

THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT- NEWSPAPER



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"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)



August 8th, 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

ONCE IN A LIFETIME



TWANIA BROADWAY
KATRINA BROADWAY
JAMES BROADWAY
BRONX, NY 1971

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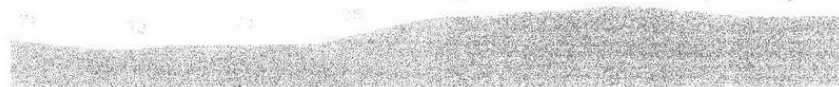
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






Bronx, NY 10456
Thursday
Chance of Storm

 **86** °F | °C

Precipitation: 60%
Humidity: 70%
Wind: 11 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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12 AM	3 AM	6 AM	9 AM	12 PM	3 PM	6 PM	9 PM
Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
							
81° 72°	86° 73°	82° 72°	86° 66°	82° 66°	84° 68°	84° 66°	81° 61°

TWANIA BROADWAY'S



CONTRIBUTION
TO THE ART-SCHOOL
<<ENERGY=YES!
QUALITY=NO!>>

TEXT ON ANTONIO GRAMSCI

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

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THE CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL INTELLECTUALS

Specialisation, organisation, leadership

POSSIBILITIES AND PARADOXES

Studies of popular culture, ideology and the intellectuals from a marxist perspective often acknowledge a debt to Antonio Gramsci. He has undoubtedly helped to put these topics on both the academic and political agenda. Yet there is more than one irony in the way his ideas have frequently been absorbed into a framework which endorses popular culture as the alternative to a set of ruling ideas, norms, and practices which are at the same time given the attributes of an all powerful social control. A close reading of his work reveals, in fact, what seems to be a series of paradoxes.

He insists that popular culture must be the starting point for both advanced intellectual work and an alternative hegemony by the working class, but he is harshly critical of its forms and most of its content. He considers ideas to have an historical force and yet says that they usually lag behind both the everyday experience of millions of people and of material conditions in general. In both his *Ordine Nuovo* articles and in prison he places great emphasis on the possibilities for an intellectual advance of the mass of society stemming from advances in the area of production. Yet in his notes on Americanism and Fordism he clearly recognises the brutalising effects of those very changes in production which he claims will dominate an entire historical epoch. Finally while the precondition for a socialist transformation of society is the creation of a new set of organic intellectuals and a new hegemony in society, which is now possible, Gramsci emphasises the immensity of the task.

These tensions in his writings are not accidental. They stem from the contradictory nature of society itself. In the 1930s capitalism was in crisis but had not collapsed. The Russian Revolution marked an historical watershed, but the possibility of an expansion of democratic control remained unfulfilled. The changing role of intellectuals and the development of the

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THE CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL INTELLECTUALS

back to the period immediately after the revolution. Far from simply endorsing Lenin's approach, having been in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s when the immense difficulties of building a new society were all too evident, Gramsci takes as his starting point the goal of expanding real democratic control, the defining feature of communism for him, to go on to investigate the conditions which might in fact make such an expansion possible.

Unlike Lenin's slogan, Gramsci's illustration emphasises specialisation and division of labour, the relationship between the skills possessed by millions of people and those of élites of specialists. These themes are the threads on which he weaves his writings. But why are the intellectuals so important for him? After all, in his notes he is most scathing about rationalistic projects woven by intellectuals out of thin air. His own feelings of isolation are manifest in his fear of being cut off from reality.

If the project he sets himself in prison takes a particular form, this form derives, I will argue, from his particular form of marxism which, by going both back to and beyond Marx and existing in critical tension with the limits of Lenin, validates the significance of ideas, culture, and intellectual skills in a much more radical way than is usually understood. As he writes the *Prison Notebooks*, he investigates the contradictory and at times surprising nature of concrete historical development and the problems and possibilities which it produces. Changes in the organisation of capitalism and problems in the construction of socialism require him to redefine the very meaning of the word 'intellectual' and to place the relationship between intellectuals and people at the centre of his work in prison. He is forced to define 'intellectual' in terms of the 'organizational and connective'⁶ function, rather than the skill of thinking, in order to understand reality.

Intellectuals were such a significant theme for Gramsci because long-term economic, social, and political trends in capitalist society placed the question of the intellectuals at the centre of politics. These trends entailed an increase in the number of people with advanced intellectual and organisational skills, higher levels of education extended throughout the population, and new divisions of mental and physical labour. Both placed the question of the intellectuals or the experts and the organisers at the centre of politics.

This made a new, more democratic relationship between intellectuals and people conceivable. Gramsci arrived at this conclusion from an analysis of the increasing *organisation* of capitalist society from the 1870s onward. The transformation of the economic sphere into organised capitalism with the increasing dominance of trusts, cartels and limited companies was but one aspect of the increasing complexity of the social and political fabric as mass political parties, trade unions and pressure groups developed. These developments brought with them an increase in the number of people who needed organisational skills from managers to trade union, party, and pressure group leaders.

intellectual capacities of the population at large, both highly problematic, provide the key, according to Gramsci, to creating the conditions for a real rather than a demagogic development of democracy. From an Italian fascist prison, Gramsci goes back to Marx to help him to develop an original and creative body of work.

In engaging with the challenges presented by the re-organisation of capitalism, when nonetheless the basis for socialism, he maintains, is also being built, Gramsci is neither a populist nor an idealist nor a utopian, but a Marxist whose work is based on certain

fundamental principles of political science: 1. that no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement; 2. that a society does not set itself tasks for whose solution the necessary conditions have not already been incubated, etc.¹

These two principles depict the possibilities and the paradoxes which provide the frame for his work in prison and the foundation on which he tries to develop a marxist political science based on the primordial fact 'that there really do exist rulers and ruled, leaders and led'. The fundamental question is whether it is

the intention that there should always be rulers and ruled, or is it the objective to create the conditions in which this division is no longer necessary? In other words, is the initial premise the perpetual division of the human race, or the belief that this division is only an historical fact, corresponding to certain conditions?²

Gramsci analyses both those developments which make the task of overcoming this division possible and those which are allowing the productive forces to find room for manoeuvre and which are helping to maintain the split between leaders and led. In this sense the transition to socialism is on the historical agenda. Gramsci's project is to investigate all the dimensions of this transition: from the latest developments within capitalism, including fascism, to the dramatic, concrete problems posed by the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Central to this project is the political question of the intellectuals.³

When Gramsci writes that, 'All men are intellectuals . . . , but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals', he illustrates his point with the following example: 'Thus, because it can happen that everyone at some time fries a couple of eggs or sews up a tear in a jacket, we do not necessarily say that everyone is a cook or a tailor.'⁴ This neglected down to earth reference was not accidental. Lenin's populist slogan that 'every cook should be able to rule', which was current in the Soviet Union until the early 1990s,⁵ goes

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Above all else, the relationship between state and society changed. The role of the state expanded dramatically. Its impact on society increased and came to influence even those spheres where it did not intervene directly. The expansion of the suffrage, the introduction of a number of social reforms, the increase in state regulation were a response to political and economic pressures. They were implemented by governments of different political hues from Bismarck to Disraeli, from Theodore Roosevelt to Giolitti and Lloyd George. In the epoch of imperialism governments undertook new tasks abroad in the name of national economic interests, while the First World War and then the economic crisis of 1929-30 led to a range of interventionist policies. New Deal America, fascist Italy or Nazi Germany (and in a different way the Soviet Union) were but the latest manifestations of a long-term, irreversible decline in the non-interventionist liberal state. The number of civil servants and policy experts, educationalists and social workers, engineers and scientists, urban planners and architects all increased.⁷

Gramsci 'reads' this story of reformism and the decline of the liberal state, with its restricted role in society, as a dimension of the long-term, organic crisis of capitalism. According to him these changes indicate the increasing importance of the masses in politics as they become organised whether in trade unions, parties of left and right, or peasant or other movements - when what they do and what they think matters - as a sign of the actuality of the socialist project. Capitalism is forced then to embark upon different forms of what Gramsci calls passive revolution; to try to manage change and maintain control of economic and political power through compromises with different social interests and political forces within limits which neutralise anything which presents a serious threat.⁸ The state undertakes new tasks in order to maintain a social basis of consent and to guarantee the conditions for an expansion of the forces of production. The full arc of this process is traced by studying the intellectuals.

THE IVORY TOWER BECOMES AN HISTORICAL RELIC

The political function of the intellectuals was a result of what Gramsci considered the irreversible decline of that limited liberal state so highly constrained in its sphere of activities that it could be compared to a nightwatchman, a precondition of which was also highly limited political participation. The growth in state activities from the end of the last century was in part a response to the expansion of democratic rights and wider political organisation. The traditional role of an intellectual élite now existed in a new context. The concept of free floating intellectuals, whose roles and functions appeared to have little directly to do with the productive sphere, state policy or political activity, was a myth. The idea of thinkers above the

fray was an ideology which had important effects in maintaining a corporate esprit de corps amongst some groups of intellectuals, but which was ideological in the sense that it could not adequately describe reality.⁹ Yet it continued to be influential.

When Benedetto Croce, philosopher and one-time Minister of Education in the fascist regime, sought to answer a public declaration of support for the regime, the Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals, with a counter-manifesto, he argued that intellectuals could participate in politics as *citizens* but as *intellectuals* they had to serve a disinterested scientific function.

... intellectuals, that is, the practitioners of science and art, if they join and faithfully serve a party, exercise their rights and fulfil their duties as citizens. However, as intellectuals their sole duty is to raise to a high spiritual level through scholarship, criticism and artistic creation all men and parties equally so that they can fight the necessary struggles with increasingly beneficial effects. To go beyond the role assigned to them, to mix up politics and literature, politics and science is an error...¹⁰

According to Gramsci, this position was anachronistic. It reflected Croce's inability to comprehend the changed role of the state, the new historical role of the working class, and wider social change.¹¹

The irony was that the manifesto organised by Croce, the ex-Minister of Education, proclaiming that intellectuals were above politics was itself a political act. Even he was forced to leave his mythical ivory tower

to plunge into practical life, to become an organizer of the practical aspects of culture, if he wants to continue to lead; he has to democratize himself, to become more contemporary: Renaissance man is no longer possible in the modern world when enormous human masses participate actively and directly in history.¹²

If traditional intellectuals wanted to maintain their influence, they had to change their way of working and become organisers, that is, undertake cultural activity in a modern form appropriate to advanced capitalism. Moreover, traditional intellectuals like Croce and others came to perform a function organic to the maintenance of what Gramsci calls the historic bloc of social and political forces by providing an ideology to unify the ruling groups and to limit the revolutionary potential of the masses. Despite maintaining a traditional view of their role, they perform a function organic to Italian capitalism. They are 'assimilated' into the capitalist project as their old role becomes anachronistic. They, too, become organic intellectuals despite themselves. He and Gramsci are in fact talking two different languages when they use the word 'intellectual'.

The increase in the numbers of those with specialised skills who have the social function of intellectual reflect what for Gramsci are two intimately related phenomena: first, the vast increase in advanced knowledge and the need for specialisation which this produces (and the specialised web of educational structures to produce both knowledge and specialists), and second, the huge increase in knowledge and skills in the population as a whole. Specialisation goes hand in hand with socialisation and organisation. Specialisation is a manifestation of that increasingly complex division of labour which is the mark of an advanced society. It is reflected in the increase in the number of specialised educational institutions which, Gramsci writes, is an indication of the general cultural level of a country, just as the complexity of the machine tool industry is indicative of the technological level.¹⁸ Gramsci's continual use of terms like specialisation, specialist, division of labour, skill, apprenticeship has the effect of demystifying the intellectual function as he tries to grasp changes in the mode of intellectual work.

His approach is in stark contrast to the traditional liberal view of the production of advanced knowledge. Gramsci argues that although Croce might believe that intellectual achievement depends on the genial creations of brilliant minds, advanced discoveries only have permanent, effective historical significance in relation to a structure of knowledge and learning: a web of institutions and the level and complexity of education, knowledge and culture in society at large. The great breakthroughs are in a sense but the tip of an intellectual iceberg. Gramsci never reduces the intrinsic differences between skills.¹⁹ Rather, he places them within a structured division of labour which rests upon the foundation of skills possessed by millions of people. The organisation of this structure of specialisms, specialists, and skills is constantly changing. Gramsci is convinced that a division of labour reflects historical advance.

The question is not whether a division of labour is necessary but which division of labour exists and for which reasons. He continually emphasises the necessity of a technical division of labour, that is, according to skill rather than a division based on class. Class indicates a permanent structural division such as that defined, in Marx's terms, by relationship to the means of production. Gramsci uses the term *élite* polemically and contrasts it to class.²⁰ Skills can be learnt, they change, they relate to the knowledge and rational capabilities of everyone. Position in a hierarchy and authority and discipline based on the recognition of skill (Gramsci's example is that of the leader of an orchestra)²¹ are defined democratically, and those with more advanced skills can be considered representative of the people, if the conditions are being created for an organic exchange between specialists and people, leaders and led, if the traditional division between those with power and the rest of society is being overcome, class divisions are being eliminated, politics as control by the few over the many is being socialised and therefore transformed.

AN OLD WORD ACQUIRES NEW MEANINGS

Gramsci is forced to develop a new language (as he does with the word state) because it is the pre-requisite for acquiring the analytical tools necessary to understand changes in capitalist society.¹³ Gramsci applies 'intellectual' to 'a whole series of jobs of a manual and instrumental character' which do not even have 'directional or organizational'¹⁴ attributes, which he recognises is unusual. He uses 'intellectual' in this broad way, rather than using 'petty bourgeoisie' or 'declassé', because it is necessary to go beyond both the liberal and the socialist traditions. The difficulty presented to anyone reading Gramsci is to fill the concept in the same way he does. To the extent that we fill it in fact only with 'creators of the various sciences, philosophy, art, etc.' and neglect 'the most humble administrators and divulgators of pre-existing traditional, accumulated intellectual wealth',¹⁵ if we do not 'think... the entire social stratum which exercises an organizational function in the wide sense - whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration',¹⁶ the word intellectual will function ideologically rather than analytically, and we will not 'reach a concrete approximation of reality'.¹⁷ What Croce and we miss by using an historically outmoded concept of intellectual is the way in which politics and state policy plus the organisation of the productive sphere define the work of intellectuals, their specialisms, their 'job specifications'.

Gramsci, then, tries to map the changes in the mode of existence of intellectuals and in the organisation of knowledge which are a manifestation of changes in the organisation of society as a whole. Above all, the number of intellectual jobs, the institutions to fill them, and the number of intellectuals in the state bureaucracy, in the productive sphere, in institutions which produce the skills needed by the development of capitalist society, and in the institutions of mass culture have vastly increased. This 'massification' and organisation of intellectuals are a measure of the complexity of capitalist society and have a multitude of effects.

Intellectuals are 'standardised', they organise in professional associations, and while enjoying and defending relative privileges, they face unemployment. Yet this does not mean they are being 'proletarianised' or that they will automatically acquire a particular political identification as a consequence of their changing function in society. The question of the intellectuals is not sociological but political. Gramsci argues that it is necessary to undertake an historical analysis of the different kinds of intellectuals, different grades of intellectual activity and the organisation of culture in each country to comprehend the concrete dimensions of what is an overall trend of capitalist societies. Although the pattern of specialisms will be influenced by technical needs and the social division of labour, the forms intellectual functions take - in particular their ways of relating to the rest of the population - are historically and politically determined.

This creation of the preconditions of expanding democracy is in fact Gramsci's way of describing the socialist project. If modernising regimes like the Soviet Union and fascist Italy which depended so heavily on the skills of intellectuals showed that defining such a goal in terms of a new relationship between intellectuals and people was highly problematic, Gramsci thinks that capitalism is creating the foundations for fulfilling it.

INTELLECTUAL DEMOCRACY RATHER THAN DEMAGOGIC POPULISM

Gramsci differs from both Lenin and Mussolini when he addresses the question of creating a democratic, organic relationship between intellectuals and people. What is striking about Gramsci's approach is his constant reference to hierarchy and mediation as an aspect of the division of labour. The relationship between, say, the woman or man in the street and the advanced specialist must be a mediated one in which there are different levels or grades which can be achieved and a web of intermediate intellectuals who link top to bottom in a series of democratic, representative relationships.

But democratic and representative in what sense? Here Gramsci is trying to examine the conditions necessary for fulfilling the promise of democracy embedded in a formal, legal concept of democratic rights. Democracy is functional, organic and necessary to the organisation of a society in which intellectuals (specialists and political leaders) conceive of their skills as part of a hierarchical structure resting on the skills of the majority of the population who set the problems to be resolved. These problems are constantly redefined in the process. The functions of intellectuals are defined in terms of the increasing skills, autonomy and therefore power of the population.

What is necessary from the outset is a moral and intellectual reform in which intellectuals 'feel' in order to 'know' and the people are equipped to 'know' as well as 'feel'.²² The precise structure of skills, the kinds of division of labour which are developed, and the organisation of the hierarchy will depend on the specific terms of the political project which can only be articulated on the basis of the needs of the population. For example, as demands by ethnic minorities or women to break down crystallised divisions based around race or gender come to be embedded in the socialist project, institutions and practices have to be created which will ensure that the divisions of labour which exist are no longer based on differences of skin colour or sex.

The needs of society are represented and democratic practices ensured not by formal legal guarantees, which are a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition for a democratically functioning society, but by creating the concrete conditions which will make democracy a reality. Gramsci refers

constantly to a hierarchy and to a division of labour because it reflects the historical development of organised capitalism. The classical liberal schema of an unmediated relationship between citizen and state, where the rational, isolated individual makes choices between alternatives and elects representatives who determine policy in the interests of the whole had been made anachronistic by history. The individual has the most impact in modern mass politics if a member of an organisation, and increasingly interests, even of those who are not members, are represented by organisations. Consequently s/he is represented both by representatives elected to legislatures and by a variety of groups.

The institutions of representative democracy now exist in the context of other forms of representation, not just the corporations of business and labour but mass political parties and all the other groups in which the people organise themselves. The relationship between individual and state therefore is mediated by a web of relationships not least through state institutions themselves as state services expand. This is another expression of the decline of the liberal state.

EXPERTS, NOT JUST IDEOLOGUES

Fascism welcomed the ideological support of intellectuals, but it also gave them an important practical role in its project of reconstructing the Italian state and Italian society. In a speech to university students in December 1923, a little more than a year after taking power, Mussolini explained the importance of educational reform.

The fascist government needs a ruling class [*classe dirigente*]. . . . I cannot create functionaries for the State administration from nothing: the universities must gradually produce them for me. . . . It is precisely because we are backward and latecomers that we must powerfully fortify our intelligentsia. . . . These are the profound reasons for the Gentile [Educational] Reform.²³

In addition to training the new specialists needed by the regime, Mussolini sought to win over a wide range of experts by giving them a role in modernising Italy: to reclaim land and to build modernist cities, to create institutions of mass culture like radio and cinema, to organise intellectuals in associations, institutes and academies.²⁴ Fascism's agenda for the intellectuals stemmed from a recognition that intellectuals, both as experts and as cultural practitioners, had acquired a political function, whatever their idea of themselves and whether they were enthusiasts for fascism or not. While attacking the demagogy of the populist rhetoric of Mussolini or Gentile, Gramsci recognised the modernity of the way fascism connected the intel-

THE CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL INTELLECTUALS

based on a scientific understanding of historical laws and a scientific analysis of the concrete situation.²⁶

Lenin emphasised the *difference* between these theoretical skills and the skills of the mass of the population. Intellectuals who are separate and different from the working class could be joined to it by making a personal, political choice: to become professional revolutionaries. As revolutionary cadres their way of living as intellectuals changed and became different from others of their background and from the mass of society. The political party was the organisational form which would provide the link between intellectuals and people, transforming theory into revolutionary science as it intervened in the class struggle. As for the technical experts, the agronomists, economists or engineers, Lenin's perspective is that skills are neutral.

the development of capitalism . . . itself creates the premises that really enable all to take part in the administration of the state. . . . [It] is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and bureaucrats to proceed immediately, overnight, to supersede them in the control of production and distribution, in the work of *keeping account* of labour and products. . . . (The question of control and accounting must not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists, and so on. These gentlemen are working today and obey the capitalists; they will work even better tomorrow and obey the armed workers.)²⁷

The workers will give them orders while the need for bureaucrats is supposed to wither away as administrative functions are simplified and the people perform them directly without need of intermediaries.

What is presented is a direct, unmediated relationship between people and specialised intellectuals. The relation between both revolutionary intellectuals and experts and the political objective of socialism is defined in terms of the application of skills to a different project, as one ruling class is substituted for another. They work towards the creation of a different society but there is no indication that they will need to transform the way they learn about reality; they work, they acquire skills.

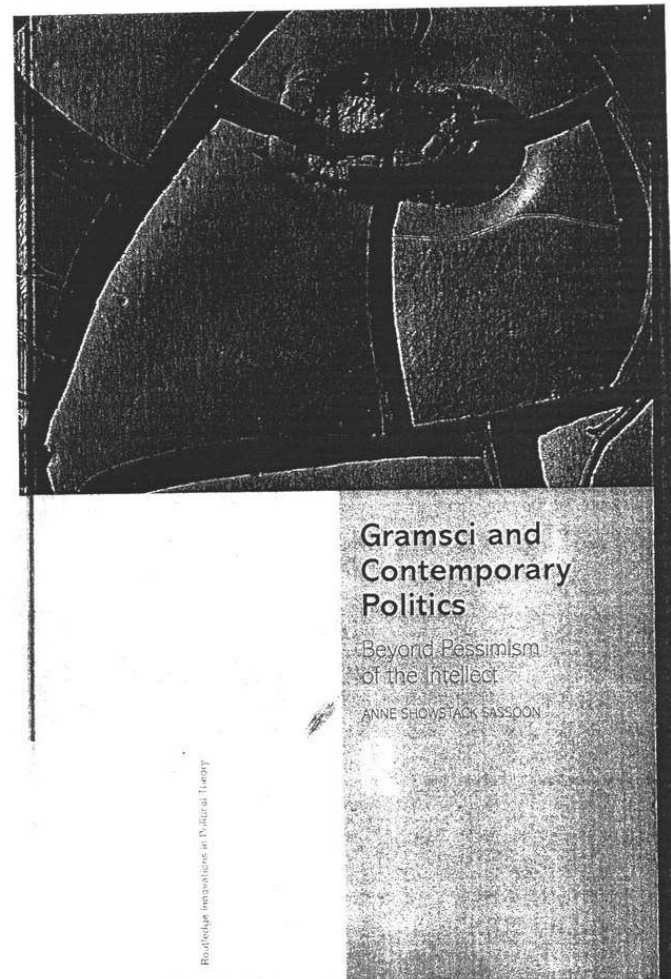
What is missing in Lenin's perspective is an examination of the *problem* of transforming the mode of existence of intellectuals or of preparing the majority of the population for the task ahead. These changes were left to the period after the revolutionary break and viewed as deriving from rather than being a precondition of the socialisation of the means of production.²⁸ There is no analysis of different levels of intellectual specialisation or of the relationship between different types and grades of advanced skills and the varied skills of the population or of a network of organisations linking people and state. Lenin did not ask *how* the cook would acquire the skills needed to govern a modern society, or how the experts would reflect wider social needs, other than through party allegiance.

lectuals to wider society and to social and political projects. Indeed, fascism's very populism was a sign that social conditions and the needs of the wider population had to be *addressed* in modern politics.

Fascism recognised the crisis of the liberal state and corporatism was in part an attempt to reorganise political relationships to take account of changes in capitalist society while maintaining the structure of capitalist economic relations. After having destroyed autonomous organisations, fascism filled the vacuum and organised women, youth, intellectuals, workers, etc. Yet the relationship between individual and leader, individual and intellectual was *mediated* through organisations in a bureaucratic rather than democratic way, an example of what Gramsci called organic centralism,²⁵ because there was no attempt to ensure that elements from the rank and file or the base were trained to assume positions of power or to control those who do. The claims by Mussolini and Hitler on the one hand and fascist intellectuals on the other to be authentic representatives of the people, to have a direct relationship with them were demagogic because of the absence of a democratic exchange between leaders and led and because they justified their positions of power on the basis of their exceptional qualities, their genius.

The Bolshevik project was very different from that of the fascists: its declared aim was to build a new society on the basis of the political protagonism of the masses. After the Russian Revolution the question of creating a new type of state based on a democratic relationship between intellectuals and people became concrete. The problem of the relationship between the intellectuals – be they army generals or bureaucrats, agronomists or Bolshevik cadres – and the people was posed in dramatic terms. It derived from the need to defend the Russian Revolution from invasion and counter-revolution, to rebuild the economy and create a new political system, to create a new socialist culture, to organise consent, to increase literacy, and to lay the foundations for industrialisation. If fascism reinforced Gramsci's conviction that the question of the intellectuals was relevant, the experience of the Soviet Union could only have convinced him of the enormous difficulties of creating a new democratic relationship between the population and political power. Skills and knowledge were required which went well beyond ideological adherence.

His analysis of a mediated relationship between masses and state, between people and intellectuals differs not only from Mussolini but from Lenin. Lenin assigned an important political role to intellectuals, to the ideological struggle and to theory. Yet he had a traditional, narrow concept of intellectual – borrowed from Kautsky – as the science carriers of the bourgeoisie. Whereas the socialist movement had often simply dismissed intellectuals as bourgeois or sought to ally with them as *declassés* or white collar wage earners who were being proletarianised, Lenin argued that the working class needed their theoretical skills to develop a political strategy



A TEXT FROM THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

THE BILBAO FAILURE

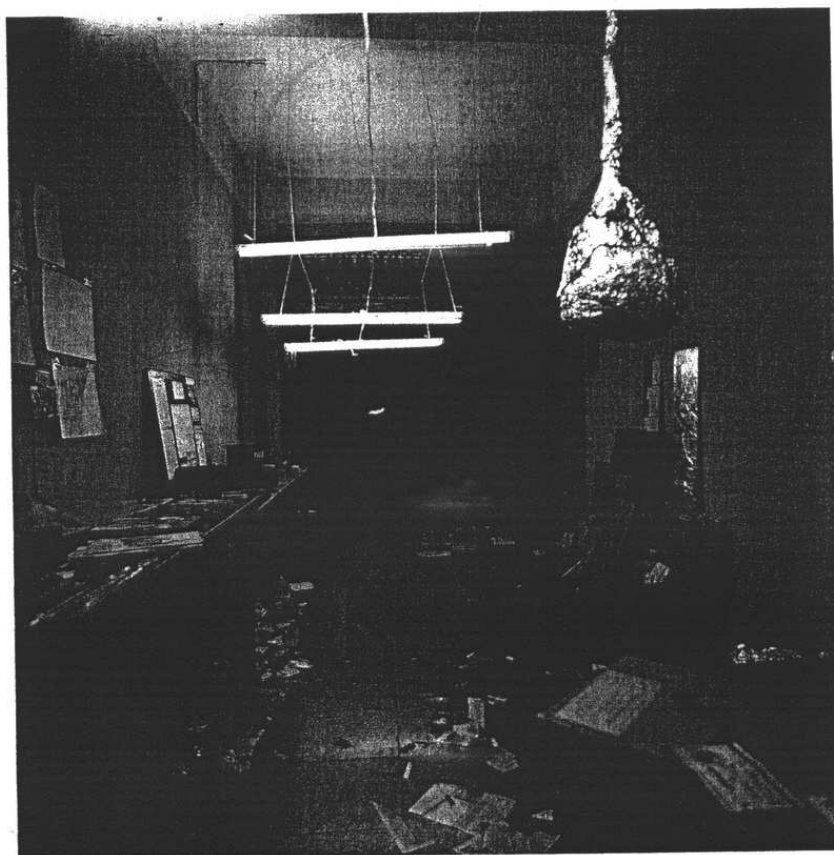
I want to talk about my experience during my time at Bilbao. I did three things in Bilbao: first, the *Bilbao Catalogue*; second, the work during my stay in Bilbao; third, the *W.U.E., World-Understanding-Engine*.⁶ Here I only want to talk about my work during my stay. I asked that during the three weeks I would be able to occupy a premises with a window on the street level and that I be able to work there. I wanted to show people in Bilbao that I was there, that I was working, that I had nothing to hide, that there was no secret. I also wanted, precisely, to not work in relation to this city or to its political and economic situation, because to me it's demagogic to come for a few days and develop a work that takes into consideration the givens of the area. Works like that can only be superficial. So I set myself up in an old haberdashery on a rather well-off street with other businesses. The area had the advantage of being near the Institut Français and also the Salle Rekalde 1 [contemporary art space]. I thought that the fact I had removed the window separating the store from the street would allow passersby to establish a visual dialog. I wanted my approach to be understood only through looking: the approach of an outsider who has come to work among them. Transparent, available, curious.

I quickly understood that this could not work. I understood it would be a failure. I understood that there were three unresolved problems that did not allow this project to achieve a conclusive result. A question is immediately raised about my desire to be "transparent," close to people, to not want to intimidate but rather to exhibit, show the process, and therefore the doubt, the hesitation. I think it's a mistake to want that. Even though I respect my willingness to show weakness, I have to fight against it with all my might. You have to fight against it because the viewer cannot understand that willingness because there is no distance between my willingness and its result. So there's a hesitation, there's awkwardness. I'm neither an exhibitionist nor a masochist. I think I was lacking utopian lucidity about this first problem, that I made the mistake of being a "native" and you don't get anywhere by staying "native." The other problem is a problem regarding the structure of this intervention.

Obviously, it's connected to the first point. But from the moment I felt my project couldn't work, I didn't make the effort to stir up people. I find this artistically and intellectually honest, but it contributed to the failure. For, I'm sure of it, if the effort to communicate were made, my project could have been understood. I mean by including information panels, by approaching people, by circulating information in the street, I could have better circulated my intention. Clearly it's not what I wanted, because I wanted visual dialog, not a dialog-explanation. I was conscious that this project could only be achieved by explaining my intention to people, yet I precisely wanted them to see without my explanation, without my help. So it was impossible to change and, at the same time, impossible to "win." I therefore continued and that was the only satisfaction I got from it. I didn't give up, I worked well, I understood, I took responsibility. The third question is a technical problem. A store with a window is, indeed, not the street. The window, the pane, the entrance door are to be crossed with the "gaze" or by entering into the store. There's still a very significant line between the passerby's passivity and activity. I removed that line by removing the window and by installing neon lights that made it seem that the studio was occupied twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. (A mesh curtain was drawn only at night, and even when I wasn't there, there was a video screen that showed me working.) So, by removing that essential boundary, I did something that no longer has a code, which cannot be read. Passersby immediately grasped, in a blink of the eye, the nonaccessibility, the incommunicability, of my proposition. I assaulted them as much as I found myself being assaulted. It was a non-dialog. I made the mistake of not establishing that artificial boundary between them and my work. That distance allows one to become active or to remain passive. The only people, and this is moral evidence, that entered into active contact with me were artists (who knew about my project), the mentally ill, alcoholics, and drug addicts (asking for money), foreigners (non-Basques, non-Spanish) wanting to talk!

1996

[Translated from French by Molly Stevens]

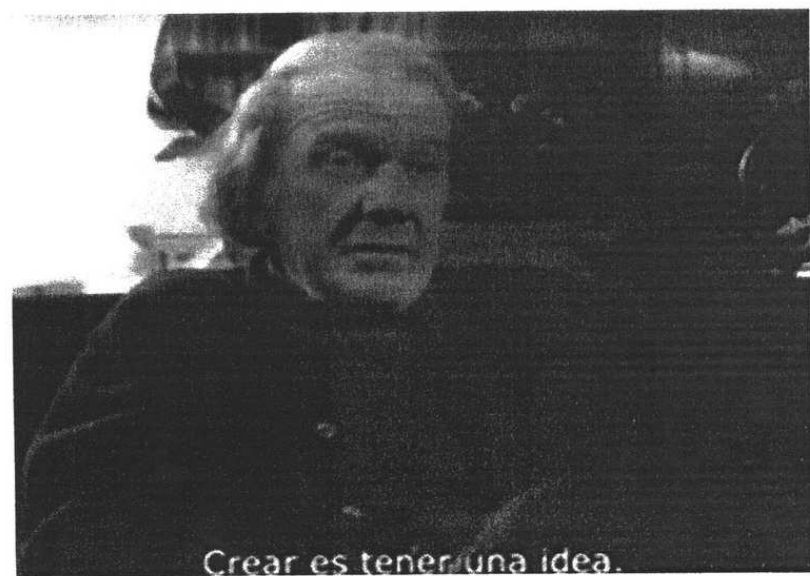
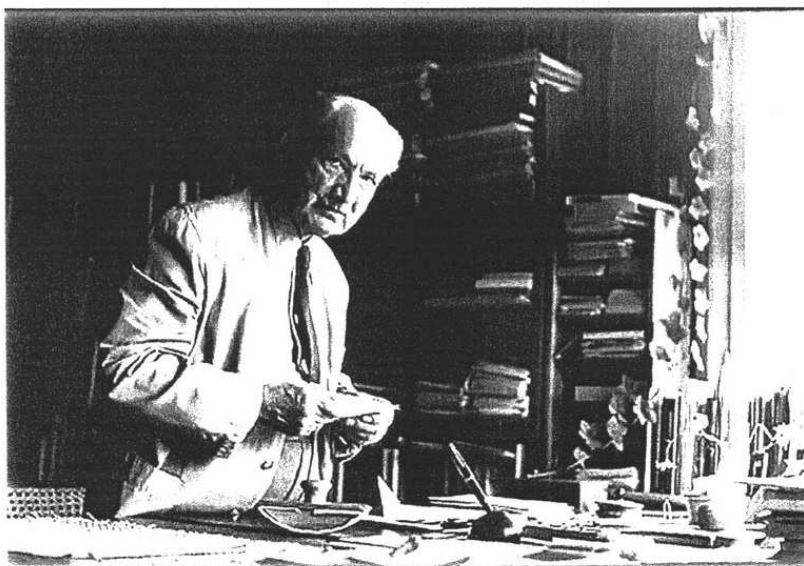


3.7 View of studio in Bilbao, Spain, 1996.

A DAILY LECTURE BY MARCUS STEINWEG

39th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 8th August 2013
HEIDEGGER WITH DELEUZE
Marcus Steinweg

In *What Is Called Thinking?* (1951/52), Heidegger says of man that he points into the withdrawal in that what must be thought eludes him. That that is so means that the *event* (*Ereignis*; the belonging-together of *Being* and *beings*, or of *Beyng* and *beyngs*) shows itself at the current moment in the history of Being in its withdrawal-form, as *disown-event* (*Enteignis*), and as we know, Heidegger does not cease to insist that this is not a lamentable circumstance but historic necessity: "What must be thought about, turns away from man. It withdraws from him. But how can we have the least knowledge of something that withdraws from the beginning, how can we even give it a name? Whatever withdraws refuses arrival. But—withdrawing is not nothing. Withdrawal is an event. In fact, what withdraws may even concern and claim man more essentially than anything present that strikes and touches him. Being struck by actuality is what we like to regard as constitutive of the actuality of the actual. However, in being struck by what is actual, man may be debarred precisely from what concerns and touches him—touches him in the surely mysterious way of escaping him by its withdrawal. The event of withdrawal could be what is most present in all our present, and so infinitely exceed the actuality of everything actual."¹ The "object" of thinking—the point toward which it remains directed even if that point withdraws from it—veils itself in obscurity. Once again it is necessary to insist that this obscurity is not simply the darkness of obscurantism. By no means does it equal the diffuseness that esoteric non-thinking conjures. It is what is most concrete; it is utterly present, presence *par excellence*. Its presence is a presence completed by its constitutive absence. The reality of the real is not itself real, just as the visibility of the visible is not visible. That is the great theme of the Platonic *idea tou agathou*, the idea of the good or the highest idea, of which the *Politeia* says that it is located beyond being, *epekeina tes ousias*.² Thinking remains directed toward this beyond, but in such a way as to acknowledge its non-integral immanence, its status as immanent transcendence. The concept of such an implicit *real* that indicates the bound of the field of immanence (of *reality*) represents the culmination of what we can call the Platonic Lacanianism of Alain Badiou. Badiou, as he is wont to, bases his argument on mathematics: "The most banal example is that the series that makes a finite whole number is not a finite whole number; indeed, it is an entity that is truly inaccessible. The immanent principle of that which is repeated or succeeded is neither repeated nor succeeded."³ Is Heidegger saying anything else when he incessantly repeats that Being cannot itself be a being? Is not Heidegger's Being in precisely this sense beyond being (beyond "metaphysical" being)? Does not therein lie the meaning of the ontological difference, in the distinction between transcendent Being and immanent being, between the Real and reality? Everything, no doubt, revolves around the question of how these two dimensions are connected (their separation is phantasmatic!⁴). It is, "as always" when thinking touches upon the utmost, "about immanence and transcendence,"⁵ about their compossibility or, as Nancy writes, about the "'outside the world' in the very midst of the world," a "transcendence of immanence."⁶ Perhaps we should speak not of a transcendence of immanence but rather of a transcendence *in* immanence.⁷ Everything would



henceforth depend on defining this *in*, which—in analogy to the analyses in Heidegger's *Being and Time* that distinguish the *being-in* of *being* from mere insiderness (the way, for instance, the water is inside the glass)—evokes a fundamental ontological trait of *reality* (of the world as immanence-space): that it is *real* in the Lacanian sense, i.e., ontologically inconsistent!

It is part of thinking to turn to the unthought, for it has long participated in it. The unthought is the unthinkable because its withdrawal is part of it. It is what cannot appear in the space of manifest appearances, or appears only as non-appearance, represented by something it is not. That is perhaps the true meaning of what Heidegger calls *thinking that is thinking-of* [*andenkendes Denken*]: that this thinking-of, as it moves toward presences, must content itself with being able to think nothing but presences, whereas the presence of these presences appears to it only as absence, and not even that. The absence as absence does not exist. It exists only as mediated or represented by figures of presence that are inadequate substitutes for it. Another name for this namelessness would be the “abyss” on which Hölderlin has man (the “mortals”) border. It is the nothingness being held into which is barely the subject's privilege. And yet to be a subject means barely more than to affirm oneself as a placeholder of nothingness that indicates a fundamental ontological inconsistency.

What Deleuze calls the insertion of a plane of consistency implies the acknowledgment of what in it retains an inconsistency, what is incommensurable in reality. Art and philosophy remain related to this incommensurability as they allow the subject to have experiences that it cannot integrate, wholly or once and for all, into its model of itself and its reality, and that have yet long been part of that reality.

But how are we to imagine such an experience of the unexperienceable? What does it mean to touch upon chaos? It need not be the “encounter with the face of the Gorgon,”⁸ the pathos of elemental terror, of absolute discontinuity and the “revolutionary rupture” Rancière, taking a critical view, associates with Lacan, Deleuze, and Badiou, the encounter with the incommensurable *real/ chaos/ event*, with what cannot be directly confronted: the Kantian *noumenon*, the Platonic *idea of the good*, the *fatal sun* Icarus veers too close to. *Gorgós* is the ancient Greek word for dreadful. He who beholds a Gorgon is said to turn to stone. There are things—the thing itself, the *thing in itself*—we better avoid, things we can approach only through indirections and not without protection. Although they constitute the edge or the impossibility of what can be addressed, of visibility and tactility, of experience or representation, of what the subject can be expected to bear, the subject is drawn to this unbearable. A certain eroticism of terror, of dread and the intolerable seems to be constitutive of occidental culture, whence *beauty* is—according to Rilke's First Duino Elegy—“nothing else/ but the beginning of terror, which we are just able to bear” and admire “because it so serenely disdains/ to destroy us.”⁹ The fact that the encounter with the Gorgon—the snake-headed monster—cannot be immediate if it is to remain the encounter of a subject with the incommensurable means that an infinitesimal quantum of familiarity with this monstrous entity is the condition of the possibility of its experience, which need not be shock-like, since it is at work, though often unnoticed, in all experience, presenting itself as the very inconspicuous, as the invisible presence of the incommensurable in all of the subject's impulses.

1 Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 9.

2 Plato, *Politeia*, 509b.

3 Badiou, *Pocket Pantheon*, 110.

4 Cf. Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, 6–7.

5 Badiou, *Pocket Pantheon*, 109–10.

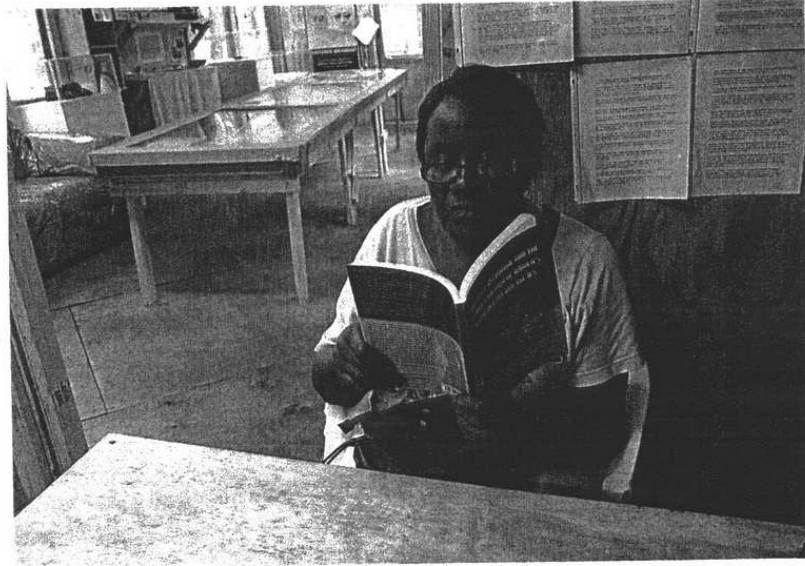
6 Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, 177 (n. 15).

7 For the “immanence of the event” and the persistent metamorphosis of the one substance (including Spinozistic echoes) see Boyan Manchev, “Sujet événementiel et événement-sujet. Les défis d'une politique de la métamorphose,” *Rue Descartes* 67 (2010), 32–42, and Manchev, *La métamorphose et l'instant. Désorganisation de la vie* (Paris: La Phocide, 2010).

8 Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009), 87.

9 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. Leslie P. Gartner (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2008), 1.

A TEXT BY MARCELLA PARADISE



Marcella Paradise Past Present Future

My name is Marcella Paradise. I was born in Harlem, an African American community located in upper Manhattan. My mother and father were upstanding people. They worked hard to keep a roof over my head and food on the table. They moved to the Bronx and into the Forrest Houses in 1954 where the rents were more affordable. We were one of the first five African American families living in this new development at that time. I had a brother and a sister. I was mostly close with my sister, as she's the only sister I had. However, I did, love my brother too, and made the most of it whenever I was with them. We all had a good childhood.

I loved going to school and ways took my studies very seriously. I had never said to anyone that '*I hate studying*'. Many people saw me as a bore. I took that as a compliment rather than an insult. I had big dreams, and that made me study more. Since I was 6 years old, I wanted to be a teacher. That was my goal, so I always did my best at school. Hopefully my hard work will pay off in the end. I don't really know why I decided to be a teacher. I just knew that I loved education. It made me feel sad whenever I saw other students failing. Caring for, and teaching people has always been my desire. Whenever I saw someone who needed help, I was always willing to lend a hand.

At the age of 19 I started working as an assistant to the Emergency Room Radiologist at Harlem Hospital. My hours were from 4pm to 12 midnight. My duties included Patient assessments, patient prepping, patient management and patient education, (all performed with the direction of a radiologist). During my years at Harlem Hospital I have seen all kinds of trauma from gunshot wounds, broken bones, charred skin, foreign objects trapped in the intestines, and death.

I worked at the Hospital for 4 years. My life changed when I was transferred to the Nuclear Radiation Department. Nuclear Radiation, or Ionizing Radiation as it is commonly called, has two very different uses in medicine —diagnosis and therapy.

Both are intended to benefit patient, and, as with any use of radiation, the benefit must outweigh the risk. Radiation is mostly used to treat diseased tissue. It can be administered orally or intravenously. Four months after working with radiation I started feeling very sick on a daily basis. I was experiencing nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and fatigue as well as lot of mental confusion. I discovered that I had radiation poisoning from being exposed to a large dose of radiation. I had many out of body experiences, and nightmares about living in a creepy far out place.

I stayed at Hospital for 4 more years then took a leave of absence. I couldn't take it anymore. I stayed home and raised my son and daughter.

One day after dropping my kids off at daycare someone told me about a career as a EMT technician. My studies for the Emergency Medical Technician State Exam included opening and maintaining an airway; ventilating patients, administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation, including use of automated external defibrillators; providing pre-hospital emergency medical care of simple and multiple system trauma such as: controlling hemorrhage, treatment of shock (hypo-perfusion), bandaging wounds, immobilization of painful, swollen, or deformed extremities, immobilization of painful, swollen, or deformed neck or spine; providing emergency medical care to assist in emergency childbirth, manage general medical complaints of altered mental status, respiratory, cardiac, diabetic, allergic reaction, seizures, poisoning behavioral emergencies, environmental emergencies, and psychological crises. After all of this intensive

studying and passing the state exam I didn't get a job because I didn't have a driver's license, nor could I drive.

Then in 1981 I started working for the Board of Education as a para-professional. In 1992 my supervisor was looking for someone who could teach the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and to help him prepare the curriculum. I taught those grades for a few years then I became an Intervention teacher.

An Intervention Teacher has the task of working within a classroom setting to help students who are lagging behind the rest of their class in their studies. Typically, the focus is on reading and language instruction. My main objective was developing strategies to help my students become successful within the classroom.

In march of 2013 I was approached by Eric Farmer (the president of the Forrest Houses Tenant Association), and Clyde Thompson, his assistant, about working on a project called the Gramsci Monument. The Gramsci Monument is a new artwork by Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn, taking place on the grounds of Forest Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Morrisania neighborhood of the Bronx. The Monument opened on July 1 and will run through September 15, 2013. It is open seven days a week, from 10 am to 7 pm. I am the chief librarian, I read poetry and do storytelling. This has been a wonderful experience for me. I am learning a lot about politics, philosophy, and about people of other countries.

...

**“ STORYTELLING 2” WITH MARCELLA
PARADISE TODAY THURSDAY, AUGUST 8 AT
4 PM (ANTONIO LOUNGE)**

WHAT'S GOING ON? FEED BACK

Summer Art Space a Big Hit at Forest Houses

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/news/gramsci-monument-a-big...>

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NYCHA News



Summer Art Space a Big Hit at Forest Houses

Maybe you want to dip your feet into a small wading pool. Or read a philosophy book while enjoying a gentle breeze. Or perhaps listen to a poetry reading on a couch in the shade. You can do all of this, and more, at the Gramsci Monument at Forest Houses. The large interactive art exhibit – built out of wood in a public space just for the summer – is drawing people not just from the Bronx development, but all over the world.

The workers and volunteers at the construction site are Forest Houses residents. This includes Harry Drake, the Resident Association Secretary, whose stage name is DJ Baby Dee – he serves as the emcee for performances, works in the radio station and reads daily announcements. "The project brought the community together; we've never seen anything like this before in NYCHA," Mr. Drake said. "It's like a burst of energy, 'Wow, it's art coming here!'"



Children receiving art instruction at Gramsci Monument at Forest Houses. Click image for more. (LETICIA BARBOZA/NYCHA)

The Gramsci Monument is the brainchild of Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn, and is paid for entirely by the Dia Art Foundation. Its name comes from the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci. An exhibit at the art space includes many of Antonio Gramsci's personal artifacts, including the utensils he used when he was in prison. And his books are included in the library, which is managed by resident Marcella Paradise. "This has brought a lot of enlightenment to me," said Ms. Paradise, who also was convinced to do a poetry reading one day. "I was nervous at first because I never had experienced that, but (Mr. Hirschhorn) brought a lot out of me."

In the computer room, the most popular spot in the exhibit, residents can use the internet and play video games. "It's a lot of fun," said seven-year-old Shamah Jeffrey. "I like playing basketball on the computer."

To make sure everything is kept safe, several residents work as security, including cousins Kareen and Ernestine Bethea, who also know CPR and first aid. "We're always out here, so why not help out?" said Kareen Bethea.

"The kids need something to look forward to every day, something positive, especially the ones who are not in day camp," said Ernestine Bethea.

People have come to the Gramsci Monument from as far away as Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. And neighborhood day camps even schedule regular visits as part of their day, according to Resident Association President Eric Farmer. "The kids love this thing. We have to actually make them leave at night," he said.

The Gramsci Monument will be dismantled on Sept. 15, by the same Forest Houses residents who built it earlier this year. "I am going to feel so sad when it closes," said Myrna Alvarez, who provides snacks at the art space. "I wish we could keep it forever; the community would get closer. It will stay in my heart and in my mind."

Mr. Hirschhorn updates the Gramsci Monument's website every day at www.gramsci-monument.com

By Eric Deutsch
July 24, 2013

- ▶ [View Photos of Activities at Gramsci Monument](#) [Flickr]
- ▶ [NYCHA & Renowned Artist Thomas Hirschhorn Host Preview of Gramsci Monument](#)

RESIDENT OF THE DAY



LORRAINE TRENT