

GEOG 252. SOUTHERN QUESTIONS: GRAMSCI, SUBALTERNITY & THE WORLD

Department of Geography, University of California at Berkeley
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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

“Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.” Motto of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, 4 Mar 1921.

“The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.” Q3, §34, 1930.

Antonio Gramsci's thought remains unique in various ways for bridging the socio-cultural and the political-economic, and the critique of capital as intertwined with other forms of social domination. Gramsci also offers a way of thinking across historical geographies of capital and revolution, and for translating different forms of critique. Gramsci has been central to rethinking the project of an open Marxist critique of modern social domination in the Global South, including forms of Black, Indigenous and otherwise subaltern critique everywhere. In our age of generalized political uncertainty and widespread discontent, Gramsci's careful diagnosis of the “morbid symptoms” of the long interregnum marked by the slow demise of “the old” could not be more relevant in practically every part of the world. Equally relevant is the charge of the young militant that we conserve “optimism of the will” against the odds, in order to help initiate the conditions for the making of “the new.” This course will open up ways of reading this crucial thinker, and particularly to thinking in the way he suggested we – all of us humans as ‘intellectuals’ – might make these thoughts real by bringing their conditions of actualization into being in the world. Gramsci once remarked that he refused the idea that we read thinkers (he was referring to Marx) to lionize them, put them up on a pedestal, and so on; rather, we should engage them (and him) with all our critical faculties, open and yet willing to let the line of thought live in new forms.

Much of Gramsci's writings are in the form of short notes in a series of notebooks while he was incarcerated in Mussolini's prisons. Meant to be safely kept from publicizing his incendiary critique of Italy's descent into fascism, Gramsci nonetheless persevered. The first attempts at collecting his works tried to sort through these fragments with the hope of coming to some kind of thematic unity that Gramsci would have aimed for had he not been incarcerated. More recent attempts take seriously his work to produce something of value that were not simply a compromise to the conditions of imprisonment under which he worked. We will try to follow this path, in our time in which much of our own process of thinking, writing, reading and research is driven by the fragmentation that the Internet has brought (rather, wrought!) Might we read Gramsci's carceral notes for a way of thinking with and beyond the subtler carceral forms that structure our own lives? Rather than insisting on ‘getting Gramsci right,’ we aim to think with his attempt at provisional and processual critique. We attempt to read Gramsci's prison notes as he suggested we ought to read thinkers, not to worship them but to think with their leitmotifs, their “rhythms of thought” as he put it. We will also see how various thinkers ‘stretch’ Gramscian concepts, to use Frantz Fanon's metaphor. How do Gramsci's concepts resonate with different realities? How might the Sardinian militant's rhythms of thought resonate with our particular concerns, and how might they help us imagine a world beyond our imperial world-prison in general?

READING GRAMSCI

We will read Gramsci's thought in relation to the challenges of radical critique in various parts of the world, and to the kinds of 'southern questions' that they provoke. The first collections of Gramsci's prison writings collated pieces along themes, without regard to the development of Gramsci's thought across notebooks (some of which were simultaneous); anglophone readers were introduced to Gramsci in this way. Joseph Buttigieg (**PN**) follows the approach in Valentino Guerratana's 1975 *Quaderni del carcere* (**QDC**) that allows a philological reading along the 29 Notebooks, to let the reader appreciate Gramsci's open, curious, revisionist method. If you read Italian, please do read the QDC! Drawing on this philological method, we will read threads through the carceral notes across his key concepts. Buttigieg did not complete the translations of all 29 notebooks; the first eight are in **PN**, Notebook 25 has just been published. The International Gramsci Society's [Concordance Tables](#) help us read sequentially across the main selected editions in English:

SPN *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*. International Publishers, 1971.

CW *Selections from Cultural Writings*. Harvard University Press, 1985.

FS *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Minnesota University Press, 1995.

AGR *Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*. NYU Press, 2000. [Selections from SPN, CW, Pre-prison writings, and some new translations. Not in Concordance Tables.]

PN *Prison Notebooks*, vols. 1-3. Columbia University Press, 1992, 1996, 2007. [Notebooks 1-8]

The internationally accepted citational practice of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* is of Quaderno or Notebook number (Q1-29), then '§' and the note number: Q1, §14 refers to Notebook 1, note 14. This is what you'll see in the list below. [Use the concordance tables](#) to work across texts.

EXPECTATIONS

1. Active participation.
2. Reading: this is a reading-driven seminar which requires setting aside adequate calm, uninterrupted time to work through readings each week. Please take space and time to read. If you have challenges with reading, you're likely not alone – let's address them together.
3. From week 3: post short weekly response to some aspect of the reading by the weekend, in time for us to read responses before seminar on Monday. Pause to reflect on some aspect of the text. Try to train your mind to attend to what the text intends, in its own terms.
4. Responsibility for moderating discussion on one week. Moderators do not summarize or offer a 'presentation' but just lead us with a brief set of thoughts and questions to help us interpret the text on its terms. Moderators should write slightly more substantial weekly responses (a page, rather than a paragraph).
5. A concise 15-20-page paper (double spaced, 12-point font of your choice) that links Gramsci's concepts to your own research problem or interests. This is where you have a chance to use Gramsci's concepts, as well as the secondary literature, to think with them about your research interests.

SEMINAR PRINCIPLES

Please keep these principles in mind as we read and think together:

1. **Equality in reading:** We will only discuss what we have read collectively in our written comments and discussion. Please keep extraneous texts out of the conversation during the seminar.
2. **Generosity to the text:** Aim, first and foremost, to read the text on its own terms, in its own categories, dwelling in its form, argument, elaboration and evidence. Remember, the carceral notes were meant to be provisional, open to revision, sometimes entirely so.
3. **Openness with listening as much as with speech:** If you are more given to one of these, try to practice the other. Active participation in class does not mean speaking a lot; it also means listening and responding to what others offer. You might rephrase what another person says in your own words, so that there is an opportunity for deepening engagement through our differences.
4. **Lines of flight:** Texts inevitably take us elsewhere, because we all read from situated experiences, histories, preoccupations, or styles of thought. Rather than repressing the capacity to digress, take note of these 'lines of flight' while you read or in our seminar discussions, as you gently return to the text. Rather than interrupt the flow of collective reading, save these thoughts for your course paper.

We aim to read critically, generously, in conversation, and with the hope of fresh thought.

This means we will aim to follow threads of discussion until the thread has been adequately attended to. Moderators might intervene to guide discussion back to the texts. We will have multiple texts to discuss in the limited time of the seminar, which means that we may sometimes have to draw a line and move on to the next text – and this might also mean moderators step in to summarize where we are and where we might transition to.

SEMINAR FORMAT

Each week starting Week 4, we begin at 12.10 with one or two people offer brief thoughts about the 'rhythm of thought' in the selections from Gramsci's writings for the week, and some questions to start us off. We might go around the room, but holding onto the thread of conversation. We first attend to the readings by Gramsci. Then we move onto the text we are 'reading with,' in relation to Gramsci's concepts. At about 1:30pm, we take a short break. When we return, at 1:45, I will offer reflections on the texts and seminar discussion. We then have open discussion for the final hour, staying with what the conversation between the texts provokes about the theme of the week.



PART 1: SITUATING GRAMSCI

Since the semester begins the Wednesday of Week 1, and since Monday of Week 3 is a holiday, we hit the ground running by asking how we might we approach Gramsci the person, the method in his carceral writings, and the rhythm of militant thought that is recognizably ‘Gramscian’?

WEEK 2. Aug 30 – Introduction: Gramsci’s Life-Work, Reading Gramsci

What it might mean to take seriously the Gramsci’s life-work today, for our various commitments, in the many carceral geographies that continue to shape our world? This will be our guiding question. We will try to grasp the rhythm of Gramsci’s thought, and imagine its creative reworking elsewhere. Imagining that possibility is crucial to the method of this course. An appreciation of Gramsci’s life is key to understanding his theoretical and political creativity.

Giuseppe Fiori 1990 [1970] *Antonio Gramsci: A Life*. Tom Nairn trans. London: Verso.

J Berger “How to Live with Stones” in M Ekers, G Hart, S Kipfer and A Loftus eds 2013 *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 6-11.

Films:

Gramsci: Everything that concerns people ([here](#)) and

New York and the Mystery of Naples: A Journey through Gramsci’s World: [here](#).

WEEK 3. [No class: Public Holiday] On Reading Gramsci

M Ekers and A Loftus 2013 “Introduction” in M Ekers, G Hart, S Kipfer and A Loftus eds. *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 15-32.

R Dianotto 2020 “Introduction” in F Jameson and R Dianotto eds *Gramsci in the World*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1-15

J Buttigieg 1991 “Introduction” in **PN1**, pp. 1-64. [especially on ‘Gramsci’s Method’ from p.42]

A Morton 2003 “Historicizing Gramsci: Situating Ideas in and beyond their Context” in *Review of International Political Economy* 10, 1: 118-146.

C N Coutinho 2012 Chapter 4 “Methodological Observations on the *Prison Notebooks*” in *Gramsci’s Political Thought*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 46-76.

WEEK 4. Sept 13 – Southern Questions

Among his early writings, we read the important piece, ‘The Revolution against *Capital*’ on how to read Marx and think politically; political journalism culminating in his unfinished piece on the ‘Southern Question’ finished close to his incarceration. We see in these works by the young Gramsci several of his abiding preoccupations: on reading, intellectuals, geography, revolution, socialism as

prefigured in working-class self-determination, literary and cultural aspects of struggle, and other things. We will return to these preoccupations through his process of constant theoretical-political revision. We read his unfinished draft on the Southern Question, written just before his arrest and incarceration on 9 November 1926. We read with the early chapters of Du Bois' *Black Reconstruction*.

1916 "Socialism and Culture." In *Il Grido del Popolo*, 29 January, and AGR, pp. 56-62

1916 "The Popular University." In *Avanti!* 29 December, and AGR, pp. 64-7.

1917 "**The Revolution Against Capital.**" In *Avanti!* 24 December, and AGR, pp. 32-36.

1919 "The War in the Colonies." In *L'Ordine Nuovo* 7 June, and AGR 112-13.

1919 "Workers' Democracy." In *L'Ordine Nuovo* 21 June, and AGR 79-82.

1919 "Conquest of the State." In *L'Ordine Nuovo* 12 July, and AGR 83-88.

1919 "Workers and Peasants." In *L'Ordine Nuovo* 2 August, and AGR 113-118.

1920 "Unions and Councils." In *L'Ordine Nuovo* 12 June, and AGR 92-96.

1920 "Questions of Culture." In *Avanti!* 14 June, and AGR, pp. 70-2.

1926 "Letter to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party." In AGR, pp. 164-171

1926 "**Some Aspects of the Southern Question.**" (September-November) in AGR, pp. 171-185.

Read with

W E B DuBois 1998 [1935] Chapters 1-3 in *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Free Press, pp. 1-54.

PART 2: A GRAMSCIAN LEXICON AGAINST THE WORLD/ PRISON

WEEK 5. Sept 20 – 'Passive Revolution'

Before slowly unpacking the concept 'hegemony,' we follow Peter Thomas' cue to begin with the concept through which the imprisoned Gramsci tries to comprehend the advance of fascism, in relation to earlier moments of revolution and reaction. Thomas helps us with the difficult work of reading the carceral notes. Chatterjee exemplifies thinking creatively with their possibilities. Gramsci also translated key texts in his notebooks, so we read some of these as well.

Q1, §44; Q1, §47; Q1, §48; Q3, §40; Q4, §57; Q8, §2; Q8, §25; Q8, §36; Q8, §236 (PN) Q13, §7; Q15, §15; Q15, §17; Q15, §62 (SPN) (~35pp)

Explicating Gramsci:

P Thomas 2020 "Gramsci's Revolutions" in *Modern Intellectual History* 17, 1: 117-146.

Two texts Gramsci translated in prison and refers to through his notes, and one speech:

K Marx 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach." online [here](#).

K Marx 1859 “Preface” to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. online [here](#).

K Marx and F Engels, 1850 “Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League,” London (March), online [here](#).

Read with:

P Chatterjee 1993 [1986] *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A derivative discourse*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: Focus on Chapters 1, 2, 5.

WEEK 6. Sept 27 – ‘The Integral State’: ‘Political and Civil Society’; and ‘Political and Civil Hegemony’

We approach Gramsci’s rethinking of the state and politics through the notion of the integral state that brings what he calls political society and civil society in relation. We then turn to how he rethinks the concept ‘hegemony’ as advancing in both political and civil society.

Grey highlights: notes already read. ~~Struck through~~: notes we read later, but pertinent for this sequence of Gramsci’s thought.

On the Integral State that ‘integrates’ Political and Civil Society:

Q1, §47; **Q1, §150**; Q4, §38; ~~Q4, §49~~; Q6, §10; **Q6, §24**; Q6, §65; Q6, §85; Q6, §86; **Q6, §87**;
Q6, §88; Q8, §2; Q8, §130; Q8, §142; Q8, §187 (**PN**);
Q9, §133 (QDC); **Q10II, §15 (FS)**;
Q13, §11; Q13, §18; Q13, §23 (**SPN**). (~54pp)

On the making of Political and Civil Hegemony:

Q1, §44; Q1, §48; **Q3, §48**; Q4, §46; Q6, §10; Q6, §24; Q6, §87; **Q6, §81**; **Q6, §88**; ~~Q6, §136~~; Q7, §9;
~~Q7, §16~~; **Q7, §35**; **Q7, §83**; Q8, §48; **Q8, §86**; Q8, §142; **Q8, 191 (PN)**
Q10I, §7; **Q10I, §12**; **Q10II, §6**; **Q10II, §12**; **Q10II, §15**; Q10II, 41x; ~~Q12, §1~~; **Q13, §14**; Q13, §18;
Q13, §23; **Q14, §68**; **Q19, §24**; Q22, §13; Q29, §3 (**SPN** and **FS**) (~54pp)

Explicating Gramsci:

C N Coutinho 2012 Chapter 5 “The ‘Extended’ Theory of the State.” in *Gramsci’s Political Thought*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 77-92.

G Cospito 2020. Chapter 10 “The *Prison Notebooks*: Hegemony and Civil Society.” In S Cadeddu ed. *A Companion to Antonio Gramsci: Essays on History and Theories of History, Politics and Historiography*, pp. 105-113.

Read with:

G Hart 2014 Chapter 1 “Contours of Crisis in South Africa” and Chapter 6 “Through the Lens of Passive Revolution: The South African Crisis Revisited” in *Rethinking the South African Crisis: Nationalism, Populism, Hegemony*. Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, pp. 1-27 and 219-42.

G Hart 2015 “Political Society and its Discontents: Translating Passive Revolution in India and South Africa Today” in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol L, No. 43, pp. 43-51.

WEEK 7. Oct 4 – Americanism and Fordism

This week we read a set of notes from one notebook, on Gramsci’s reading of American society as a kind of ‘historic bloc’ in which transformations in the Ford industrial complex at Dearborn, MI, were part of a broader hegemonic transformation of all aspects of social life. We read with Michael Burawoy’s pioneering Gramscian sociology of work, the conceptual side of a series of workplace ethnographies. Chari’s work in South India tried to explain the sociocultural dynamics surrounding what was seen as a ‘post-Fordist’ industrial form, built through specific agrarian gender/caste/class relations. We also have an opportunity to begin to think about race, gender, caste and other forms of difference as constitutive of regional hegemonic formations.

Q22 §1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 (SPN pp. 277-318, in the wrong order, consult the concordance tables to read it sequentially.)

Read with:

M Burawoy 1985 Chapter 1 “The Labour Process in Capitalist Society” in *The Politics of Production*. London: Verso, pp. 21-68.

S Chari 2004a Introduction & Chapter 6 “Gender Fetishisms and Shifting Hegemonies” in *Fraternal Capital: Peasant-workers, self-made men and globalization in provincial India*. Stanford: Stanford U Press, pp. 1-52, 240-73. (Read Chari 2004b between the two excerpts)

S Chari 2004b “Provincializing Capital: The Work of an Agrarian Past in South Indian Industry” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, 4: 760-85.

M Ekers 2013 “Gramsci and the Erotics of Labor: More Notes on ‘The Sexual Question’” in M Ekers, G Hart, S Kipfer & A Loftus eds. *Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics*, Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 217-237.

M Denning 2009 “Antonio Gramsci as a theorist of labor” in J Francese ed. *Perspectives on Gramsci: Politics, culture and social theory*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 69-79

R Judy 2020 “Gramsci on *la questione dei negri: Gli intellettuali* and the Poesis of Americanization.” In F Jameson and R Dianotto eds *Gramsci in the World*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.164-78.

WEEK 8. Oct 11 – ‘War of Position and War of Movement’

Still on the theme of the process of striving for hegemony, we turn to Gramsci’s political theory on the terrain of political and civil society. Ato Sekyi-Out notes the close kinship between Gramsci and Fanon in this regard, as we read his carceral notes in relation to Fanon’s classic *Les damnés de la terre*.

Q6, §138; Q7, §16; Q7, §24; Q8, §52 (PN)

Q10I, §7; **Q10I, §9; Q10I, §12; Q10II, §12; Q11, §20; Q13, §7; *Q13, §24 (SPN)**

Q 13, §26 (QDC) (~15pp)

Read with:

A Sekyi-Otu 1996. *Fanon’s Dialectic of Experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, pp. 47-55 and 84-87.

F Frantz 1963 *Wretched of the Earth*. **C Farrington trans.** New York: Grove. (Read the Conclusion first, then turn to the beginning; skip Sartre’s Preface.)

WEEK 9. Oct 18 – Hegemonic Apparatus

Gramsci also subjects the apparatus of hegemony to dynamic critique, to identify its fissures and contradictions from a militant perspective. This was Stuart Hall’s life’s work as a Black and Marxist intellectual in Britain. We read from Hall’s work from the late 1970s, when his reading of Gramsci transformed his critique of the racial capitalist apparatus surrounding him. Importantly, showing us the internationalism of this method, Hall drew insights from a close reading of the historiography of South African apartheid to rethink Black diaspora politics and aesthetics in British society. *Hard Road to Renewal* and *Policing the Crisis* remain key texts in our long racial neoliberal present. Finally, Hall exemplifies how radical political economy and Black art/ aesthetics must be thought relationally.

Q1, §48; Q1, §77; Q3, §48; **Q3, §49; Q4, §12; Q4, §38; Q6, §81; Q6, §87; Q6, §136; Q6, §137;**

Q7, §33; Q7, §80; Q7, §83; Q8, §2; Q8, §179 (PN)

Q10II, §12; **Q11, §29 (SPN); Q13, §37 (FS); Q15, §13 (QDC); Q19, §24; Q25, §5.** (~12p)

Read with:

S Hall et al 2021 [1978] **“Black Crime, Black Proletariat.”** In S Hall *Selected Writings on Marxism*. G McLennan ed. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 199-223. [*Excerpting* S Hall et al 1978 Chapter 10 **“The Politics of ‘Mugging’”** in *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan, pp. 327-397. Read the astonishing last section, pp.389-97 not included in McLennan’s selection.]

S Hall 2021 [1980] “Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance.” In S Hall *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*. P Gilroy and RW Gilmore eds. Durham: Duke, pp. 195-242.

S Hall 2021 [1983] “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees.” In S Hall *Selected Writings on Marxism*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 134-156.

S Hall 2021 [1986] “Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.” In S Hall *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*. Durham: Duke University Press, 295-328.

S Hall 2021 [1988] *Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*. London: Verso, pp. 1-74, 95-149, 161-173.

S Hall 2021 [1988] “New ethnicities.” In S Hall *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*. Durham: Duke University Press, 246-255.

S Hall 1993 “What is this ‘Black’ in Black Popular Culture.” In *Social Justice* 20, 1-2: 104-113.

S Hall 2006 “Black diaspora artists in Britain: Three ‘moments’ in post-war history.” In *History Workshop Journal*, 61: 1–24.

WEEK 10. Oct 25 – Intellectuals and Forms of Consciousness

Gramsci’s early plan of his carceral notebooks was that he would focus on four things: intellectuals, the Southern Question, the theater of Pirandello and the serialized novel (the last on the possibility of critique in new media of his time.) What united all four, in his view, were the limits and possibilities of creative consciousness. This week we turn to his conception of the intellectual, read with Grant Farred’s engaging text on Black vernacular intellectuals, complemented by Angela Davis’ reading of the pioneering theorists of the Blues. Gramsci was a central figure in the work of Edward Said. We read notes for an unpublished talk of his which explores Gramsci as an intellectual in prison with an expansive conception of critical consciousness.

Q4, §3; Q4, §33; Q4, §49; Q7, §1 (PN)
Q10I, §1; Q10II, §41.iv (FS);
Q11, §12; Q 11, §13; Q 12, §1-§3; Q 13, §7; Q 15 §4 (SPN and FS)

Read with:

G Farred 2003 *What’s My Name? Black Vernacular Intellectuals*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

A Y. Davis. 1999 “Introduction” and “Strange Fruit” in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, pp. xi-41 and 181-197.

E. Said. “On Critical Consciousness: Gramsci and Lukacs” unpublished manuscript, Edward Said Papers, Box 78, Folder 10. Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University. (With thanks to the librarians of RBML. Please do not share beyond this course.)

For future reference, a wonderful Gramscian ethnography of education:

P Willis 1981 *Learning to Labour: How Working-Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

WEEK 11. Nov 1 – ‘Subaltern Social Groups’ and Plural Temporalities

Turning to another key concept from Gramsci that is often misinterpreted, we read his very short Notebook 25 on ‘subaltern social groups’ “on the margins of history.” We will think about two things here: the conception of the subaltern, and his conception of history. The South Asian Subaltern Studies Collective were fundamentally concerned with these questions. We read a wonder of a book by Shahid Amin that points to the possibilities emergent in this line of thought, and also an essay by Gyanendra Pandey that exemplifies layers of history in a North Indian *qasba*.

Gramsci 2021 [1934] Notebook 25 *On the Margins of History (The History of Subaltern Social Groups.)* In *Subaltern Social Groups: A Critical Edition of Prison Notebook 25*. Columbia University Press, pp. 3-14.

Explicating Gramsci:

M Green 2002 “Gramsci Cannot Speak: Presentations and Interpretations of Gramsci’s Concept of the Subaltern.” In *Rethinking Marxism*, 14, 3, pp. 1-24.

P Thomas 2018 “Gramsci’s Plural Temporalities.” In V Morfino and P Thomas *The Government of Time: Theories of Plural Temporality in the Marxist Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 174-209

V Morfino 2020 “The Layers of History and the Politics in Gramsci.” In S Cadeddu ed. *A Companion to Antonio Gramsci: Essays on History and Theories of History, Politics and Historiography*, pp. 47-55.

Read with:

S Amin 1995 *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri-Chaura, 1922-1992*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gyanendra Pandey 1988 [1984] “‘Encounters and Calamities’: The history of a North Indian *qasba* in the Nineteenth Century” in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak eds. *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 89-128.

WEEK 12. Nov 8 – Subaltern Disclosure/Effacement and the Politics of Representation

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak’s critical interventions within the Subaltern Studies Collective, and her translations of Mahashweta Devi’s short stories, have fundamentally recast the problem of the subaltern as a sign of disclosure through effacement, so much so that Robert Young suggests that Spivak rather than Gramsci invented ‘the subaltern’ as we know what this term names. We will consider what this means by reading one version of her argument in relation to gendered, raced, caste, Indigenous or sexual subalterns (take your pick!)

G C Spivak (with M Devi) 1988 *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Routledge:

Mahashweta Devi “Draupadi” (“*Agnigarbha*”) with foreword. pp. 179-196.

“Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” pp. 197-221.

Mahashweta Devi “Breast-Giver” (“*Stanadayini*”) pp. 222-240.

“A Literary Representation of The Subaltern: A Woman’s Text from the Third World” pp. 441-268.

G C Spivak 1999. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 269-276 and 306(bottom)-311.

Explicating Gramsci, Subaltern Studies and Spivak:

R J C Young 2012 “Il Gramsci meridionale.” In N Srivastava and B Bhattacharya eds. *The Postcolonial Gramsci*. London, Routledge, pp. 18-33.

Read with:

K McKittrick 2006. “The Last Place They Thought Of: Black Women’s Geographies” in *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 37-64.

R Guha, 2005 [1987] “Chandra’s Death” in R Guha ed. *Subaltern Studies V*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 135-165.

C Zene 2011 “Self-Consciousness of the Dalits as ‘Subalterns’: Reflections on Gramsci in South Asia.” In *Rethinking Marxism*, 23, 1: 83-99.

R Varma 2015 “Representing the Adivasi. Limits and Possibilities of Postcolonial Theory.” In A G Nilsen and S Roy *New Subaltern Politics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 103-125.

S Roy 2015 “Affective Politics and the Sexual Subaltern. Lesbian Activism in Eastern India.” In A G Nilsen and S Roy *New Subaltern Politics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 149-173.

WEEKS 13. Nov 15 – The Modern Prince

Gramsci’s political theory of the communist movement underwent major shifts through his study of passive revolution, hegemony, subaltern social groups, cultural and literary forms, language and translation: all this effects political mobilization. We turn to his conception of the ‘modern prince,’ an engagement and revision of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Gramsci explores the possibility that rather than a charismatic leader, the ‘modern prince’ should be a party, *the party*. We read these notes with Robin Spencer’s gendered analysis of the Black Panther Party in Oakland.

Q3, §48; **Q5, §127**; Q 8, §37 (PN);

Q13, §1-§2 (SPN); Q13, §5-§6 (QDC);

Q13, §7; Q13, §8; **Q13, §10-§11**; **Q13, §14**; **Q13, §17**, Q13, §18; **Q13, §21**; **Q13, §23** (all in SPN);

Q13, §25 (QDC);

Q13, §33; **Q13, §36**; **Q14, §13**; **Q14, §34**; **Q14, §70** (all in SPN); Q25, §2; Q25, §5.

Explicating Gramsci:

P Thomas 2020 “Toward the Modern Prince.” In R Dainoto and F Jameson eds *Gramsci in the World*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 17-37.

G Vaca 2020 “The Modern Prince.” In *Alternative Modernities: Antonio Gramsci’s Twentieth Century*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 218-230

Read with:

R C Spencer 2016 *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland*. Durham: Duke University Press.

WEEK 14. Nov 22 – The National-Popular Collective Will

Gramsci’s conception of ‘what is to be done’ involves a radical transformation of popular nationalism, but his notion of ‘national-popular collective will’ also drew from his engagement with language, folklore, theater and other cultural forms. We try to engage what this means by reading Gramsci with René Zavaleta Mercado’s history of ‘the national-popular’ in Bolivia.

Q29, §1-§7 (CW)

Explicating Gramsci:

P Ives 2004 *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, London: Pluto Press, pp. 89-101, 110-12, 113-14.

A Freeland 2019 “Subalternity and the National-Popular: A Brief Genealogy of the Concepts.” In F Antonini, A Bernstein, L Fusaro and R Jackson eds. 2019 *Revisiting Gramsci’s Notebooks*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, pp. 195-208.

Read with:

R Zavaleta Mercado 2018 *Towards a History of the National Popular in Bolivia*, Calcutta: Seagull Books.

WEEK 15. Nov 29 – ‘Philosophy of Praxis’: Towards ‘Optimism of the Will’

We conclude by revisiting the novelty of Gramsci’s ‘philosophy of praxis’ as we turn to what is to be done through ‘pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will’ and the necessary work of imagining a new ‘conception of the world.’

Q5, §127; Q7, §33; Q7, §35; Q8, §61; Q8, §198; Q8, §220; Q8, §232; Q8, §235 (PN)
Q11, §12-§70; Q16, §2; Q16, §3; Q16, §9 (SPN and FS)

Read With:

B Bhandar and R Ziadah 2020 Bannerjee, Simpson, Gilmore and Davis Interviews, and Lowe's Afterword in *Revolutionary Feminisms*, London: Verso, pp. 95-118, 161-178, 203-227.

PP Pasolini 1979 [1954] "The Ashes of Gramsci." In *the Paris Review*, 76 (Fall) N MacAfee and L Martinego trans.

C Casarino 2010 "The Southern Answer: Pasolini, Universalism, Decolonization." In *Critical Inquiry* 36 (Summer): 673-96.

M Denning 2021 "Everyone a Legislator" in *New Left Review* 129 (May June), 29-44.

J Chalcraft 2021 "Revolutionary Weakness in Gramscian Perspective: the Arab Middle East and North Africa since 2011." In *Middle East Critique*, 30, 1: 87-104.

N Abourahme 2021 "Revolution after Revolution: The Commune as Line of Flight in Palestinian Anticolonialism." in *Critical Times* 4, 3, forthcoming.

WEEK 16. Dec 6 – Short in-class presentations: How does Gramscian thought recast your potential dissertation research project?
