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Abstract

This is the abstract of the English translation of a review in French by Camilla Sclocco of the two collectively-authored books *Gramsci in Francia*, edited by R. Descendre, F. Giasi and G. Vacca, with the assistance of A. Crézégut, as part of the *Gramsci nel mondo* series, Bologna, il Mulino, 2020; and *La France d'Antonio Gramsci*, edited by R. Descendre e J-C. Zancarini for Ens Éditions, Lyon, 2021.

Keywords

Gramsci; France; André Tosei; Translation Phases; Jacobins; National-Popular Collective Will.

Gramsci's France and Gramsci in France

Camilla Sclocco

1. Introduction

While the 1980s in France were characterized by a neglect of Gramsci, the last decade has witnessed a reawakening of specialist studies on him. The new interest is due most of all to the work on Gramsci carried out by André Tosel from the mid-1970s through to the first decade of the new century. His was original research, carried out autonomously, at a time when French attention for Gramsci had entered into crisis, and thus ensured that a research space was maintained, now reactivated and broadened by the activity of new scholars.¹ Amongst these, we may single out the group of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers of the *École Normale Supérieure* (ENS) of Lyon, including Marie Lucas and the present author, where since September 2012 there has been an annual seminar *Lire les Cahiers de prison* (*Reading the Prison Notebooks*), under the direction of Romain Descendre and Jean-Claude Zancarini. The seminar aims at making widespread the results of the philological studies stemming from the *National Edition of the Writings of Antonio Gramsci*. There is also intense research work being carried out among staff at the Sorbonne in Paris, who are engaged in the organization of international days of study and conferences, such as those on the *Théorie de la culture et critique littéraire chez Gramsci* held at the Italian Department in the 2019-2020 academic session.

Documents of significance for this revival of Gramsci studies in France are two recent volumes that go into aspects of French political and literary thought respectively that emerge from his work. These are *Gramsci in Francia* (2020) published in 2020 under the auspices of the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome, and *La France d'Antonio Gramsci*, published in 2021 under the editorship of Romain Descendre and Jean-Claude Zancarini.

¹ On the nature of this general reawakening of Gramsci studies in France, see P. Desogus (2022) and R. Descendre (2022).

2. *A Complex Reception*

The volume *Gramsci in Francia*, forming part of the series *Studi gramsciani nel mondo*, and edited by Romain Descendre, Francesco Giasi and Giuseppe Vacca, with the collaboration of Anthony Crézéguet, brings together the texts of the French authors who, through their Gramsci studies, have contributed an important chapter to the European culture of the second half of the twentieth century. Each single article in the anthology is preceded by an preface which brings into focus the particular reasons why it marks a stage in the reception of Gramsci in France.

Leafing through the index one is immediately struck by the massive presence of Tosel, three of whose publications are included: *I malintesi dell'egemonia 1965-1989* (1989), *Filosofia marxista e traducibilità dei linguaggi e della pratiche* (1981), and *La philosophie de la praxis comme conception du monde intégral et / ou comme langage unifié* (1989). As we have already noted, this is due to the circumstance that the current revival of Gramsci studies in France depends to a great extent precisely on the activity of Tosel. And it is for this reason that the volume opens with an essay by Descendre devoted to the research carried out by Tosel, intended to be editor of the volume had death unexpectedly not overtaken him in 2017.

The different phases of Tosel's Gramscian trajectory emerge in this striking portrait. It should be emphasized that to reconstruct his Gramscian itinerary does not mean to go from Gramsci to Tosel as much, rather, as to go from him to Gramsci. His Gramscian research sets off initially from the political necessities inherent in overcoming the doctrinal schematisms of the French Communist Party, and only in his last two decades was it translated into a historical-philosophical study conducted with the use of philology. The political nature of this particular itinerary enriches the author's exegetic reading, which takes on the contours of a true 'living philology'. His critical interpretation is not simply that of a Gramsci specialist but of a Gramscian philosopher who has 'done something more than study Gramsci' (Descendre 2020, p. 17). As we have already said, what is important in this Gramscian journey of Tosel's is that he begins to ask questions of the work of Gramsci in the decade in which there was drawing to a close that season of studies animated by Jacques Texier, Hugues Portelli and Christine Buci-Glucksmann. This was a fortunate period that reached its

zenith with the publication in 1978 of the critical edition of the *Prison Notebooks* in French, based on Gerratana's edition;² however, as compared with Gerratana, the arbitrary choice was made to omit the first draft notes, which unfortunately makes it unusable in the light of the new diachronic method of reading the *Notebooks*.

Tosel interrogates Italian Marxism in order to define the contours of a new communist political strategy appropriate to a Western democratic context inaugurated by 1968 and 1977. This is a context marked by the emergence of a plurality of distinct social struggles and by the consequent anachronism of political theories linked to the leadership-oriented activity of the political party in its relations with civil society. Gramsci's text is thus investigated in order to single out theoretico-political tools able to conceive convergence while respecting the differences between the various struggles of a now politicized civil society. Hence the centrality that is recognized in the concept of hegemony and above all in that of translatability, of which Tosel was the first to bring out its importance. In this phase he defines the act of translation as the political gesture that, in overcoming the Stalinist formulation of the conception of the party, allows us to coordinate, organize and lead horizontally the plurality of the various social spaces.

This particular way in which Tosel interprets Gramsci's text ensures that from this stance, the fall of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the crisis of Marxism in Europe during the 1990s did not end up by having a negative effect on the validity of Gramsci's Marxism. Indeed in his collection of essays (Tosel 1991), Gramsci is distinguished by being the 'sole thinker destined to survive the collapse of Marxism' (Tosel 2020, p. 17). It is moreover from Gramsci's work that he extracts the concept that, more than anything else, appears to describe the phase of world capitalism that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and which we now call passive revolution. In the final part of his activity, the last production of which constitutes the most important statement, the Gramscian principles of hegemony, translatability, passive revolution, defined between the 1970s and the 1990s on the basis of political necessities, are subjected to an innovative study of a historical-

² The 5-volume French edition (Gramsci 1978-1996) was edited by Robert Paris; the critical edition in Italian (Gramsci 1975) was edited by Valentino Gerratana; see the *Bibliography* under Gramsci, A.

philosophical nature (Tosel 2016). It is exactly this last phase that is characterized by a philosophical exegesis which proceeds without ever losing sight of the contingencies of the present in order to be at the origin of the new season of Gramscian studies in France.

Tosel was spurred on to come closer to Gramsci by the need to overcome the epistemological approach of Louis Althusser, his former guide at the *École Normale Supérieure*. This comes over strongly in Tosel (1984), in the *Introduction* to which he focuses on the need to overcome the closure in the logico-theoretical dimension of Althusser's Marxism, which ended up by corresponding to a structural inability to articulate concrete political strategies. Through Tosel's lens it thus became possible to focus on a number of weak elements in the interpretation and consequent critique of Gramscian historicism advanced by Althusser, represented in the anthology by two essays *Il marxismo non è uno storicismo* (1965) and *Ideologia e apparati ideologici di Stato* (1970).³

Althusser's limits emerge most of all in the first essay, centred on the possibility within Marxism of separating the moment of theory from that of practice, and of recognizing the logical and temporal precedence of the former. This distinction between theory and practice is initially applied to the *Prison Notebooks*, of which Althusser takes into consideration only the so-called "organic" concepts, concepts which really belong to his most profound philosophical problematic', leaving out of his consideration those philosophical reflections with a 'function of "practical designation" (designation either of an *existing* problem or object, or of a *direction* to take, in order best to pose and solve a problem)' (in English Althusser 1970, p. 126). This is an operation that, as demonstrated by the most recent progress in Gramscian philology, does not allow access to the profounder philosophical sense of the concepts elaborated in the prison writings. And, after this, the operation is used to find fault with Gramsci's historicism, in the belief that its limit consists precisely in the inability to separate Marxism into a theory of history and a theory of philosophy. Althusser in fact writes that

he [Gramsci] often tends unite under the same head the scientific theory of history (historical materialism) and Marxist philosophy (dialectical materialism) and to think this unity as a "conception of the world" or as an "ideology" [...]

³ These essays are available in an English translations (see the *Bibliography*).

It is here, it seems to me, that the disputable principles of Gramsci's historicism lie (Althusser 1970, p. 131).

This operation of critique of Gramsci's Marxism was aimed at legitimizing the conception of a Marxism as science or self-criticism that becomes ideology, that is to say practice and politics, only after being fully realized as theoretical elaboration:

Marxism [...] is a science [...] which must become the "organic" ideology of human history by producing a *new* form of ideology in the masses (an ideology which will depend on a science this time – *which has never been the case before*), *ibidem*.

Without here going into the philosophical procedure that led Althusser to make Marxism into a science that only afterwards becomes a mass ideology, as well as into the politico-philosophical problematics that this assumption generates, what is of interest in the structure of our examination to emphasize is that he takes as the error of Gramscian historicism just that element which, instead, defines its originality. For Gramsci, in fact, the impossibility of distinguishing between theory of history and philosophy of Marxism depends on the need to overcome the reduction of Marxism to materialism, in other words to raise it from a metaphysics of external reality (sociology) to a fully rounded-out philosophy of praxis (dialectical thought of the transformation of reality). This is seen to effect in a second-draft note of Notebook 11, written between July and August 1932, in which all the mistakes of Bukharin's materialist Marxism are brought back to the general one of the separation of philosophy and history:

philosophy of praxis is envisaged as split into two elements: on the one hand a theory of history and politics conceived as sociology— i.e. one that can be constructed according to the methods of natural science (experimental in the crudest positivist sense); and on the other hand a philosophy proper, this being philosophical alias metaphysical or mechanical (vulgar) materialism' (Q11§12, note IV, p. 1425; in English Gramsci 1971, p. 434).⁴

In other words, it is precisely the rooting of the philosophy of praxis, its identification with the political dimension, which

⁴ Q followed by the paragraph sign, paragraph number and page number refers to Valentino Gerratana's critical edition of the *Notebooks* (in the bibliography under Gramsci 1975).

guarantees that process of modification of reality which Gramsci indicates in the expression ‘revolutionizing of praxis’ (*rovesciamento della praxis*).⁵

The years of the Gramsci Renaissance that followed the Althusserian season of substantial discrediting of Gramscian Marxism are represented in the volume by three important essays: *Il concetto di ‘egemonia’ e la teoria dello Stato* (1965) by Nicos Poulantzas, *La funzione ideologica della Chiesa cattolica secondo Gramsci* (1975) by Hugues Portelli and *L’Eurocomunismo e problemi dello Stato* by the philosopher Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1977). As all Gramsci specialists know, we are here dealing with texts that are well-known and still discussed in international Gramsci studies circles. In particular, the essays of Buci-Glucksmann and Poulantzas were important moments in the debates of the 1970s on the construction of a Marxist theory of the State. At the centre of intense debates above all in western Europe and Latin America, they have served for developing new viewpoints and political strategies relating to the democratization of civil society and the entrance on to the scene of popular forces into the political institutions.

The volume also includes the texts of two interesting interventions made on 23 and 27 April 1967 in Cagliari. These are by Jacques Texier, who provides a detailed account of Gramsci studies in France during the Sixties and *Gramsci e la crisi teorica del 1923* by Robert Paris, an author who in those years was engaged in pioneering research on the philosophical-political biography of Gramsci between 1922 and 1926, still not fully investigated even now. Also taken from an international conference is Étienne Balibar’s *Gramsci, Marx e i “rapport speciali”*, a talk which he gave at the Franco-Italian Colloquium from 23 to 25 November 1989 in Besançon, organized by Tosel. This is a text which it is important to return to, since it marks the beginning of a positive coming to terms by him with the work of Gramsci after a long period characterized by diffidence and repulsion.

A praiseworthy aspect of the volume is the decision to include two essays which are not well-known today in the panorama of

⁵ The phrase in Italian is Gramsci’s translation (1930 or 1931) in Notebook 7 of the third *Thesis on Feuerbach*, available to him in Engels’s version (*umwälzende Praxis* – ‘overturning Praxis’) and differing from Marx’s wording (*revolutionäre Praxis* – ‘revolutionary praxis’), first published only in 1932 in the first *MEGA* and therefore unknown to Gramsci; now in Gramsci (2007), pp. 744 and 814n (trans. note).

Gramsci studies: *Gramsci oltre la leggenda* by François Ricci and *Senso comune e mondo oggettivo nei Quaderni* by Annick Jaulin, which were published respectively in the volume *Gramsci dans le texte* (Ricci and Bramant 1975) and in the review 'Critica Marxista' in 1991. While not receiving any great attention when they were published, these two articles have stood the test of time in the sense that some of the interpretative proposals there advanced have now been confirmed by the new philological method linked to the period of studies initiated by the publication of the *National Edition*. This, for example, is the case as regards the importance that Jaulin correctly attributed to the linguistic dimension in the process of construction of common sense. In Ricci, on the other hand, one is struck by the lack of sufferance demonstrated for that period of study connected to the thematic edition, which in the author's view degenerated into a conceptual analysis incapable of linking Gramsci's political thought to his political biography, as well as by the stress laid on overcoming the prejudice of a gap between Gramsci as political leader, author of the pre-prison writings, and Gramsci as the philosopher of the *Prison Notebooks*. Of lasting validity are his appreciation of the value of the prison reflections regarding the relation between humanity and nature, the concept of orthodoxy in Marxism and the definition of organic intellectuals.

Lastly, Descendre, Giasi and Vacca deserve praise for having put into circulation a text that is still today unknown in Italy: *De la modernité des concepts gramsciens par une critique du capitalisme informationnel* by Pietro Musso. This is an essay that appeared in 2005 in the review 'Quaderni. La Revue de la communication' in which Gramscian theoretical tools taken from Notebook 22 on Americanism and Fordism and from the one on the intellectuals (Notebook 12) are utilized to construct a critical analysis of contemporary communication industries and their three representative figures; Jean-Marie Messier, Bill Gates and Silvio Berlusconi. By expanding the Gramscian concepts of 'factory hegemony', 'new intellectual' and 'Americanism', Musso opens up an innovative reading of the capitalist phase of deregulation of the communication industries that began in the mid-1970s and of the consequent spread of Americanism on a global scale. In this critical Gramscian analysis of information capitalism there are at least two elements to be underscored. In the first place, Musso indicates in our present times a

new type of intellectual, the *commager* (a neologism coined by running together *communication* and *manager*) who is simultaneously the producer of services and the creator of forms of consumption, a marketing specialist and creator of new values and forms of existence. In the second place, he emphasizes how this type of Americanism is spreading in Europe by exploiting the process of crisis of the liberal State. According to Musso, the current European liberal State is attempting to resolve its crisis of hegemony by absorbing into its structures technical and managerial rationality, masked behind the call for the respect of the principle of free competition. This process is manifested by yielding one part of intellectual production to the managerial methods of communication enterprises, which would thereby be able to expand current company modalities to different sectors of society, and at the same time to spread a commodified vision of existence. This is a phenomenon which, in our view, it is urgent to investigate most of all because is regard to the Italian panorama, where it is also manifest as a process of ‘companyization’ of State education and the reduction of students to users and human resources.

3. From France to Italy

The collectively-authored volume edited by Zancarini and Descendre (2021) brings together the interventions at the International Conference *La France d’Antonio Gramsci* held at the ENS in Lyon from 23 to 25 November 2017 during the eightieth anniversary year of Gramsci’s death. Striking a balance between scholars of a consolidated reputation such as Fabio Frosini and young researchers such as Marie Lucas, the conference proceedings show the philological reconstruction of philosophical and political thought in France as regards the intellectual biography of Gramsci.

The editors begin the volume with a rich introductory essay that reviews four still not well known aspects of French philosophical and political culture absorbed by Gramsci: the linguistics of Bréal and Meillet, the French intellectual environment between the Dreyfus affair and the Great War, the cultural movement of the 1789 Revolution, and French reflection on the concepts of nation and people. We are dealing with investigations which, interwoven with the various contributions, make visible the main thread that runs through the book. Among the sections in the volume there

immediately comes to the fore that on *La Révolution française*, in which Descendre and Zancarini demonstrate how Gramsci defines the modalities of the Italian translation of the Russian Revolution, within a constant comparison between the intellectual preparation and the political unfolding of the great revolution of 1789. In particular Gramsci's attention is drawn to the Jacobin period of the revolution and the molecular processes determining the formation of the bourgeois spirit of the era, which he contrasts with the national processes in Italy which took shape between the period of the Communes and the beginning of foreign domination.

On Gramsci's relationship to Jacobinism the authors shed light on a change in judgment that took place during his experience as a journalist. If at the time of the articles in 'Il Grido del popolo' in 1918 Gramsci still considered Jacobinism a phenomenon outside the experience of the working class, beginning with July 1920, when 'L'Ordine nuovo' published a speech by Zinov'ev referring to the linkage between the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks established by Lenin (in '*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*'), he then changed his opinion. In the volume Zancarini goes in depth into the question of Jacobinism in one specific chapter, *L'union de la ville et de la campagne. Machiavel et les jacobins*. Here, as indicated in the title, the subject is widened to Gramsci's reflection in the union of city and countryside with the connection also made to the reflection on Machiavelli. After also focusing on the Third International's political discussion in the subject of the alliance between the workers and the peasants and the path that led Lenin to the 'strategic retreat' of the New Economic Policy, the article goes on reconstruct the specificity of Gramsci's approach to the peasant question. In the first place, through a precise examination of the reflections developed between 1919 and 1926, it is demonstrated that Gramsci understands this relationship in terms of consent, that is of alliance and persuasion, and not of simple domination. Secondly, as regards the prison period, light is shed on the connection established by Gramsci between the Jacobin policy of mobilization of the peasants, and Machiavelli's *The Art of War*, in which the city is encouraged to rely militarily on the peasants in order to reinforce its power internally and externally. By bringing out the historical role in the context of the formation of the bourgeois spirit, in the end it is demonstrated that Gramsci reaches the point of making the alliance with the

peasants the conceptual fulcrum for the formation of that new collective national-popular will which in the *Notebooks* is indicated by the expression 'the Modern Prince'.

Gramsci's relationship with the intellectual premisses of the French Revolution is investigated in two other specific essays, one by Giuseppe Cospito and one by Giulio Azzolini, whose contributions add new tesserae to the theme in Gramsci of the presence of the French Enlightenment and of Rousseau respectively. With the philological meticulousness that defines his Gramscian studies, Cospito shows how Gramsci changed his assessment of the Enlightenment between the period as a journalist and the prison writings. The Turin writings, indeed, contain a negative judgment on the Enlightenment philosophers, accused of being under the influence of idealism and the romanticism of the cold and abstract rationalism of Encyclopedism. In the *Prison Notebooks*, on the other hand, eighteenth-century philosophical thought is subject to reconsideration, most of all as regards the project of intellectual and moral reform, and one sees the delineation of the figure of the democratic intellectual and the recognition of cosmopolitanism as the instrument of the political emancipation of the popular groups. Azzolini's essay on *Gramsci and Rousseau*, instead, contains first a reconstruction of the presence of Rousseau in Gramsci's journalism and then in the correspondence with the Schucht sisters, before going on to look at the prison relation with Rousseau's pedagogy and attempts to compare Rousseau's notion of general will with his own of collective will. This research ends up by recognizing a number of basic differences between the two authors. In the first place, on the question of education Gramsci finishes by adopting the principle of voluntarism, and not Rousseau's ethic of authenticity. In the second place, on the question of democracy, in so far as Rousseau puts the emphasis on the problem of political legitimization, Gramsci instead defines democracy in relation to the process of the constitution of political subjectivities. Finally, while Rousseau may be considered one of the major modern developers of the concept of utopia, Gramsci stresses precisely the need to go beyond the democratic utopia of the eighteenth century.

Francesca Antonini, already author of a volume on *Caesarism and Bonapartism in Gramsci*, contributes an essay on a subject still ignored in Gramscian circles. In her new research she goes deeper into

Gramsci's link with two aspects of French culture at the end turn of the twentieth century: Boulangism and the Dreyfus affair. But broadening out the comments in the *Prison Notebooks* to the pre-prison journalistic articles, she shows that it is possible to trace an innovative interpretation of these events in Gramsci's writings, which she then unravels along three different research axes. On the Dreyfus affair, light is shed on how in the prison period Gramsci tends to abandon a moral reading of the event, proposing instead one that hinges around a cultural conflict between clericalism and secularism which he defines by the formula of *Kulturkampf*. On the subject of Boulangism, on the other hand, through a rigorous analysis of two notes (first and second draft in Notebooks 8 and 13 respectively), the author shows that Gramsci considers Boulanger's failed coup d'état as an immediate action not having any organic historical nature. In assessing the anti-economistic nature of Gramsci's research on these two phenomena, in part indebted to Croce's *History of Europe*, it is shown in the end that the prisoner's juxtaposition of the two, Boulangism and the Dreyfus affair, served him for firmly establishing the role of the marginal forces in historical processes, the manifestation of forms of Caesarism and the phenomenon of the crisis of parliamentarism in the European panorama. With respect to the Third Republic too, then, France was confirmed for Gramsci as a political laboratory of modernity, a national terrain of use for understanding the complex political and social transformations that were going through Europe at the turn of the twentieth century.

The contributions of Marie Lucas and of Natalia Gaboardi are devoted to Gramsci's wide-ranging reflections (pre-prison and prison writings respectively) on the nationalist and antidemocratic movement of *Action française*. Lucas's *Gramsci et l'Action française* constitutes a scrupulous reconstruction of the evolution of Gramsci's judgment during the Turin years on the French nationalist movement then going on to the first notes on it in the *Prison Notebooks* and underlining the new estimation of Charles Maurras as a form of 'reverse Jacobinism' (Q1§48, p. 58; in English, Gramsci 1992, p. 58). A useful magnifying glass to understand the processes then going on in the Vatican hierarchy, the decipherment of the attitude of the Holy See after it had put the newspaper *L'Action française* on the Index, was to serve Gramsci for problem-

aticizing the relation of the catholic church and the regime after the Concordat of 1929. On the other hand, in her *A partir de l'Action française. L'activité de l'irrationnel dans l'histoire*, Gaboardi acutely emphasizes that several paragraphs of the *Notebooks* dedicated to *Action française* become the fount for historical-philosophical reflections on the subject of the irrational in history. Through a rigorous reconstruction of the notes in Notebook 1 up to the celebrated first section of Notebook 11 (in Gerratana's critical edition Q11§12, pp. 1375-95; in English Gramsci 1971, pp. 323-43), Gaboardi shows convincingly that the action of the irrational in history corresponds to workings of arbitrary and non-organic ideologies within the superstructures. In both cases the question is that of the sedimentation of old visions of the world and values which, not having completely died out, would continue to influence the future and whose social usefulness would reside in providing the organic and rational ideologies of history with the force of opposition in order to assert themselves.

With the contribution '*Surhomme*', '*bas romanticisme*', '*fascisme: Antonio Gramsci et la roman populaire française*' Descendre deepens Gramsci's enquiry into the origins of the myth of the superman. In this reconstruction he advances the thesis that, for Gramsci, the myth of the superman was not born on the basis of Nietzschean writings but, rather, of the French serial novels. Parallel to this, it is demonstrated that the mythology of the superman is used by Gramsci to understand the origin and development of fascist ideology. Closely linking philological research to lucid political historical analyses, the evolution of this subject is followed through the articles of the second and third series of '*L'Ordine nuovo*' up to the newspaper '*L'Unità*'. The last part of the chapter shows how in the prison notes between 1932 and 1933, discussion on the mythology of the superman, now a code for referring to Mussolinianism, reacts negatively on the construction of the myth of the Modern Prince. Gramsci's need to think a truly national-popular culture and expression of the needs of the masses is thus also fed by the contrast with this 'populist'⁶ culture.

⁶ The Italian word is 'popolare'. This adjective is of fairly frequent use in the *Notebooks* (ca. 50 times); as Hoare and Nowell-Smith point out (Gramsci 1971, note on p. 395) it is different from 'populist', although sometimes translated as such. It means fundamentally, oriented towards the lower and more modest social strata of society; as such, we here use the neologism 'populist' (trans. note).

The discussion of Francesco De Sanctis's notion of 'phantasy' which Descendre highlights in order to grasp Gramsci's nexus between literature and politics, comes back in an in-depth way in Frosini's essay on *Gramsci, Sorel, Croce: de la "passion" au "mythe"*. In this closely-argued chapter Frosini reconstructs the ways in which in the *Prison Notebooks* the Sorelian notion of the myth is taken over and reinterpreted in order to go beyond Croce's theory of politics-as-passion, which, in actual fact is not directly Crocean but recognized as such by Gramsci in Croce, using Giovanni Malagodi's book *Le ideologie politiche* as his starting point. This 'going beyond' would take place in a wholly particular way, that is by the fusion of the Sorelian notion of the myth, that of phantasy of De Sanctis and the interpretation of the *Prince* proposed by Luigi Russo in his *Prolegomena a Machiavelli*. Phantasy – defined as the faculty able to animate the world and provide the idea with a concrete individuality able to open future horizons of reality and to be found in De Sanctis's *History of Italian Literature* – is put to use by Gramsci to construct the myth of the Modern Prince in terms of a national-popular collective will. By combining De Sanctis and Sorel, Gramsci finishes by enclosing ideology, myth and phantasy in a tight nexus, making it the theoretical underpinning of the principle of the political autonomy of the proletariat. In this way, Frosini concludes, Gramsci responds to Croce's reduction of politics to a sterile immediate passion.

The collection ends with another closely-argued study by Giuliano Guzzone, the author in 2018 of *Gramsci e la critica dell'economia politica*. In his new research Guzzone reconstructs Gramsci's utilization of a French source in the context of the studies of classical political economy and the critique of political economy, that is Charles Gide and Charles Rist's manual *Histoire des doctrines économiques*. In the course of his research a number of convincing hypotheses are put forward for dating Gramsci's direct reading of this work.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the value of this innovative volume on Gramsci and France does not regard solely bringing to light new bibliographical sources and more or less broad intervals of the rhythm of Gramsci's 'thought as it develops'.⁷ More broadly

⁷ For Gramsci's phrase 'rhythm of thought as it develops' see Q16§2, p. 1841; in English Gramsci 1971, p. 383 (trans. note).

it contributes to giving back the living process of the translation between the national and international dimensions through which Gramsci constructs new political categories and historical analyses. In this sense, Gramsci comes face-to-face with France as a place of modernity for grasping the different international political processes of modern European civilization and the ways in which they vary in each national reality. The experience of France, as it emerged from the 1789 revolution, is utilized by him in this sense to understand the position of Italy in the international scenario after the tragedy of the First World War, the victory of the Russian Revolution and the assertion of fascism. It may thus be said that the collective effort of this excellent group of Gramscian researchers is that it has provided an example of the type of national-international research that Gramsci had in mind when, in Notebook 14§68 (Gerratana edition Q14§65, p. 1729; in English Gramsci 1971, p. 240) he wrote on the subject of the soviet union that ‘the point of departure is “national” – and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise’.

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