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The Democratic Philosopher: Rhetoric as Hegemony in Gramsci

BENEDETTO FONTANA

To Doris, amicae carissimae et fortissimae, quae vitam meam laetificat

I

THIS ESSAY ARGUES THAT THE CONCEPT OF HEGEMONY IN GRAMSCI RECAPITULATES and summarizes in Western thought the perennial argument between philosophy and rhetoric, knowledge and politics, and dialectic and power. These dichotomies hark back to Plato's critique of sophists such as Gorgias, Protagoras, and Thrasymachus. Plato attempted to undermine the rational and theoretical bases of rhetoric in order to establish the supremacy of philosophy over politics, as well as the supremacy of dialectical speech over rhetorical speech (Hariman 1986; Fontana, Nederman, and Remer 2004). The essay further argues that this antinomy is inherent in Gramsci's hegemony, which represents an attempt to reconcile the demands of philosophy with the requirements of political action.

Gramsci's hegemony is complex, multiform, and many layered, characterized by interwoven yet differentiated polarities (see Williams 1960; Nardone

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1971; Buci-Glucksmann 1975; Anderson 1976-77; Adamson 1980; Germino 1990). It operates within the duality force/consent and violence/persuasion that to Gramsci characterizes the nature of power. It acquires concrete structure and specific content particularly during those periods in history in which the people or the masses either form the ground of political action or have become a force in politics.

In the manner of the ancient Greek dichotomy between political (constitutional) and despotic (dominating) rule, hegemony may be seen as an alliance or association of groups that share similar interests, a consensual alliance under the leadership of a group pursuing the interest of the associated groups (Ehrenburg 1964; Sinclair 1968; Fontana 2000, 2005). Conceptually this is expressed by the dyad "domination/leadership." A group exercises "leadership" over "allied" groups, and exercises "domination" ("even with armed force") over antagonistic groups (Gramsci 1975, 2010-11; 1971, 57-58). In this case, hegemony is opposed to dictatorship, where the latter represents domination and force, and the former represents consent/persuasion and the formation of opinion. Underlying such a notion is the reciprocal relation between force and consent, such that hegemony may also delineate a balanced "equilibrium" between force and consent, where force does not prevail "too greatly" over consent. Alliance formation based on consent and on the autonomy of the constituent coalition partners requires the formation of a political-social group that is able to transcend narrow, particular interests (of a class, nation, or other social group) to more general universal ones. Thus hegemony describes a movement from the economic to the political.

What this means is that hegemony describes the ways and methods by which consent is generated and organized, which, in turn, is directly related to the mechanisms and processes by which knowledge and beliefs are first, produced, and second, disseminated. Here the crux is the formation of a "conception of the world" and its dissemination throughout the people. A conception of the world (an "ideology" or a system of beliefs) is always opposed to differing conceptions of the world, so they are constantly in conflict, in a "battle" against each other. The hegemonic conception is one that has become the "common sense" of the people (Gramsci 1975, 1236, 1493). But a counterconception is constantly generated, even if only embryonically, to challenge the prevailing common sense.

This battle or contest of opposing views of the world means that hegemony is preeminently a political concept: that is, the organization of culture is at once the organization of power. Thus to be political is to be hegemonic,

or minimally to attempt to move toward a new hegemony, that is, to be counterhegemonic. What hegemony underlines, therefore, is the political and cultural question regarding the formation of a group or a subject capable of rule. In other words, a hegemonic relationship, while necessarily political, is and must also be a pedagogic relationship: that is, the conflict among opposing hegemonies, and the germination of a counterhegemony, require the formation and evolution of what Gramsci calls a “personality” (Gramsci 1975, 1338; 1971, 360, 352) that is conscious, self-disciplined, and autonomous (self-governing and self-ruling). Hegemony operates at two levels: first, internally, the formation within the social group of self-discipline and self-government, that is, the self-constitution of the group into a coherent and active political actor; and second, externally, the extension and dissemination of the group’s conception of the world throughout the society.

At the same time, hegemony represents the dual nature of power: force and consent, violence and persuasion, both of which define political action. The question is to identify the “proper” balance or proportion in the dyadic relation (Gramsci 1971, 238). For Gramsci the exercise of power (or the relation between ruler and ruled) rests (or should rest) on an inverse relationship between force and consent, which, in turn, depends upon the generation of consent. The more weight consent acquires, the less force is necessary. To Gramsci the power and resilience of a sociopolitical order (the “state”) is defined by the individuation of consent and persuasion within concrete political and social structures. Hegemony is the institutionalization of consent and persuasion within both civil society and the state. Yet the element of force and domination, as the balancing and limiting pole of the dyad, cannot be eliminated.

Machiavelli, Sheldon Wolin writes, tried to establish a politics characterized by an “economy of violence” (Wolin 2004, 197–200). Hegemony represents Gramsci’s attempt in the modern world simultaneously to delineate and construct such a calculus of power. An economy of violence points to the methods by which force, coercion, and violence are limited and circumscribed, and highlights the ways and means by which moral, intellectual, and ideological belief systems are implicated in the attaining and maintaining of power structures.

In effect, this essay represents an attempt to go back to the beginnings, to try to link Gramsci and his notion of hegemony to the ancient classical controversies regarding the relation between philosophy and rhetoric, and dialectic and politics.¹ We should remember that rhetoric is the art of persuasion,

rhetorike esti peithous demiourgōs: rhetoric is the craft that produces persuasion (Nietzsche 1989, 3–6). Isocrates and Gorgias understand rhetoric in the sense of *peithous epistēmē*, as the knowledge of the means and techniques of persuasion. Aristotle defines it as the ability to discover the “possible means of persuasion” (*Rhetoric* 1.2.1). It is generally divided into the deliberative, the judicial, and the epideictic. *Deliberative* refers to methods of persuasion within legislative, elective, or popular assemblies; *judicial* to forensic rhetoric used in courts of law; and *epideictic* refers to the rhetoric of display or ceremony (*Rhetoric* 1.2.22). In this essay we are concerned almost entirely with rhetoric in its deliberative, or political, form: the art of addressing the people, either formally in their political and popular assemblies, or less informally in meetings, demonstrations, and other forms of gatherings. Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian outline three means or forms of persuasion: that based on the character of the speaker (*ethos*), that derived from emotion and passion (*pathos*), and that based on true or probable argument (*logos*). Aristotle, following Plato, criticized and lamented the orator’s tendency to rely on *pathos* and *ethos*, rather than on argumentation. Nevertheless he provides his discussion of rhetoric with an analysis of character types and of the psychology of emotion, all useful and necessary for effective persuasion (See Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1.3; Cicero *De inventione* 1.5.7; Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 3.4.12–15).

In the ancient world rhetoric was perceived as the preeminent method of forming, generating, and maintaining consent. From Gorgias to Plato to Cicero the power of the *logos* (discourse, speech/language, reason) to persuade and to convince was universally recognized.² The *logos* as it is articulated and expressed by means of the techniques of persuasion and public speech was seen as the essential prerequisite in attaining power in the popular assemblies (Kennedy 1991; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Cole 1991; Wardy 1996). As such, rhetoric and the means of persuasion were generally linked to both democratic and republican politics, either positively (Aristotle and Cicero) or negatively (Plato) (Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1.1.10, 8.5; Fontana 2004, 27–56).³

II

In a note in the *Notebooks* on the “passage from knowing to understanding to feeling and vice versa,” Gramsci makes an important analytical distinction between those who “know”—intellectuals—and those who do not know but merely “feel,” the “people-nation.” Intellectuals may possess knowledge but not necessarily feeling or understanding, and the people may possess feeling

or understanding but not knowledge. To know something politically and socially, as opposed to abstractly or purely intellectually, is to understand it with feeling and with passion. Gramsci says:

L'errore dell'intellettuale consiste nel credere che si possa *sapere* senza comprendere e specialmente senza sentire ed essere appassionato (non solo del sapere in sé, ma per l'oggetto del sapere) cioè che l'intellettuale possa essere tale (e non un puro pedante) se distinto e staccato dal popolo-nazione, cioè senza sentire le passioni elementari del popolo, comprendendole e quindi spiegandole e giustificandole nella determinata situazione storica, e collegandole dialetticamente alle leggi della storia, a una superiore concezione del mondo, scientificamente e coerentemente elaborata, il 'sapere'; non si fa politica-storia senza questa passione, cioè senza connessione sentimentale tra intellettuali e popolo-nazione. (Gramsci 1975, 1505; 1971, 418)

The knowledge of intellectuals, in short, becomes life and politics only when linked to the feeling/passion of the people. The synthesis intellectual/people and knowledge/passion is what provides the motive force for political and historical activity. In both cases it is the generation and dissemination of systems of thought and systems of belief that connect the intellectual and the people, and that render knowledge socially and historically concrete (Gramsci 1975, 1375–83).

The above passage is crucial to understanding Gramsci and his notion of hegemony. For it summarizes *in nuce* Gramsci's perspective regarding the relation between knowledge and politics, thought and action. At the same time, it is a critique of the dominant philosophical and cultural thought in the Italy of his time, that of Benedetto Croce (see Gramsci 1997, 60–63, 789–92, 992–94; 1994, 1: 82–86, 2: 65–68, 167–70). Croce's classical liberal thought posits a necessary and unresolvable antinomy between thought and action, philosophy and politics. In 1949, in his review of Gramsci's *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura*, Croce criticizes Gramsci's basically De Sanctian notion regarding the necessity of "going to the people." Croce asks why a man of such intellect and gravity such as Gramsci has let himself be seduced by "sophisms," that is, by Marxist revolutionary thought. Croce says that

nell'accingersi a cercare una verità si compie di necessità, nell'atto stesso, il distacco da tutti gli altri interessi umani, soli rimanendo signore dell'animo

nostro l'interesse per la verità stessa. Anche la più piccola verità porta naturalmente con sé quel distacco e superamento. E se un altro e diverso interesse, persiste, immediato o mediato che sia, il pensiero—sapete che cosa fa?—non pensa. (Croce 1955, 137–39)

Here, Croce, in the manner of Plato, is asserting the autonomy and sovereignty of reason and of thought, an autonomy that must be maintained if thought is to retain its ability “to think.” Such an autonomy is only possible through “detachment and separation from all other human interests,” that is, from political and socioeconomic activity. The very act of thinking, which presupposes an “interest for the truth,” demands such a detachment. Thus detachment and interest for the truth together act to produce thought, which is coterminous with the truth.

Croce's understanding of thought, its relation to truth, and the intellectual/cultural dichotomies he thinks are necessary to maintain the relation, may be seen as modern interpretations of fundamental distinctions that permeate Plato's dialogues and subsequent responses to them. Thus, in the *Gorgias* Plato sets up a distinction between rhetoric and philosophy, appetite and reason, in which the former appeals to, or caters to, the selfish desires and the latter is directed by the desire for justice and virtue (461–66). The former is used by politicians to cater to the desires and appetites of the masses, and the latter is used to investigate and to question the nature of moral and political reality (to arrive at knowledge and virtue). The locus classicus of rhetoric is the public arena and mass assembly, whereas for philosophy it is the exchange of rational conversation within a narrowly circumscribed circle. The first seeks to persuade in order to lead a particular mass audience or assembly toward a particular outcome, to make a decision, or to act, whose ultimate purpose is to attain and maintain power. The second seeks to instruct and to educate in order to arrive at a certain moral, logical, or philosophical truth. The rhetor or orator devises ways and means by which the audience/assembly is led to believe, whereas the philosopher devises rational methods by which truth is discovered and taught. Socrates in the *Gorgias* (454c) establishes a radical distinction between knowledge (“there is a thing called ‘knowing’”) and belief (“there is a thing called ‘believing’”), and between two kinds of “conviction,” that which gives knowledge and that which gives belief without knowledge (*Gorgias* 455). Rhetoric engenders belief without knowledge, because it is a form of speech which arises from persuasion, and not from teaching (Guthrie 1998, 176–219).

Thus, for Plato there are two kinds of *logoi*: dialectical speech, which looks to *episteme* and truth, and *rhetorike techne*, which gives mere opinion (*doxa*) and belief (*pistis*). While the latter are merely contingent and relative, the former is sovereign and autonomous, and thus constitutive of natural (universal) reality. In Plato, philosophy and dialectic can recognize only one *logos*, which grounds the world of appearances to the intelligible world. On the other hand, argumentation in rhetoric is necessarily double-sided (*dissoi logoi*), and hence rhetorical speech presupposes a multiplicity of discourses and languages, for it is grounded within the concrete life and activity of the people who constitute social reality.

Such a distinction between conversation and rhetoric is echoed in Aristotle. Cicero, too, distinguishes philosophic conversation (*sermo*) from oratory (*contentio*) (Cicero *De officiis* 1.37.132).⁴ The former aims at the truth, while the latter aims to persuade in order to prevail against an adversary or opponent. Rhetoric presupposes conflict, competition, struggle for power and for advantage. As such it further presupposes factional, group, class, and party strife. Plato looks askance at rhetoric because it appeals to the self-interest and to the appetites of the people. The standard or criterion by which rhetoric is judged is the same that Socrates uses to weigh the relative value of rhetoric. In the *Gorgias* Socrates asks: "Has Callicles ever made any of the citizens a better man?" (*Gorgias* 515). Socrates' question is directly related to the nature and status of rhetoric as a political technique and as a means of rule. The question, therefore, is: has the practice of rhetorical arts contributed to the reformation or improvement of the people's soul and character? Socrates continues: "is there anyone, foreign or native, slave or free, who can thank Callicles for making him a virtuous man?" (*Gorgias* 515B). And, men such as Pericles "have regaled the Athenians by giving them their fill of what they desired. [. . .] [W]hat they do not perceive is that through [. . .] [their] efforts [. . .] [Athens] is swollen and rotten to the core. They have stuffed city with harbors and arsenals and walls and tribute and suchlike trash" (*Gorgias* 518E–519). The value concerning the "improvement of the people's soul" is a value that in Croce appears as the "interest for the truth." In the same way, the distinction in Plato between appetite and virtue parallels the distinction in Croce between "all other interests" (that is, politics) and thought.

Plato, like Croce, argues that philosophy and dialectic are diametrically opposed to rhetoric and politics. Rhetoric, in the context of Athenian democracy, is politics: for the exercise of leadership in the Athenian assembly means the ability to persuade the public opinion of the citizens (Ober 1989). Thus

Croce sees Gramsci's attempt to synthesize philosophy and politics as the death of philosophy, and its consequent transformation into ideology. As Croce says in a review of Gramsci:

[. . .] la stanchezza e il fastidio si fanno sentire all'udir ripetere all'infinito la formula del giovinotto Marx, una delle parecchie formule arrischiate, avventurose e bizzarre, improvvisate negli anni tra il '40 e il '48, quando si estingueva la grande fiammata filosofica che circa un secolo apportava dalla Germania luce e calore alla mente umana, e le succedeva la corrotta filosofia di uso pratico e politico, che è gradita ai dilettanti ma reca disgusto a chi rispetta la dignità del pensiero. (Croce 1955, 138–39)

Philosophy becomes corrupt, and is transformed into ideology, when it becomes immersed in political activity. In the same way, rhetoric is mistaken by Sophists such as Gorgias as knowledge, when in fact it merely represents a corruption of true dialectical thought. And what Plato says of the rhetors who address the popular assemblies Croce echoes when he says of Gramsci: “[. . .] Gramsci, coerente alle sue premesse, confondeva con la filosofia e con la cultura l'opera a cui egli attendeva della formazione in Italia di un partito del quale già si sentiva capo e responsabile.” As a consequence, notes Croce, Gramsci is “*totus politicus* [. . .] e non *philosophus*: tale era il suo effettivo ideale, al quale veniva serbato il ‘borghese’ nome di ‘filosofia’ e di ‘cultura’” (Croce 1955, 139).

In effect the death of philosophy means that philosophy has been reduced to history, to ideology. What is ideology? For Croce it is the contamination of thought with interest, with desire, and with appetite. It is thought translated into action, particularly action arising out of competition, conflict, and struggle. In Croce thought or philosophy becomes ideology when it is linked to any interest other than thought. In the modern world, beginning with Machiavelli, the death of philosophy means its reduction to history (as in the history of thought). But if, as Croce notes, all history is contemporary history, then the analysis and interpretation of the past cannot but be colored by the competition and the conflict generated by contemporary factional strife. Thus history means politics, that is, the struggle for power and advantage. Politics, moreover, requires the use and elaboration of rhetoric as an instrument for attaining and maintaining power. The death of philosophy, then, means that philosophy has become politics. Thus Gramsci's response to Croce: “il filosofo reale è e non può non essere altri che il politico, cioè l'uomo attivo che

modifica l'ambiente, inteso per ambiente l'insieme dei rapporti" that form sociopolitical reality (Gramsci 1975, 1345; 1971, 352).

III

Croce's dichotomies parallel both Plato's distinction between philosophy/dialectic and rhetoric/politics, and Cicero's distinction between *sermo*—the inquiry into philosophic truth by means of conversation—and *contentio*, the struggle for power and decision in a public forum by means of rhetorical persuasion (Fontana 2004, 27–56). For Plato, philosophy, the quest for moral and philosophical truth, leads to the primacy of reason and of the expert who alone is capable of wielding it. Specialization, expertise, rational argumentation are paramount. Cicero, on the other hand, argues against specialization and against expert knowledge. The orator, he says in *De oratore*, should master all forms of knowledge: "No one can hope to be an orator in the true sense of the word unless he has acquired a knowledge of all the sciences and all the great problems of life" (1.20, and see 1.72). Cicero recognizes the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric as Plato portrayed it in the *Gorgias*, but his comment on the dichotomy, while seeming to dismiss it, actually reveals his belief in the superiority of rhetoric: "in mocking the orators he [Plato] showed that he was himself a supreme orator" (*De oratore* 1.47). In any case, and notwithstanding his belief that the orator should be the master of knowledge (or better, precisely because of this view), Cicero, unlike Aristotle and Plato, does not denigrate or criticize the use of passion, emotion, and sentiment in addition to argument, reason, and logic (Cicero *Brutus* 89, 279; and see his *Orator* 128). He notes that

[m]en's judgements are more often formed under the influence of hatred, love, desire, anger, grief, joy, hope, fear, misconception or some other emotion, than by truth and ordinance, the principles of justice, the procedure of the courts or the laws. (*De oratore* 2.178)

The orator/statesman must appeal to the character of the people he needs to influence in order to win over the audience and carry the day (see *Gorgias* 513). The orator ought to be

an acute and clever man, his natural wit sharpened by experience, a keen observer of the thoughts, feelings, opinions and expectations of his fellow-

citizens and of those whom he wishes to win over to his point of view. (*De oratore* 1.40; and see *Brutus* 105)

The rhetorical concept of decorum neatly captures these dichotomies (*De oratore* 3.210–11, and *Orator* 123; Vasaly 1993, 15–39). Rhetoric is peculiarly subject to the vicissitudes and changes of time and space. And the speaker must adapt himself to the vagaries of contingency, moment, and place.

The opposition between the two ways of formulating the relation between speech and politics cannot be maintained, and must be overcome if one is to establish a new political order, and if one is to transform a scattered people into a coherent and organized body politic. The conflict is resolved in their synthesis, what Plato calls “true rhetoric,” that is, a rhetoric used to “improve the soul” or character of the people. Yet true rhetoric cannot use the language of philosophy or of science. It is a rhetoric that manufactures stories, fictions, and myths as a means to educate the people: as a means, in fact, to transform a disaggregated mass into a self-disciplined people. In Plato rhetoric is subordinated to philosophy, such that deception, dissimulation, and simulation may serve to educate and to instruct (*Phaedrus* 239e). What this means is that the speech and language of the philosopher must be adapted to the nature and character of the people that are being addressed, in order to lead them to virtue. A proper or true rhetoric is measured by the science (*episteme*) of mind by which it becomes the “art which wins men’s minds by means of words [*techne psychagogia dia logon*]” (*Phaedrus* 261b, 271d). By means of words (*dia logon*) a social space may be constructed within which rational discourse and ethical life become possible. The philosopher must be, or must become, an orator. Similarly, in the *Statesman* Plato notes that rhetoric cannot instruct and teach by means of reason and dialectic (what Cicero calls *sermo*); rather, it is the technique by which the many (*plethou*) or the mob (*ochlou*) is persuaded by means of myths and stories (*ouchlou dia mythologiai*) (*Statesman* 304d). The masses are brought to philosophic truth and to moral virtue by means of deceptions and fictions. Cicero makes a similar point. He notes that philosophy and rational discourse are helpless without rhetoric: “it does not seem possible that a wisdom either silent or lacking speech [*inops dicendi*] could have converted men suddenly from their [primitive and savage] habits and introduced them to different ways of life [. . .] unless men had been able by eloquence to persuade their fellows of the truth of what they had discovered by reason” (*De inventione* 1.2.2–3). In effect, in order to disseminate the truths arrived at by philosophy and by knowledge, and thereby embed them

within a concrete culture, it is necessary to translate them into a language the people can understand.

In this sense, the connection between hegemony and rhetoric is crucial to understanding Gramsci's project: to transform a subordinate group into a hegemonic subject capable of ruling, to transform the subaltern into the hegemonic, which is to form a "personality" that is reflexive, conscious, and self-disciplined. The movement from the subaltern to the hegemonic is multiple and multidimensional: from the material (economic), to the moral/intellectual (philosophic), to the cultural (language, education, literature), to the political (the question of power, and of political technique, the generation and organization of consent, leadership [*direzione*] and the relation of ends to means, and most important, the founding of a "great State"; Gramsci 1975, 658).

The formation of such a personality capable of rule is to Gramsci both a hegemonic and a cultural/philosophic project. As he notes, "Ogni rapporto di 'egemonia' è necessariamente un rapporto pedagogico [. . .]" (Gramsci 1975, 1331). What is a hegemonic relation, and what is an educational relation, and how do they intersect?

For Gramsci education is not limited to the merely narrow confines of formal schools and university. Rather it encompasses the entire sociocultural and sociopolitical structure as it is manifested in the complex relations "per ogni individuo rispetto ad altri individui, tra ceti intellettuali e non intellettuali, tra governanti e governati, tra élites e seguaci, tra dirigenti e diretti, tra avanguardie e corpi di esercito" (Gramsci 1975, 1331). The pedagogic relation is simultaneously cultural/philosophical and political, and each element of the relation reciprocally acts on the other.

It is for this reason that Gramsci specifically identifies the emergence (or perhaps the reemergence) of a space wherein public opinion is formed and proliferated, and wherein consequently the battle for and over this opinion is fundamental. Such a battle takes place within what is called civil society. And such a battle presupposes what Machiavelli calls variously *vivere politico*, *vivere civile*, *vivere libero*, and the kind of culture and thought that later arose during the era of the Enlightenment in Europe and in America.

As Gramsci points out, in the modern age, that is, the age beginning with the English, American, and French Revolutions, the defining characteristic of civil society was and is the prevalence of freedom of speech, of thought, of the press, and of association. Civil society cannot exist without such liberties, and only where they are politically embedded within society can the reciprocity of

the student/teacher and leader/led relation emerge and take root. And, according to Gramsci, only within such a civil society can a “new type of philosopher” take shape historically. Gramsci calls this new type the “democratic philosopher” (Gramsci 1975, 1332). The democratic philosopher is one who realizes that his philosophic activity is both producer and product of the changes occurring within the overall culture.

This notion of the democratic philosopher, one who is at once immersed within the culture of the “people-nation” yet capable of critical distance, is what Gramsci, most often calls the “organic intellectual,” the organizer, educator, and moral/intellectual leader of a given social group or class. The organic intellectual is contrasted to the traditional intellectual, who aspires to “Olympian” detachment in his philosophic or scientific search for truth and knowledge (Gramsci 1975, 477–79, 1513–40, 1550–51).⁵ The former are closely and intimately linked to the people or social group, the latter attempt to establish and to maintain, like Plato and Croce, a gulf or divorce between their intellectual activity and the people. Indeed, they regard the popular masses as generally incapable of thought and culture. As Gramsci notes, traditional intellectuals see the dichotomy between the *alta cultura* of the dominant class and the *cultura popolare* of the subordinate groups as essential to the preservation of knowledge, science, and humanistic culture in general (Gramsci 1975, 1375–95).

These dichotomies and antitheses are trenchantly and conceptually embodied in the notion of the democratic philosopher. The notion is simultaneously a moral/intellectual and a political subversion of the established power structure and of traditional thinkers and writers who support and legitimize it. From the perspective of Plato or Croce the democratic philosopher appears as an egregious oxymoron, a philosophical, intellectual, and cultural impossibility. Indeed, most thinkers from Plato to contemporary liberal thought regard the synthesis as an anathema. Gramsci deliberately brings together politics and philosophy, action and thought, in order to criticize Croce’s insistence on the necessary divorce between the two. Both Plato and Croce insist on the irreconcilability of philosophy and politics. What is more, by linking democracy and philosophy, Gramsci undermines and radically subverts the traditional antithesis between politics and thought.

IV

There is a direct relation between Gramsci’s notion of the democratic philosopher and his notion of civil society. Indeed, he sees the emergence of

the former as contingent upon the development of the latter. Immediately after pointing out the relation between hegemony and education, Gramsci notes that

una delle maggiori rivendicazioni dei moderni ceti intellettuali nel campo politico è stata quella delle così dette “libertà di pensiero e di espressione del pensiero (stampa e associazione)” perché solo dove esiste questa condizione politica si realizza il rapporto di maestro-discepolo nei sensi più generali su ricordati e in realtà si realizza “storicamente” un nuovo tipo di filosofo che si può chiamare “filosofo democratico”, cioè del filosofo convinto che la sua personalità non si limita al proprio individuo fisico, ma è un rapporto sociale attivo di modificazione dell’ambiente culturale. (Gramsci 1975, 1331–32; 1971, 350)

“Freedom of the press” and “freedom of association” are the two fundamental requisites for the emergence of a civil society within which are prevalent plural and multiple forms of independent groups. Civil society and multiplicity of factions are therefore coterminous. It is the open competition of these groups and associations that generate philosophers of the democratic type.

Since the fall of the ancient Roman republic, the rise of monarchy and empire, and the eventual triumph of the medieval and feudal forms of rule, political fragmentation and the decline of city centers reduced immeasurably the sociopolitical space in which the “people” or the “masses” formed either the ground or the background for political activity: since all space was now privatized by feudal relations of power, opinion was no longer public or political. With the rise of the Italian communes, however, the role of the people began to assume its original importance, and a public political space began to be constructed. Sheldon Wolin attributes to Machiavelli the “discovery of the mass” in politics (Wolin 2004, 205–11). If this is so, then the emergence of the centrality of the people in politics and society means also the emergence of a public political space, and thus of “public opinion.” Or, in Machiavelli’s words, what is now crucial is the formation and deployment of the “opinion of the many” (Machiavelli 1960, 72–74). What is decisive in modern (that is, post-Machiavelli, especially post-Enlightenment) politics is precisely the opinion of the many. In parentheses, it should be noted that such a politics is precisely what Plato criticized in the *Gorgias*, that is, a politics in which the opinion (*doxa*) of the many (the *demos*) is preeminent, and

in which knowledge (*episteme*) (and its bearer, the philosopher) is condemned to silence.

In any case, the modern world is characterized by mass politics and by the organization and mobilization of public opinion. Referring specifically to public opinion and its relation to the consensual basis of state power, Gramsci writes:

Ciò che si chiama “opinione pubblica” è strettamente connesso con l’egemonia politica, è cioè il punto di contatto tra la “società civile” e la “società politica”, tra il consenso e la forza. Lo Stato quando vuole iniziare un’azione poco popolare crea preventivamente l’opinione pubblica adeguata, cioè organizza e centralizza certi elementi della società civile. Storia dell’“opinione pubblica”: naturalmente elementi di opinione pubblica sono sempre esistiti, anche nelle satrapie asiatiche; ma l’opinione pubblica come oggi si intende è nata alla vigilia della caduta degli Stati assoluti, cioè nel periodo di lotta della nuova classe borghese per l’egemonia politica e per la conquista del potere.

L’opinione pubblica è il contenuto politico della volontà politica pubblica che potrebbe essere discorde: perciò esiste la lotta per il monopolio degli organi dell’opinione pubblica: giornali, partiti, parlamento, in modo che una sola forza modelli l’opinione e quindi la volontà politica nazionale, disponendo i discordi in pulviscolo individuale e disorganico. (Gramsci 1975, 914–15)

This passage adumbrates Gramsci’s notion of hegemony at several levels. It recapitulates his celebrated conception of the “integral State,” defined as “political society + civil society” and as “dictatorship + hegemony,” where the first terms represent the element of force, coercion, and domination, and the second terms represent the element of consent, persuasion, and education (Gramsci 1975, 763–64, 801, 1020; Gramsci 1997, 789–92; Gramsci 1994, 2: 65–68). Moreover, the first two terms refer to the classical liberal and neo-liberal understanding of the state: the administrative, juridical, and military apparatus, which is diametrically opposed to, and distinctively separate from, civil society. It is also reminiscent of Gramsci’s distinction between “leadership” (*direzione*) and “domination” (*dominio*), the former being power exercised over consenting allies, and the latter power exercised over opposing antagonists. Public opinion not only connects state to society, but more important it is the motive force for the generation of state power and is the basis upon which rests the coercive apparatus of the state. Thus, to say that

public opinion is the point of contact between these two moments is to say that the generation of persuasion and the organization of “permanent consent” presuppose an interpenetration between state and society. Public opinion is formed through the reciprocal action of state and society on each other.

A closer reading of the above passage reveals several other layers of meaning. First, the ensemble of institutions, associations, and organizations that compose civil society produces a multiplicity of beliefs and values that when disseminated throughout the various social groups assume the form of public opinion. It is through the generation of a prevailing conception of the world and its distillation and concretization by means of mass opinion that hegemony is attained and maintained. Concomitantly it is through the formation of subordinate groups within civil society, and their progressive attempts to develop the germs of an opposing view of the world, that a counterhegemonic movement becomes possible. It is here that the power of “political society” to shape mass opinion is decisive.

Second, the history of public opinion shows a developmental process. Although “even Asiatic satrapies” may have developed certain kinds of public opinion, its modern forms emerged and developed out of the struggle of the bourgeoisie to form its representative state. Thus the emergence of the bourgeoisie parallels the emergence of public opinion. All of which, of course, is another way of saying that public opinion emerges with the advent of civil society. For despotic government, whether of the Asiatic and satrapic type, or of the European and feudal type, is antithetical to civil society.⁶ In this sense, public opinion becomes powerful and effective within a civil society governed by a state legitimated by an electoral and representative system in which the instruments of opinion formation, as well as the content and substance of opinion, are multilayered, multiple, and antagonistic.

The distinction Gramsci establishes between “Asiatic satrapies” and absolutism, on the one hand, and liberal and democratic (“bourgeois”) polities, on the other, is central in identifying variations and difference within the general category of opinion. The criteria that differentiate the two systems of rule are simultaneously those that distinguish their respective forms of opinion. In both cases it is the development (or lack thereof) of open, public/political space that is the determining and defining characteristic. For such a space is constitutive of republican and democratic systems; indeed, such a space is coterminous with democratic politics *tout court*. The Athenian *demos*, as it comes together in the *ekklesia* in order to deliberate and to legislate, is coterminous with the democratic polis. So too the Roman *populus*, as

it assembles in its various *comitia* (legislative and elective), embodies the *res publica libera*. In both there is a public and open space, at once political, social, and cultural, in which the popular masses are simultaneously the ground and the motive force for political action. In both it is the organization and deployment of the masses (by means of opinion formation) that defines politics. Writing long after the Roman republic was transformed into the military dictatorship of the principate, Tacitus comments:

in the disorder and license of the past [that is, the conflict and strife of the republican era] more seemed to be within the reach of the speaker [orator/politician], [. . .] hence, speeches of magistrates [. . .] who passed nights on the Rostra; hence, prosecutions of influential citizens brought to trial; hence, factions among the nobles, and incessant strife between senate and people. In each case the state was torn asunder, but the eloquence of the age was exercised and, as it seemed, was loaded with great rewards. For the more powerful a man was as a speaker, the more easily did he obtain office, the more influence did he acquire with the leaders of the state, the more weight in the senate, the more notoriety and fame with the people [. . .]. [I]t was thought a disgrace to seem mute and speechless (*mutum et elinguim videri deforme habebatur*). [. . .] [And] even against their own wish they had to show themselves before the people. (*Dialogus* 36)⁷

Such a passage is telling regarding the nature of republican politics, and nicely captures the relation between the role of the popular masses and the struggle for power in republican Rome, struggle both defined by and conducted within the physical/spatial/political arena of the republic (Fontana 1993; Lintott 2004, 199–208; Millar 2002, 143–61).

Though different on many levels (especially the nature and role of the popular assemblies), what the Athenian democracy and the Roman republic have in common is a public sphere founded upon the presence of the people, both as political actors (the *demos* and the *populus* as the sovereign and as the legislator) and as spectators (the people as the electorate). In systems Gramsci calls satrapies, “elements of public opinion” exist only in the form of custom, tradition, past usages, and what Clifford Geertz has called “primordial” beliefs and values (Geertz 1973, 1994). For they lack the people as a force in politics and history, and also as a constitutive element in the calculus of power.

The distinction between “Asiatic satrapies” and European absolutism on the one hand, and republican and democratic politics, on the other, is significant.

It parallels Gramsci's famous distinction between civil society in the East and civil society in the West. We should recall that in the former civil society is "primordial" and "gelatinous," while in the latter it is deeply and broadly sedimented into multiple and complex strata. As Gramsci notes,

[I]n Oriente lo Stato era tutto, la società civile era primordiale e gelatinosa; nell'Occidente tra Stato e società civile c'era un giusto rapporto e nel tremolio dello Stato si scorgeva subito una robusta struttura della società civile. Lo Stato era solo una trincea avanzata, dietro cui stava una robusta catena di fortezze e di casematte. (Gramsci 1975, 866; 1971, 238)

The "proper relation" between state and civil society is founded precisely on this open, public-political space within which the competition for power and within which the contestation between and among differing and opposing conceptions of the world and systems of belief take place. Gramsci's use of the "East," and its contrast to the "West," are crucial.⁸ "East" and "West" should be understood not merely and only as geographic terms, but significantly and theoretically as conceptual categories denoting specific types of sociocultural and sociopolitical orders. As such, East refers to despotic and "satrapic" forms of governments, in which the military, administrative, and juridical power of the state rests on tradition, custom, and past usage. In this system the population is passive and fragmented, widely dispersed geographically, and understands itself, and is understood, as "subjects" of power and authority. In the West, where civil society is strong, and where a public space exists, the popular masses are active and conscious politically, and consider themselves, and are considered, as "citizens" and as the source of power and authority within the system. It is no coincidence that there is both a conceptual and an etymological connection between the term *civil* in "civil society" and the term *citizen*; both refer to the *cives* who together constitute the *civitas* of the city (Athens, Rome, etc.).⁹ In the "East," therefore, there is no public space, no citizen body, and thus no public opinion in any modern (or classical) sense.

All of which brings us to our third point. Political parties and parliament are institutions that presuppose mass politics and mass opinion. Each necessitates the other, for the party is organized to capture governmental power within the legislature and the executive. In doing so they are compelled to address the people as a force in the power equation. Together parliaments and parties exercise moral and intellectual leadership as they

organize, mobilize, and deploy public opinion inside the governmental apparatus ("political society") and outside it ("civil society") (see Buttigieg 1995; 2005; Adamson 1987).

Since public opinion is "closely linked to political hegemony," and since it is the "point of contact between [state and society and] [. . .] between consent and force," the formation and dissemination of opinion (ideas and beliefs) represent the attempt to construct and generate consent, which, in turn, represents the attempt to transform consent into coercion. It is the transformation of mass public opinion into the authoritative force of the state (as expressed in terms of law and policy). This force is possible (that is, the state is possible and endures over time) precisely because public opinion makes it possible. And finally, the process by which opinion becomes concentrated into state power, that is, the process by which persuasion becomes coercion and consent becomes force, is determined by the conflict and strife of the groups composing civil society. Such a conflict is what Gramsci calls the war of position, a continual and perduring struggle (which he calls "trench warfare") of opposing ideas, values, and views of the world (Gramsci 1975, 858–60, 865–66, 1566–67, 1613–16).

V

In a note entitled "Argomenti di cultura: Materiale ideologico," Gramsci proposes to uncover the popular, ideological, and consensual bases of the power of the dominant groups: "Uno studio di come è organizzata di fatto la struttura ideologica di una classe dominante: cioè l'organizzazione materiale intesa a mantenere, a difendere e a sviluppare il 'fronte' teorico e ideologico" (Gramsci 1975, 332–33). The project is in fact an investigation into the anatomy of hegemony, how it is constructed and developed, how it is expressed and institutionalized, and how it functions and evolves concretely within civil society. Gramsci focuses on what he believes is the most dynamic and central of this ideological structure:

La parte più ragguardevole e più dinamica di esso è la stampa in generale: case editrici (che hanno implicito ed esplicito un programma e si appoggiano a una determinata corrente), giornali politici, riviste di ogni genere, scientifiche, letterarie, filologiche, di divulgazione ecc., periodici vari fino ai bollettini parrocchiali. (Gramsci 1975, 332–33)

“Everything” that may directly or indirectly affect and influence public opinion should be identified and related to the manner in which hegemony is constructed (Gramsci 1975, 332–33). Included in this analysis are institutions such as primary and secondary schools, vocational and technical institutes, universities and colleges (today Gramsci would add foundations, “think tanks,” and research institutions), libraries, voluntary associations and clubs, religious groups (in Italy the Catholic church is especially important as the organizer of “permanent consent” within civil society), and other groups that pluralist and liberal theorists of the present era would call interest or pressure groups (Dahl 1963, 1989; Ricci 1971).

In addition, in a manner that evokes Ciceronian political and rhetorical technique,¹⁰ Gramsci underlines the importance of the relation between, on the one hand, the generation of consent, the organization of mass opinion and, on the other, the physico-spatial and the urban-architectural structure of civil society: various types of buildings, streets and avenues, boulevards and parkways, squares and other public spaces (Gramsci 1975, 333). The relation is mutual and reinforcing. The generation and organization of public opinion is shaped and informed by the physical and material organization of the space within which such activity emerges and takes place. Political activity—whether conducted by means of direct speech (addressing an assembly within a hall or in the open in a public square), or by means of mass print (newspapers, magazines, etc.), or electronic media (radio, film, television, etc.); or by more direct forms of action, whether peaceful (such as marches, demonstrations, rallies) or more unruly or even violent (such as riots, mass outbursts, various forms of civil disobedience)—is dependent upon the kinds of physical space that have been constructed over time. It is to be noted that all the above-mentioned forms of mass mobilization and deployment can occur only within a particular kind of urban space. Hence the character of political action is shaped by the topography of everyday life, as is the necessary connection between “civil society,” “public opinion,” and hegemony.

The ensemble of institutions, structures, and sociocultural practices is thus a “powerful system of earthworks” that, taken together, constitute civil society. These are the “formidable complex of trenches and fortifications of the dominant class” (Gramsci 1975, 332–33) that renders state power and hegemonic rule legitimate and hence stable. The ideological and cultural, and therefore hegemonic, apparatus of civil society constantly produces and reproduces consent in order to render the system durable over time. On the

other hand, such legitimating activity is balanced and checked by forces and groups opposed and hostile (either actually or potentially) to the dominant group and to its values and beliefs. These are what Gramsci calls the “subaltern classes” (Gramsci 1975, 2283–89), which may be found in society in different and varying levels of evolution. Some subaltern groups exhibit embryonic capacities for further development, some may reach a more mature stage of political consciousness, while others in acquiring cultural and moral/intellectual resources develop into a coherent and purposive actor capable of challenging the prevailing hegemony. Only in the last stage, in which the subordinate group has acquired the political and cultural ability to exercise moral intellectual leadership, will the subaltern become hegemonic. This process takes place within civil society, and involves a conflict and struggle over public opinion and over its organization and direction. The conflict over opinion is precisely Gramsci’s war of position; it is waged to construct and control the dissemination of consent. The process occurs on two levels: first, within the cultural/political and organizational body of the protagonists there is the struggle to develop a common consensus and a common basis of action; and second, conflict and strife take place among and between them. The war of position is therefore characterized by a series of moral and intellectual contests, whose ultimate goal is the construction of social and political reality. The group that succeeds in disseminating its particular interpretation or view of sociopolitical is the group that has become hegemonic.

In a note on “Il linguaggio, le lingue, il senso comune,” Gramsci understands philosophy as a conception of the world:

Posta la filosofia come concezione del mondo e l’operosità filosofica non concepita più [solamente] come elaborazione “individuale” di concetti sistematicamente coerenti ma inoltre e specialmente come lotta culturale per trasformare la “mentalità” popolare e diffondere le innovazioni filosofiche che si dimostreranno “storicamente vere” nella misura in cui diventeranno concretamente cioè storicamente e socialmente universali [. . .]. (Gramsci 1975, 1330; and 1971, 348)

The formation and mobilization of consent (which, in turn, involves the exercise of moral and intellectual leadership) is competitive and antagonistic. It is a “battle” (Gramsci 1975, 1236, 1493) to form and disseminate a coherent “philosophy” or a coherent conception of the world, such that it becomes

“historically true.” Hence consent and persuasion presuppose, and emerge from, a complex structure of conflict and strife.

VI

It is within the context of the physical/social/political space we have discussed above that hegemony, understood as the process by which consent is generated and ideas are disseminated, acquires significance as a modern form of *peithous episteme*, a sociopolitical *demiourgos* that constructs the ideological and cultural apparatus of “permanent persuasion” by which power is produced and reproduced. That is to say, speech/language (the *logos*) as a form of hegemony, and rhetoric as an instrument of hegemonic action, underlie Gramsci’s project of attempting to construct a conscious, disciplined political actor capable of rule. The two are mutually interwoven. Here the central idea, and what connects hegemony and rhetoric, is the notion of decorum.

Decorum (*to prepon*) was developed analytically and substantively first by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. Of course, it was anticipated conceptually by Plato in his redefinition and reformulation of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*. Decorum is generally understood to mean that styles of speaking and writing should conform to the subject matter, to the audience, to the speaker, and to the occasion. What is important, however, is that decorum summarize the reciprocal relation between speaker and audience, such that each informs the other. Neither the speaker nor the audience in itself is the locus of decorum. This means that decorum is the product not of the text, or of the speech, but rather of the mutual relation itself. At the same time, the perception and the culture of the audience are crucial to the relation: they provide the structure within which the speaker must move.

Thus decorum is not a simple rhetorical technique. Certainly in the ancient world it was seen as an indicator of social and cultural forms of belief, knowledge, and practice. The relation between speaker and audience, like that between ruler and ruled, teacher and student, both determined, and was determined by, the overall or prevailing sociocultural and sociopolitical system.

To know how to address a particular audience would mean to know how to establish the decorum of that particular instance, which in turn would mean to know not only the character and social psychology of the listener, but also to become immersed in the listener’s culture. This is what Michael Polanyi calls “tacit knowledge” (1974), or what Schattschneider terms the “assimilation of bias” (1975). With Clifford Geertz it becomes the process by

which one “finds one’s footing.” For Geertz, anthropological investigation and the understanding of alien cultures presuppose the ability to acculturate, to locate and decipher in a natural and unselfconscious manner the alien cultures’ symbols and signals (Geertz 2000).

In this sense, decorum, and by extension rhetoric, is not merely an adaptive instrument that passively reflects and accepts the prevailing cultural and social forms of thinking and acting. Decorum in the very process of reflecting social and political reality simultaneously transforms it—that is to say, it constructs and creates reality; in Gramsci’s parlance, “crea il reale” (Gramsci 1975, 1485–86; 1971, 345–46). By means of the *logos*, that is, by means of language and speech, and their various techniques such as rhetoric, a concrete social and cultural reality is constructed, which, though a highly elaborate and complex fiction, is taken and understood as if it were natural. Thus the idea of society as a “second nature,” from Protagoras and Plato to Vico, Hegel, and Gramsci. As Vico puts it: *verum et factum convertuntur*, that is, “[t]he criterion of the truth is to have made it” (Vico 1988, 45–46).

A speaker, in order to move an audience, no doubt must understand the structural and psychological characteristics of that audience so as to adapt his or her rhetorical technique to them. Yet at the same time the relation between audience and speaker, where each reciprocally constitutes the other, constructs a social reality.¹¹

At the same time, hegemony is inherently unstable, constantly undermining itself; that is, it is intrinsically contradictory, for its internal logic and dynamic generate continually a counterhegemony. Thus the idea of a “battle” of competing and opposing hegemonies follows directly from the asymmetrical character of the concept. Social reality is itself both product and producer of such a battle, in the same way that truth is both product and producer of the argumentation and decorum of rhetorical technique.

Dissoi logoi, constructing and elaborating competing arguments on the same question, presupposes an epistemological stance that is open yet skeptical and critical toward the idea of truth. With the opposing *logoi* truth is dependent upon the internal structure and development of each distinct argument, such that no stable criteria are possible for its determination. In other words, there is no extrahistorical or extrasocial standard: the criteria issue from the decorum of the argument, in the same way that the latter issues from the former. In this sense Croce’s distinction between philosophy and politics, as well as Plato’s antinomy between *episteme* (knowledge given by dialectical speech) and *doxa* (opinion given by rhetorical speech),

are conflated. The boundaries that define them break down, and a reciprocal interaction becomes possible. To Gramsci hegemony encapsulates a dual and reciprocal movement—the passage from knowledge to opinion, and from opinion to knowledge—such that knowledge has become the opinion of the many.

NOTES

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1. In doing this, I am aware that hegemony in Gramsci does not merely operate on the cultural and moral/intellectual level, and that it simultaneously presupposes a material (technical/economic) structure (see Fontana 2006).
2. See, for example, Isocrates' comments regarding the centrality of the *logos* for humanity: "Because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish." And "[. . .] none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as our thoughts speech is our guide [*hegemonia logon*]" (*Antidosis* 254–57).
3. Plato famously equates democratic politics with free speech and with the equal right to speak (*Republic* 557–58).
4. In *De finibus* 2.6.17 Cicero distinguishes between the rhetoric of the philosophers and the rhetoric of the courts.
5. Gramsci also discusses the national-popular intellectual, and contrasts this type to the cosmopolitan (Gramsci 1975, 1914–15, 2113–20; 1971, 56). Thus the dyads organic/traditional and national-popular/cosmopolitan form parallel and opposing dichotomies.
6. Modern dictatorship, especially of the totalitarian type, presupposes the popular masses as the ground of politics. Since Machiavelli's theorization of his "new modes and orders," and since the advent of the modern world, all politics (whether democratic or nondemocratic) are popular politics, and public opinion (its character, its

form and content, as well as its movement over time) becomes decisive in the struggle for power (see Baehr and Richter 2004).

7. Tacitus equates the decline of public speech with the decline of the republic, and he sees the open competition for popular and mass opinion as the distinctive characteristic of liberty and republicanism. He writes: “[. . .] the great and famous eloquence of old is the nursling of the license which fools call liberty; it is the companion of sedition, the stimulant of an unruly people, a stranger to obedience and subjection, a defiant, reckless, presumptuous thing which does not show itself in a well-governed state [. . .]. [O]ur own state, while it went astray and wore out its strength in factious strife and discord, with neither peace in the forum, unity in the senate, order in the courts, respect for merit [. . .] produced beyond all question a more vigorous eloquence.” And further: “the orator gets an inferior and less splendid renown where a sound morality and willing obedience to authority prevail. What need there of long speeches in the Senate, when the best men are soon of one mind, or endless harangues to the people, when political questions are decided not by an ignorant multitude, but by one man of preeminent wisdom [*sapientissimus et unus*]?” (*Dialogus* 41). In addition, Tacitus connects the centrality of public speech and public opinion with the power of the people: “Does history contain a single instance of any orator at Sparta or Crete, two states whose political system and legislation were more stringent than any other on record? It is equally true to say that in Macedonia and in Persia eloquence was unknown. [. . .] Rhodes has had some orators, Athens a great many; in both communities all power was in the hands of the populace—that is to say, the untutored democracy, in fact the mob. Likewise at Rome” (*Dialogus* 40.3–4; see Fontana 1993).
8. The dyad East/West, in which each term is antithetical to the other, and in which each is a synecdoche for contrasting political and social systems, is fundamental to Western political thought. It may be traced back from Gramsci to Marx to Hegel to Montesquieu to Machiavelli, back to the ancient Romans, and finally to Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle (see Fontana 2000).
9. The city/country distinction is also important: *citoyen/cité-paysan/pays*, *cittadinol città*. It is one that Gramsci emphasizes in his analysis of intellectuals (see Fontana 2006).
10. Cicero uses place and topography as a means of rhetorical persuasion. In his forensic and deliberative orations he often refers to the *loci* (city walls, temples, forum, streets) that define the spatial and political architecture of the city of Rome. He also, like Gramsci, recognizes the importance of the city/country dichotomy (see Vasaly 1993).
11. Such a conception of decorum is directly related to Gramsci’s dialectic between “passion” and “feeling,” on the one hand, and knowledge, on the other (see Brown 1987).

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