

REVIEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Piotr Stalmaszczyk*

Introducing Antonio Gramsci and the *Prison Notebooks*: A Review Article of George Hoare and Nathan Sperber, *An Introduction to Antonio Gramsci. His Life, Thought and Legacy*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, and John Schwarzmantel, *The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci’s “Prison Notebooks.”* London and New York: Routledge, 2015

Introduction

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was a prominent Italian Marxist philosopher and politician, co-founder of the Italian Communist Party, an influential thinker and critic of contemporary politics, society and culture. The 21st century has seen a strong revival of interest in his work, especially in the use of Gramscian concepts in a wide variety of disciplines (from literary and cultural studies, translation theory, social studies, and international relations theory to political philosophy, history of Marxism);¹ at the same time important introductory companions and guides to his work and achievement have been published. This review is concerned with two such introductory publications: George Hoare and Nathan Sperber’s *An Introduction to Antonio Gramsci. His Life, Thought*

* Department of English and General Linguistics in the Institute of English Studies, University of Lodz, piotrst@uni.lodz.pl

¹ See, for instance, the studies in Francese (ed.) (2009), McNally and Schwarzmantel, eds. (2009), Ives and Lacorte, eds. (2010), Carlucci (2013), and the most recent publication, Filippini (2017).

and Legacy and John Schwarzmantel's *The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci's "Prison Notebooks."*²

Gramsci's encyclopedic breadth and depth of thought has been often commented upon, recently by, among others, Joseph Francese who also stresses that his impact:

on social and political thought, critical theory and literary methodology is profound. Gramsci was an Italian journalist, activist, and social and political theorist whose writings are heavily concerned with the analysis of popular and elite culture and political theory. He is notable as a highly original thinker within the Marxist tradition, especially for his ideas concerning the role of civil society as lynchpin between the economic base and the ideological superstructure of societies. He is also renowned for his theorization of the importance of cultural hegemony as a non-coercive means of maintaining bourgeois dominance in capitalist societies. (Francese, 2009: 1)

John Schwarzmantel underlines that the main themes of Gramsci's thought were developed in close connection with his life and activity (as a socialist journalist, political leader and political prisoner), and that:

They can be summarised as a deep concern with the importance of culture and of intellectuals in civil society; the creative role of the working-class movement and its potential emergence from a subaltern or dominated position to one of the leadership of all society; and reflection on the distinctive characteristics of Western Europe compared with the society in which the Bolshevik revolution had taken place. (Schwarzmantel, 2009: 1–2)

***An Introduction to Antonio Gramsci.
His Life, Thought and Legacy***

Advanced Gramscian studies are developing intensively, nevertheless there is still constant demand for introductory texts and guidebooks. George Hoare and Nathan Sperber offer such a most recent introduction to Gramscian studies, putting the life, thought, activity and achievement of the Italian Marxist philosopher into a wide context. *An Introduction to Antonio Gramsci. His Life, Thought and Legacy* (hereafter *Introduction*, followed by appropriate

² This review incorporates material published earlier in *Marx & Philosophy Review of Books*: <http://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviewofbooks/reviews/2016/2154>, and <http://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviewofbooks/reviews/2016/2317>. Permission for publication of this material in *International Studies* is gratefully acknowledged.

page reference) comprises a short introduction, four parts dealing with, respectively, life, thought, applications and legacy, followed by a guide to further reading, bibliography and index.

Hoare and Sperber commence the introduction with a brief section on “Thinking through Gramsci,” observing that there exists a whole “Gramsci industry” with “a great many different Gramscis. Thus we see a Gramsci in International Relations, in Cultural Studies, in Political Theory, in Literary Theory and in Postcolonial Studies. There is a Gramsci used by the Right and one claimed by the Left” (*Introduction* 1).³ Against these diverse and proliferated approaches to Gramsci, the authors argue for “a unified and consistent Gramsci, a Gramsci essential for critical thought today” (*Introduction* 1). Though the task of producing a “unified Gramsci” might turn out impossible, it is very important that a recent attempt has been made for a consistent interdisciplinary (or multidisciplinary) presentation of Gramsci, his achievement and legacy.

Part One is devoted to Gramsci’s biography, his intellectual development, and some of the early writings. Gramsci’s life, at every stage, from Sardinian origins, shaped his thought and, conversely, and tragically, his thought shaped his life. His early involvement in politics (first the Italian Socialist Part, next the Italian Communist Party) radicalised his thought, whereas experience in political journalism “instilled in him a talent and a taste for polemics” (*Introduction* 11). Part One also provides relevant information on Gramsci’s trial and imprisonment, and concludes with a powerful fragment from the activist’s 1928 letter to his mother “I’ve always refused to compromise my ideas and am ready to die for them, not just to be put in prison” (*Introduction* 23).

Part Two discusses Gramsci’s “Thought,” and is divided into chapters on culture, politics, philosophy, and hegemony, respectively. This part of the book might be used as a self-contained concise guide to the most important aspects of Gramscian thought relevant in the different disciplines. In the chapter on culture, the authors note that though Gramsci never provided a systematic explication of his theory of culture, his conception was both social

³ Additionally to the “many Gramscis” issue and superficial interpretations, “much too often, Gramsci is cited because he is important, and he is important because he is cited” (Buttigieg, 2009: 22). Buttigieg’s suggestion that “this is the time to start re-reading Gramsci” (2009: 31) has lead him to initiate the *Reading Gramsci* series (with Pluto Press).

and political (an observation which can be carried over to his other fields of interest), and he considered culture as the antithesis of a system, a “succession of quotidian practices” (*Introduction* 28), accessed through the “combined ways of acting, perceiving and feeling of all people” (*Introduction* 29).

Chapter 2 also discusses intellectuals, education, journalism, and popular literature. According to Gramsci, intellectuals and education are tightly linked, since education trains and forms intellectuals, and the intellectuals are constituted by their social role, which consists in the production and diffusion of knowledge in society. This is a very modern approach to the social characteristics of intellectuals (and one which differs from the traditional Marxist inclusion of intellectuals into the bourgeoisie). However, as observed by Hoare and Sperber, despite “his consistent rejection of vulgar economic determinism, Gramsci stays faithful to Marx’s original insight that intellectual life is always situated in a socio-historical field of forces in which class struggle is the primordial reality” (*Introduction* 34), at the same time this new intellectual “should never go as far as to doctor the truth in the name of the revolution” (*Introduction* 38).

María Zambrano, a Spanish philosopher and essayist, with a decidedly different ideological background and orientation, but also writing in turbulent times, described politics as a strictly human activity whose analysis reveals the greatest dramas, conflicts and glories of man.⁴ This description tunes in very well with the approach advocated by Gramsci. In Chapter 3 Hoare and Sperber focus on politics, stressing that it was understood by Gramsci as an “essential moment of social life” (*Introduction* 53). They discuss the triangle of concepts: civil society–political society–the State, the “cornerstone of Gramsci’s theory of politics” (*Introduction* 55), devote separate sections to the interpretation of modern politics, and the modern Prince. The authors note that Gramsci’s historical-political research reveals “an epistemological caution that is complementary to his theoretical audacity” (*Introduction* 60), and that his approach to analysis of politics is inductive, with theory emerging from concrete findings. Throughout this chapter it is clearly visible that for Gramsci a careful analysis of the present as it is (socially,

⁴ “La actividad más estrictamente humana y su análisis nos descubre los mayores dramas, conflictos y glorias del hombre,” María Zambrano, *Horizonte del Liberalismo* (1930), quoted in Sánchez-Gey Venegas (2016: 40).

politically) is an essential prerequisite of any transformation (including, crucially, the revolutionary one).

The strict ties linking theory and practice are also obvious in Gramsci's approach to philosophy, the subject of Chapter 4. As well known, Gramsci redefined philosophy, viewing it in the context of everyday life, and asserting that "every man is a philosopher" (*Introduction* 83); furthermore, philosophy is a certain conception of life to which an ethical attitude is attached. Other parts of this chapter introduce the topics strongly related to philosophy in Gramscian thought, namely ideology, economy, Americanism, Fordism, and the concept of praxis. Additionally, Hoare and Sperber devote some pages to the influence (and final rejection) of Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce on Gramsci's thought, and in conclusion of the chapter they note that ultimately "for Gramsci politics and philosophy are most intimately joined together through the revolution of common sense" (*Introduction* 116). Common sense (*senso comune*) is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The last chapter in Part Two is devoted to the reconstruction of Gramsci's most famous concept, that of hegemony. Hoare and Sperber aim to show how this concept relies on other stipulations, especially the ones concerned with intellectuals, culture, society and politics. Very basically, hegemony serves for Gramsci to stress the cultural, moral and cognitive aspects of leadership, the dimensions of "the exercise of political power" (*Introduction* 118). Hegemony constitutes a form of knowledge and signifies an ethical renewal, it is constructed through various mechanisms of political negotiation and intellectual persuasion, and at the same time it is a fundamentally cognitive and moral process. Similarly to other concepts in Gramsci's thought, hegemony has a dialectical and dynamic aspect. The authors also discuss the historical stages of hegemony (from the pre-hegemonic state to the regulated society), and also hegemonic consciousness as catharsis, i.e. a moment of intensity resulting "in the intellectual liberation of the subject" (*Introduction* 131). The discussion of culture, philosophy, politics and hegemony demonstrates that these concepts represent "complementary aspects of a unified project of the renewal of historical materialism" (*Introduction* 142).

Whereas the first two parts of the book provide necessary background information and analyses of relevant concepts, Part Three, "Applications," brings two very interesting chapters on "thinking through Gramsci" in political theory and in political economy, and Part Four is concerned with Gramsci's legacy in

Western Marxism, Italian communism, post-Marxism, and also in postcolonial studies and cultural studies. Chapter 6 offers a critical analysis of the notion of Left/Right as part of the “common sense” of modern politics and modern life. The applied methodology contextualises common sense, traces the historical development of the notion of Left/Right, analyses the sources and implications of the metaphor, and finally interprets Left/Right as a story about society and politics (i.e. as a political narrative). It would be most interesting to see (and interpret) how the metaphor and discourse developed and changed on both sides of the Iron Curtain, also historically, before, during and after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Chapter 7 shifts attention to political economy, and investigates neo-liberalism and hegemony in Britain and France in the 1980s. Hoare and Sperber stress that “Gramsci’s concepts are at their most potent when they are refined in order to adhere as closely as possible to concrete historical situations” (*Introduction* 202), and they show how Gramscian categories may sharpen the understanding of the diffusion of neoliberalism across the globe; they refer to Stuart Hall’s interpretation of Thatcherism as a hegemonic project, they briefly discuss the socialist politics in France before 1981, and the consequent developments. The Franco-British comparison shows that whereas economic transformation was utilised as a mobilising cause by Thatcher in Britain, in France it became an argument for popular demobilisation.

In Part Four, Hoare and Sperber attempt to map “Gramsci’s influence on contemporary critical thought”; they caution, however, that such a map is by necessity limited and schematic “not least because Gramsci has had an influence on virtually all subjects within the humanities (...) and with the availability, strengths and weaknesses of collections of his prison writing” (*Introduction* 205). The chapter places Gramsci within the perspective of the first generation of Western Marxism (alongside such figures as Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse), Italian post-war communism, and also post-Marxism, on the one hand, and postcolonial studies and cultural studies, on the other. The authors conclude this part with a brief overview of the influence of Gramsci’s thought in international relations, and especially the sub-discipline of international political economy, with attention to Robert Cox’s innovative work on a neo-Gramscian approach and internationalising the concept of hegemony. In an attempt to assess Gramsci’s future they suggest that his concepts and method “and in particular his extension and renewal of Marxism are useful tools for

thinking through capitalism today”; they also observe that Gramsci is “one of the foremost theorists of defeat in the history of critical thought” (*Introduction* 234), which, not that paradoxically, also makes his writings attractive, and they finally suggest retaining a healthier “*Gramscian pessimism* rather than a useless *defeatism*” (*Introduction* 234).

The book concludes with a concise guide to further reading, with separate sections on Gramsci in English, publications devoted to Gramsci’s life (including reference to the documentary “Everything That Concerns People” available on YouTube), secondary sources and other electronic resources. This guide chapter includes also a short section with a suggestion on reading Gramsci, especially useful for a potential reading group.

George Hoare and Nathan Sperber have produced a modern, methodologically consistent, introduction to Antonio Gramsci, his thought and legacy; an excellent guide to interdisciplinary Gramscian studies.

The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci’s “Prison Notebooks”

Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*, recently republished by Columbia University Press as a three volume set (Gramsci, 2011), are a classic text of twentieth century political and social thought, exerting considerable influence on contemporary debates in political philosophy, as well as theory and history of ideology, international relations, cultural studies and also translation studies. At the same they are complex and often difficult to read, especially without background knowledge of the appropriate historical, philosophical, ideological, and intellectual context and influences. Peter Ives and Adam David Morton have recently observed that reading Gramsci

[i]s no easy task. He plunges into the complexities of debates of his time that are now obscure to many readers and engages in an enormous range of topics that at first seem unrelated. Moreover, the prison conditions and his own method yield a set of open-ended, fragmented and intricately layered *Prison Notebooks* whose connections and argumentation do not lead linearly from one note to the next, but seem to ripple and weave in many directions. (Ives and Morton, 2017: xi)

A detailed guide to this work is therefore more than welcome, and John Schwarzmantel (already quoted above in this review),

who has published widely on citizenship and identity, ideology and politics, and, crucially for the topic discussed here, he co-edited (with Mark McNally) a volume on Gramsci and global politics (McNally and Schwarzmantel, eds., 2009), has all necessary expertise to author such a publication.

In the introductory chapter of *The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci's "Prison Notebooks"* (hereafter *Guidebook*, followed by appropriate page number) "Gramsci before the *Prison Notebooks*," Schwarzmantel explains Gramsci's political career and his writings before the imprisonment in November 1926, he also reminds that Gramsci started writing his notebooks in February 1929, and "filled twenty-nine notebooks (school exercise books) with his reflections on history, politics, philosophy and culture, as well as four notebooks filled with translations from German, English and Russian texts, which Gramsci used as language exercises" (*Guidebook* 2). Schwarzmantel briefly explains Gramsci's use (often polemical) of Marx and Marx's writings in his early journalism, and stresses that the Sardinian's early focus on Marxism understood "not as a form of economism in which politics was determined by economics, but of Marxism as precisely the expression of human will and creative action" (*Guidebook* 6). This approach was developed in *PN* as the famous *philosophy of praxis*. The introduction shows Gramsci as a political actor "situated in the milieu of the Italian and international communist movement, and grappling with problems of how to organize the working class movement in a period of capitalist reaction" (*Guidebook* 28).

In chapter two, "The Nature and Genesis of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*," Schwarzmantel discusses the key themes and originality of the text, he stresses that the *Notebooks* "have to be understood (...) as a fundamentally *political* text, if politics is understood in the broadest terms as the understanding of a historical epoch and an analysis of the forces acting to preserve and to change the nature of a political and social order" (*Guidebook* 30–31). The discussion in this chapter shows, among other things, how Gramsci's work defined and redefined politics (again, in connection with his concept of philosophy of praxis), also through his interpretation and reinterpretation of such terms as hegemony, civil society, the state, passive revolution, and Americanism and Fordism. Additionally, Schwarzmantel comments in this chapter on the limitations of the English-language selection of *PN* (in comparison with the full original Italian version).

The following four chapters concentrate on the issues crucial to *PN* and Gramsci's thought in general: intellectuals and education (Chapter 3), history and modernity (Chapter 4), politics, state and civil society (Chapter 5), and philosophy and Marxism (Chapter 6). The question of intellectuals was one with which Gramsci was deeply engaged; however "his concern with intellectuals and with education was a broader one, going beyond the specifically Italian role of intellectuals," it was a contribution to "a debate central to socialist and Marxist movements of his time (...) but Gramsci's theorization of intellectuals and his analysis of their role are both much wider and more penetrating than anything on the topic carried out previously by socialist theorists" (*Guidebook* 70–71). Gramsci defines intellectuals as the agents of legitimation of the existing order, as the functionaries of the superstructure (at two levels: civil society and state), the dominant group's deputies. Important parts of this chapter are devoted to Gramsci's analyses of Benedetto Croce's thought (further discussed in chapter six), on organic intellectuals and the political party, and on education. Schwarzmantel stresses that Gramsci is concerned with education understood as "a democratic force, and as a means of breaking down rather than reinforcing class divisions" (*Guidebook* 90–91), hence his critique of vocational schools, and advocacy of more general type of formative schools.

Chapter four focuses on "History and modernity." Many of Gramsci's most significant concepts, such as hegemony and passive revolution, are developed through careful analyses of historical events, especially the Italian Risorgimento, the complex process of Italian unification and independence from foreign rule, which ended in 1861 with the declaration of Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy. Gramsci's historical analysis "pointed out lessons for the politics of his own time. He saw the process of the Risorgimento as a passive revolution (...) [which] had left Italy with a defective legacy. It had been an incomplete revolution which it was the task of the working class movement to bring to fruition and in that way complete the process of making Italy a truly modern nation" (*Guidebook* 98). Sections of *PN* show Gramsci as a political visionary (especially his notes on Americanism and Fordism), some of his visions and solutions, however, never materialised; on the other hand it is also possible to see in Gramsci a precursor theorist of modernity, and contemporary "analyses of the present state of the global economy do in a sense follow in Gramsci's footsteps by exploring the political

and economic and social implications of the transformed structure of the economy” (*Guidebook* 148).

In Chapter five Schwarzmantel considers “Politics, state and civil society,” and discusses in considerable detail the sections dealing with topics crucial to Gramsci’s thought: the nature of politics, theory of the state and its relation to civil society, revolutionary politics, and the strategy dubbed war of position. Schwarzmantel stresses that these sections “were written in an attempt to analyze the victory of fascism in Italy and the reasons for the defeat of the revolutionary surge in Italy and beyond” (*Guidebook* 150–151), and the whole chapter demonstrates the practical dimension and commitment of Gramsci’s historical, political, and ideological considerations. Important sections of the *PN* are devoted to interpreting Machiavelli, and to constructing the concept of the political party as the modern Prince. Other issues discussed in this chapter include leadership and the masses, and concepts of the state. In his prison writings Gramsci “is formulating a new language of politics, even if he is using the same words (party, state, civil society) that have been used by earlier theorists of the political” (*Guidebook* 212).

Chapter six deals with Gramsci’s ideas on “Philosophy and Marxism,” concentrating especially on the notion of philosophy of praxis, since, as observed by Schwarzmantel, “the philosophy of praxis conveys and summarizes Gramsci’s distinctive interpretation of Marxism” (*Guidebook* 214). Philosophy is not seen by Gramsci as a specialised activity carried on by professional philosophers, but rather as “a process of imparting intellectual order, reinforcement and coherence to the mass of beliefs held in a particular society” (*Guidebook* 220), furthermore it “educates and transforms common sense and is the means through which a new culture and *Weltanschauung* (view of the world) is transmitted to the mass of the people, and this is an essential part of the revolutionary transformation of society” (*Guidebook* 219). For Gramsci, this philosophy of praxis can achieve the task of linking intellectuals with the non-professionals, in ways neither religion nor liberal idealism could manage. An important final section of this chapter is devoted to Gramsci’s critique of (and occasionally dialogue with) Benedetto Croce. Gramsci recognised the importance of Croce, both for his concept of hegemony, and for highlighting the significance of ideas and culture in a particular society; however, his “engagement with Croce’s idea should be understood not just as an intellectual exercise but as a profoundly political task” (*Guidebook* 246), he also argued that “Marxist historiography could apply the insights

of Croce's historicism, but purge that philosophy of its speculative and transcendent aspects" (*Guidebook* 255).

The last chapter is concerned with "The afterlife and influence of Gramsci's *Prison Notes*." Schwarzmantel discusses Gramsci's influences and presence in post-war Italy, and in the debates outside Italy. He focuses on neo-Gramscianism, understood as the use of categories and concepts derived from the *PN* in particular fields of academic enquiry, such as international relations, international political economy, and cultural studies (*Guidebook* 266–67), and stresses that the interpretation of Gramsci as the theorist of the superstructure "whose key concept was civil society certainly opened up a new perspective on Gramsci, and fitted in with (...) the rediscovery of civil society, seen both as the arena for struggle against one-party rule in communist systems and as the sphere of diversity and difference characteristic of liberal-democratic society" (*Guidebook* 274). Recent political developments in Europe (though not limited to Europe) show that the tools worked out by Gramsci can be still precisely applied for the purpose of ideological and political analyses. Schwarzmantel very aptly stresses (quoting the Italian scholar Guido Liguori) that the *PN* are the work of a classic author, "of someone whose interpretation of his own time remains relevant at all times" (*Guidebook* 285). This chapter also includes a short section on the use of ideas derived from the *PN* to analyze British politics and the phenomenon of Thatcherism (especially in the work of Stuart Hall),⁵ and a conclusion on the status of *PN* today, where Schwarzmantel declares the new season of Gramsci studies, which "opens up for the first time a more adequate understanding of those complex reflections on history, philosophy, politics, language and culture, with their single theme underlying the many paragraphs and notes: how could subordinate groups end their subaltern position? How can a process of moral and intellectual reform be initiated and carried to a successful conclusion?" (*Guidebook* 292).

The discussion of individual topics is accompanied throughout the book with detailed referencing and cross-referencing (often comparing the English and Italian versions of *PN*), and every chapter concludes with detailed suggestions for further reading. The final bibliography is divided into studies directly concerned with Gramsci

⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of Gramsci and contemporary British politics, see the chapters in Part III of McNally and Schwarzmantel, eds. (2009).

in English, studies in Italian, and other works referred to in the book (furthermore, a list of Gramsci's own works precedes the chapters).

The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci's "Prison Notebooks" will definitely become a most useful resource for Gramscian studies. John Schwarzmantel has achieved his aims, formulated in the Preface, and the *Guidebook* "introduces readers to Gramsci's highly original and exciting reflections on politics, history, philosophy and culture, which can help us make sense of our present epoch, different though it is in crucial aspects from the era in which Gramsci wrote his notes in the cell of a fascist prison" (*Guidebook* xii).

Conclusions

The *oeuvre* of Antonio Gramsci remains open to further interpretations and reinterpretations. As observed by Mark McNally (2009: 199), "his writings continue to illuminate, provoke and inspire political thought and analysis, and are likely to do so well into the new millennium," whereas Filippini (2017: 122) claims that Gramsci "constantly reformulated and reutilized the vocabulary of other theoretical traditions different from Marxism – such as sociology, anthropology and linguistics – which today, 80 years after his death, has been revived in contemporary debates." It would be fascinating to see profound comparisons with the achievements of philosophers as diverse as, for example, José Ortega y Gasset (and his analyses of leadership and the masses in *The Revolt of the Masses*), on the one hand, and Hannah Arendt (with her concept of *vita activa* developed in *The Human Condition*, but also the insights offered in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*), on the other.

References

- Buttigieg, J. Reading Gramsci Now. Joseph Francese, ed. 2009, 20–32.
- Carlucci, A. *Gramsci and Languages. Unification, Diversity, Hegemony*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Filippini, M. *Using Gramsci. A New Approach*. Trans. Patrick J. Barr. London: Pluto Press, 2017.
- Francese, J. Introduction: "Gramsci Now." Joseph Francese, ed. 2009, 1–6.
- Francese, J., ed. *Perspectives on Gramsci. Politics, Culture and Social Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Gramsci, A. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

-
- Gramsci, A. *Prison Notebooks*, Vol. 1-3. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Hoare, Q., and G. Nowell Smith. Preface. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. 1971, ix-xv.
- Ives, P., and R. Lacorte, eds. *Gramsci, Language, and Translation*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010.
- Ives, P., and A.D. Morton. Series Preface. M. Filippini, *Using Gramsci*. London: Pluto Press, 2017, ix-xi.
- Liguori, G. Common sense in Gramsci. Joseph Francese, ed. *Perspectives on Gramsci. Politics, Culture and Social Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 122–33.
- McNally, M. Conclusion: The Enduring Attraction of Gramscian Analysis. McNally and Schwarzmantel, eds. 2009, 187–99.
- McNally, M., and J. Schwarzmantel, eds. *Gramsci and Global Politics: Hegemony and Resistance*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Sánchez-Gey Venegas, J. *María Zambrano*. Madrid: Fundación Emmanuel Mounier, 2016.
- Schwarzmantel, J. Introduction: Gramsci in His Time and in Ours. McNally and Schwarzmantel, eds. 2009, 1–16.

Zbigniew Bednarek,* Tomasz Fisiak**

***ISSEI 2016 Conference:
New International Europe***

In 2016 the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz, held a special event, i.e. *ISSEI 2016 International Conference: What's New in the New Europe? Redefining Culture, Politics, Identity*. The conference, organised by the Department of British and Commonwealth Studies together with the Israeli partner, International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), took place between 11 and 15 July 2016. For five days nearly 150 researchers from Poland and abroad participated in 24 panel discussions conducted by some of the world's most prominent scholars. It was the fifteenth edition of the conference, the previous ones being hosted in other European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Israel, Norway, Great Britain, Spain, Finland, Turkey, Portugal, Malta and Cyprus.

The panel discussions covered topics as diverse as identity politics, the future of Europe and European Union, globalisation, new nationalisms and postcolonial discourse. The aim of the series of debates was to respond to a significant question: what makes the new Europe. The conference proved to be a great polyphonic commentary on the difficult situation in today's Europe, caused by the immigration crisis, Brexit and a growing threat of terrorism. Yet, the purpose of the conference, apart from the scholarly one, was also to promote Lodz as an academic, artistic and creative city (guests visited EC-1 and the Planetarium; they also had an opportunity to take part in several sightseeing tours through Lodz). Therefore, *ISSEI 2016* could encourage cooperation among foreign scholars and increase student exchange between universities.

* Department of British and Commonwealth Studies, Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz, z.bednarek@yahoo.pl

** Department of British and Commonwealth Studies, Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz, tomasz.fisiak@gmail.com

During the official opening, the organisers, Prof. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney and Dr Edna Rosenthal, discussed the key topics of the conference. Both of them also referred to events destabilising Europe. Dr Rosenthal put emphasis on the futility of fighting and wars as a means of solving problems. Then several distinguished speakers followed: Prof. Antoni Różalski, the then Vice-Rector for Scientific Research (now His Magnificence Rector of the University of Lodz); Prof. Tomasz Domański – the then Dean of the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the University of Lodz; Prof. Stefan Höjelid of Linnaeus University. A congratulatory letter was read on behalf of Hanna Zdanowska, the Mayor of the City of Lodz. The opening of the conference culminated with a show of traditional Polish folk dances and songs performed by the “KUJON” Academic Student Folk Group.

The next three days of the conference were devoted to workshops, panel discussions and plenary lectures. Tuesday’s session closed with a lecture delivered by Prof. Peter Swirski (Sun Yat-Sen University/University of Silesia), in which the eminent scholar talked about the unprecedented blooming of culture in today’s world. On the one hand, the growing number of cultural initiatives may be considered beneficial for the sake of global society, yet, on the other, it may cause anxiety as people are unable to keep up with the mass production of information and cultural goods. The lecture caused a heated debate which continued during the dinner organised on the premises of the Training and Conference Centre of the University of Lodz (Rogowska St). A mini-concert given by a trio of Lodz-based musicians concluded the second day of the conference.

On Wednesday Prof. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, head of the Department of British and Commonwealth Studies, delivered a lecture on the universality and timelessness of works of the Bard of Avon, William Shakespeare. Also on Wednesday conference participants were encouraged to partake in film screenings: they could watch Sławomir Grünberg’s 2015 *Karski & The Lords of Humanity*, a documentary about Jan Karski (the film session was preceded by a meeting with Joanna Podolska-Płocka, the director of the Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Lodz), or *The Promised Land* by Andrzej Wajda (1974). On Thursday Prof. Jürgen Oelkers (University of Zurich) gave a speech on “The European Crisis and Education (Bildung) towards Democracy.” A gala dinner at the Biedermann Palace followed.

ISSEI 2016 concluded on Friday with a poignant mini-lecture by Dr Ruvik Rosenthal (Open University of Israel). Dr Rosenthal

talked about the future of Europe and the place of ISSEI within it, first and foremost as a platform for the exchange of ideas. Moreover, participants suggested some changes that could improve the organisational process of subsequent editions of the conference.

ISSEI 2016 International Conference: What's New in the New Europe? Redefining Culture, Politics, Identity was a highly successful enterprise, not only intellectually, but also socially. Guests praised the variety of subject matters and research perspectives, efficient organisation, as well as the ability to confront their own scholarly views with international perspectives. Furthermore, participants expressed their appreciation for the rich programme and additional attractions (artistic performances, garden party and barbecue, organised tour to see world-famous Lodz murals, film screenings, banquet in Biedermann Palace). They also acknowledged friendly atmosphere of the event.

An apt summary of the conference was offered by Dr Gesine Palmer (Zentrum Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg): “Good reading and virtual communication can help a lot to bridge the gaps between the different cultures. But nothing can make up for personal encounter. It sobers illusions, corrects prejudices, opens new perspectives, and inspires everyone who has the privilege to take part in such an event as *ISSEI*.”

The honorary patronage over the conference was assumed by Hanna Zdanowska, the Mayor of the City of Lodz, and Witold Stępień, the Marshal of Lodz. The partners included VOLEO Marketing Szkolenia Eventy, “Liberté!” journal, Lodz University Press, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, British Council and American Corner Łódź.

Anna Laura Palazzo is an Associate Professor in Urban Planning at “Roma Tre” University of Rome. She holds National Scientific Qualification as Full University Professor in Urban and land planning and design, as well as PhD in Town and Country Planning and MS Degree in Investigation and Restoration of Monuments. She is a coordinator of the PhD programme “Local Project and Territorial Policies” and a member of the teaching staff of the PhD programme “Landscapes of the Contemporary City: Policies, Techniques and Visual Studies.” She is also a senior researcher and/or coordinator in national and international research projects (Med, COST, Marie Curie, Erasmus+) dealing with regional development, urban regeneration, landscape planning, and policy design. She was a Visiting Professor at: Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon (2009), Northeastern University of Boston (2012), San Diego State University (2013), Université de Liège (2014), Université de Paris “La Sorbonne” (2016). She is an author of several books, peer-reviewed articles and international research reports.

Biancamaria Rizzo is an architect, Assistant Professor of Urban and Territorial Policies at “Roma Tre” University of Rome, and PhD in Urban, Territorial and Environmental Planning. She is the senior researcher in national and international research projects dealing with regional development, urban regeneration, landscape planning and policy design. She authored several books, peer-reviewed articles and international research reports. Her research grants include: “Sustainable policies and resilient landscapes in the metropolitan city of Rome” (2015/2016) and “ENERSCAPES – Territory, landscape, and renewable energies” (2012/2013).

Keti Lelo is an architect, Adjunct Professor of Urban Economics at “Roma Tre” University, in charge of the Laboratory of territorial

analysis and cartography at CROMA (Centro di ateneo per lo studio di Roma). She earned PhD in Geomatics, PhD in Environment Economics, M.S. degree in Geoinformation for urban planning. She obtained research grant on “Atlante di Roma moderna e contemporanea” (2001/2008). She provides scientific and technical expertise for the development of territorial data-sets in national and international projects (GIS, RS e DBMS). She is the author of numerous publications in the fields of spatial analysis, urban and regional development, urban regeneration, and urban history.

Federica Benelli has worked as an architect since 2006. She attended a postgraduate master programme in Landscape ecology in 2008 and earned her PhD in territorial policies and local projects in 2012. Since 2009, she has collaborated with an engineering company in Rome. She received a grant for research concerning urban planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation from 2011 to 2013, and currently holds a grant within the Erasmus+ project ENEPLAN “Developing Skills in the Field of Integrated Energy Planning in Med Landscapes” at the Department of Architecture, “Roma Tre” University of Rome.

Stefano Magauda earned MA in architecture in 2001 at the “Roma Tre” University of Rome. He attended a postgraduate master’s programme in urban planning and an advanced course on environmental assessment. Since 1999, he has collaborated with the Department of Urban Studies (now Department of Architecture) of the “Roma Tre” University of Rome, taking part in several research projects related to landscape planning, environmental assessment, and urban regeneration. Since 2006, he has been a grant holder on geographic information systems applied to territorial analysis. He works in the field of environmental, urban and energy planning, and has participated, also as a coordinator, in several European cooperation projects. He has written numerous papers about spatial analysis, urban history, regional development and urban regeneration.

Elena Battaglini holds a MSc in Political Sciences and a PhD in Environmental & Spatial Sociology. She is managing the Urban & Regional Economics’ Research Area of Di Vittorio Foundation (ex IRES), where she has been working since 1992. She has published more than thirty books, peer-reviewed articles and international

research reports in the field of regional endogenous development and its innovation processes. She is a member of the PhD Programme “Landscapes of the Contemporary City: Policies, Techniques, and Visual Studies” at the University of Roma Tre. She is the elected member of the Scientific Board of the Italian Sociological Association – Urban&Rural Section (2013–2016; 2016–2019).

Tomasz Domański is the Head of the Department of International Marketing and Retailing at the Faculty of International and Political Studies (University of Lodz, Poland). He pioneered and promoted the development of research on strategies adopted by retail chains, place-based marketing and university marketing at Polish universities. Within the framework of international cooperation programmes he was a research editor of the following monographs: *The Role of Universities in the Promotion of Cities and Regions* (Lodz 2015) and *The Role of Cultural Institutions and Events in the Marketing of Cities and Regions* (Lodz 2016). His latest writings focus on internationalisation strategies of universities and building their international brands.

Marta Hereźniak is an Assistant Professor at the University of Lodz, Poland; author of the first Polish doctoral dissertation and book about nation branding; author and co-author of academic and popular publications on place branding and brand management; member of the International Place Branding Association and the Institute of Place Management. She is also a full-time teacher at the International Marketing programme; an expert at the Polish Chamber of Commerce and the Institute of Polish Brand, and a consultant in brand-related projects for companies, public institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Regional Development) and local governments; a member of the Brand for Poland project chaired by Wally Olins; a leading consultant in the project on the Kazakhstan country brand; and a co-author of the European Funds Brand strategy in Poland. Her research interests include: place brand identity development; measurement of place branding effectiveness, stakeholder engagement in place branding, and place of origin branding.

Michał Sędkowski is a PhD candidate at the Department of International Marketing and Retailing, Faculty of International Relations and Political Studies, University of Lodz. His main interests focus on social media and mobile technologies. His

research is aimed at analysing how new technologies impact interactions between people on a personal and an organizational level. His PhD thesis discusses the issue of utilising social media to improve citizen participation in Polish cities. He participated in many seminars and conferences devoted to this subject and received the 1st grade Academic Mentor from Collegium Wratislaviense.

Justyna Anders-Morawska is an Assistant Professor at the University of Lodz, Faculty of International and Political Studies. She holds a PhD in economics in the field of management and an MA in political studies in the field of international relations. In her academic work, she concentrates on issues of interorganisational relations and the role of cross-sector collaboration in place management and public policies. She is the co-author of the first Polish monograph that applies market orientation concept in the operationalisation of metropolitan governance processes. She is a member of the programme board in the study group Administration and Public Policies (Polish Association of Political Science).

Aleksandra Olejnik is a graduate of the University of Lodz, Faculty of International and Political Studies, specialisation: Euromarketing and International Journalism. She is a PhD student at the Department of International Marketing and Distribution (Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz). Her field of study is the implementation of innovative solutions in urban centres. She is a representative of Lodz in Brussels and a coordinator of the activities of Lodz in the Urban Poverty Partnership.

Piotr Stalmaszczyk, Professor Ordinarius, is the Chair of the Department of English and General Linguistics in the Institute of English Studies, University of Lodz (since 2007). He was the Dean of Philological Faculty, University of Lodz (2008–2012; 2012–2016). He is a member of several professional organisations such as Komitet Językoznawstwa Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Linguistics Committee, Polish Academy of Sciences, member of board, since 2012), Polskie Towarzystwo Językoznawcze (Polish Linguistic Society, vice-chairman, member of board, 2007–2011; 2014–), Komisja Językoznawcza, łódzki oddział PAN (Linguistics Committee, Polish Academy of Sciences, Lodz branch, chairman, from 2014). He is the author/editor/co-editor of numerous books on, among others, English and general linguistics, theory of language, generative

grammar, Celtic languages and Celtic varieties of English. He has recently launched a new book series – *Studies in Philosophy of Language and Linguistics* (with Peter Lang).

Zbigniew Bednarek, PhD, works in the Department of British and Commonwealth Studies, Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz. His academic interests include media and political and social processes, journalism (theory and practice), war journalism in particular, modern international relations, foreign policy and security of Great Britain, armed conflicts of the 20th and 21st century in terms of politics, media and culture.

Tomasz Fisiak, PhD, teaches in the in the Department of British and Commonwealth Studies, Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz. He is a member of Polish Association for the Study of English and International E. M. Forster Society. His academic interests include Gothicism as a widely understood cultural phenomenon, British (pop) culture, gender/queer issues. He has published articles on feminist auto/biographies, horror cinema, modern erotic fiction.