matter of staged histories of relation of forces progressing along subjective, cathartic passages leading toward raised consciousness (see Holst and Brookfield, pp.216-7). Nonetheless, in spite of style and "unquestionable destiny" (Tarlau, p.113), the texts assist in reading Gramsci pedagogically.

Social class and middle strata

Hillert maintains that social classes are objectively determined by their position in terms of production. However, since the middle class is not structurally in conflict against any other it is strictly not a social class and so she adopts 'middle strata' where a defining subjective feature, constructing a social identity, is more relevant. Along with multitude, crowd, pueblo, and others, this suggests social theory freed from an exclusive structural interest in class conflict. Ultimately, the social unit adopted is not merely a definitional problem; it points at political strategy. Post-Marxist Laclau is just round the corner. So, it is surprising that in this book, populism is hardly dealt with and, perhaps, countered.

Institutional agency and strategy

With subjective development firmly in mind, Fusaro picks the political party as the agent responsible for organisation and education. Free from economic determination but also spontaneity, "politics and the party are required to guide this cultural formation" (p.73). The claim is for a "subjectively defined outcome" instead of "an extra-historical and extra-human objectivity" (p.74). The party has a strong presence in Gramsci however, keeping the neoliberal

point above, to dampen unwarranted enthusiasm, one becomes seriously sober today looking around for potential, strategic candidates.

Tarlau reserves her conclusion to strategy. The need for organisation and association leading to the creation of a collective will presume strategy subsumed by, "a deeply educational theory of social change" (p.112). Instead of a party we get a movement, but organisation still requires leadership or Gramscian intellectuals. In 2011, the MST issued a national mandate that leaders required studying, writing, and researching, against the dire reality "where only a few of the top leaders are able to participate in intellectual debates" (p.114).

Praxis or Intellectuals?

Fusaro prioritizes the philosophy of praxis over intellectuals in representing "the true theoretical essence of Gramsci's work" (p.67). Analytically debateable, it is problematic to conceive how his 'pedagogical obsession' (p.68) transforms the philosophy of praxis into a pedagogy of praxis, without intellectuals, unless intent "für ewig". Tarlau picks up the challenge and while rejecting specialised and intellectualistic philosophical movements, she opts for thought that is "superior to 'common sense' and coherent on a scientific plane", as it remains in contact with the 'simple', "the source of the problems it sets out to study and to resolve" (p.118). This is sealed with the Gramscian "intellectual-moral bloc" (p.119), that includes peasants, not "a backward, inferior social group that is destined to disappear as countries become more developed and 'modernized'" (p.112).

Formal schooling

If political projects are understood as educational projects (Pizzolato & Holst, p.xii), Mussolini's education minister, Gentile, had a clear political agenda in providing a dual academic and vocational school system. This won't surprise anyone remotely interested in education today. Besides sustaining the capitalist system, as Rubneuza, an MST education leader argued (Tarlau, p.109), it prevents social growth with increasing focus on work-related skills. Whilst Gramsci believed existing schools could be useful to develop knowledge, skills, and a disposition for working-class independence, this could only be comprehensively developed in schools controlled by the working class (Holst and Brookfield). This limits class-privileged freedom of choice.

Teachers

The formal sector is the principal concern of Hillert: do teachers in Argentina consider themselves part of the 'pueblo'? They are specialised and salaried but Hillert attributes Donaire's (2009) features to them, including increased proletarianization with recruitment from the poor petite bourgeoisie and proletarian classes; standardised training periods; universalised salaries; feminisation of the profession; increased regulation of working conditions; and, reforms that intend to measure productivity and efficiency criteria (pp.154-5). Notwithstanding, it is not a homogeneous sector: some are convinced of meritocracy and academic priorities, others reject them arguing against productivity assessments transforming a social good into a commodity. The former leads to "exclusion, competition and inequality", the latter to "inclusion, solidarity and equality" but also extra unpaid work (p.151).

Language

Global English is the main theme of Carlucci's contribution. Its imperialist connotations are weighed on the observation that English is not bad because it benefits imperialist dreams but because it might not benefit all. Once mastered, it can become an effective tool. Mayo briefly refers to colonial language useful to the working class (short shifting here, however, the ideological baggage in that colonising language). One cannot underestimate working class kids' experiences in the "hesitant, auxiliary knowledge of English" good enough for a consumerist culture (shopping, travel) and, in subordinate employment within the much-praised diversity of a multilingual workforce. Those who benefit are the transnational, cosmopolitan, well-educated scholars, technocrats or elite executives and professionals (Carlucci, p.133). This consequentialist thread affects also adult education policy: it can promote privileged interests but, likewise, promote alternatives (Pizzolato & Holst, p.26).

The subaltern

What happens to the subaltern? Maltese offers a heavily referenced study of a pedagogy for them. Capital-labour relations are economic but also cultural; in the latter, unrepresented subalterns drown in a history written by others. They can also self-inflict harm supporting others' views (e.g., racism) subjugating themselves further. Infantilised, "they would always be like children in need of a guide" (Maltese, p.190). In Guido Liguori's words, effectively they will not "be able to get out...from the state of subalternity on their own" (quoted, p.191).

Still on representation, it is strange that in a text introducing "Italian scholarly discussion … that continues to resonate within the current scholarship" (Pizzolato & Holst, p.xi), Maltese's chapter is the only one referring to Liguori or other regular participants in the International Gramsci Society (IGS) who have published massively on Gramsci. Conversely, it includes Fusaro, source of critical diatribes with IGS.

The working-class shares representation difficulties. Gramsci's "real people in specific social relations" (quoted, p.175) consist of those who "when they are employed, work for a boss or bosses and have little control over the nature of their job … little say over the what, when, and how" (Holst and Brookfield, p.199). Unfortunately, direct references to contemporary working contexts are few. To reiterate, the cultural bent is prioritised even when, in Tosel's words, hegemony "begins in the factory"; cathartically, it "transmutes … investing and transforming the state" until it becomes a civil society society concern, where culture "becomes a glue" (p.175).

To conclude, Gramsci's philosophy of praxis is a theory for emancipation. Does this book assist? Following Marx's call to change the world (act) more than interpreting it (think), without forgetting the fundamental precept for any adult education programme that there is no practice without theory, will the latter sustain a war-of-movement (disciplining spontaneity) and/or a war-of-position (redefining theory)? The book tackles both. The editors deserve praise for this initiative supporting a pedagogy to change the real world in a present that features the pessimism (already familiar to Gramsci) illustrated by Revelli's (2019) *"La lotta di classe esiste e l'hanno vinta i ricchi". Vero!* (translating to: "*The class struggle exists and the rich won it". True!)* and the optimism that accompanies emancipatory experiences.