



Antonio Gramsci



CULTURE AND MEDIA

BARBORA SITTOVÁ

PATRICIJA FAŠALEK

MARTINA VALENTÍKOVÁ



- ▶ 1891 – 1937
- ▶ Italian philosopher and politician
- ▶ inspired by: Karl Marx Niccolo MachiavelliVilfredo Pareto Georges Sorel Benedetto Croce
- ▶ co-founder of the Communist Party of Italy (1921)



Personal & political

- ▶ canceled his studies at the University of Turin due to his poor health
- ▶ 1913 member of the Italian Socialist Party
- ▶ as a representative of the Communist Party travelled to Moscow to learn, how to fight against fascism (Benito Mussolini)
- ▶ he got married in Moscow, but his wife and two sons stayed there, while Gramsci travelled back to Italy as a chief leader of the Party

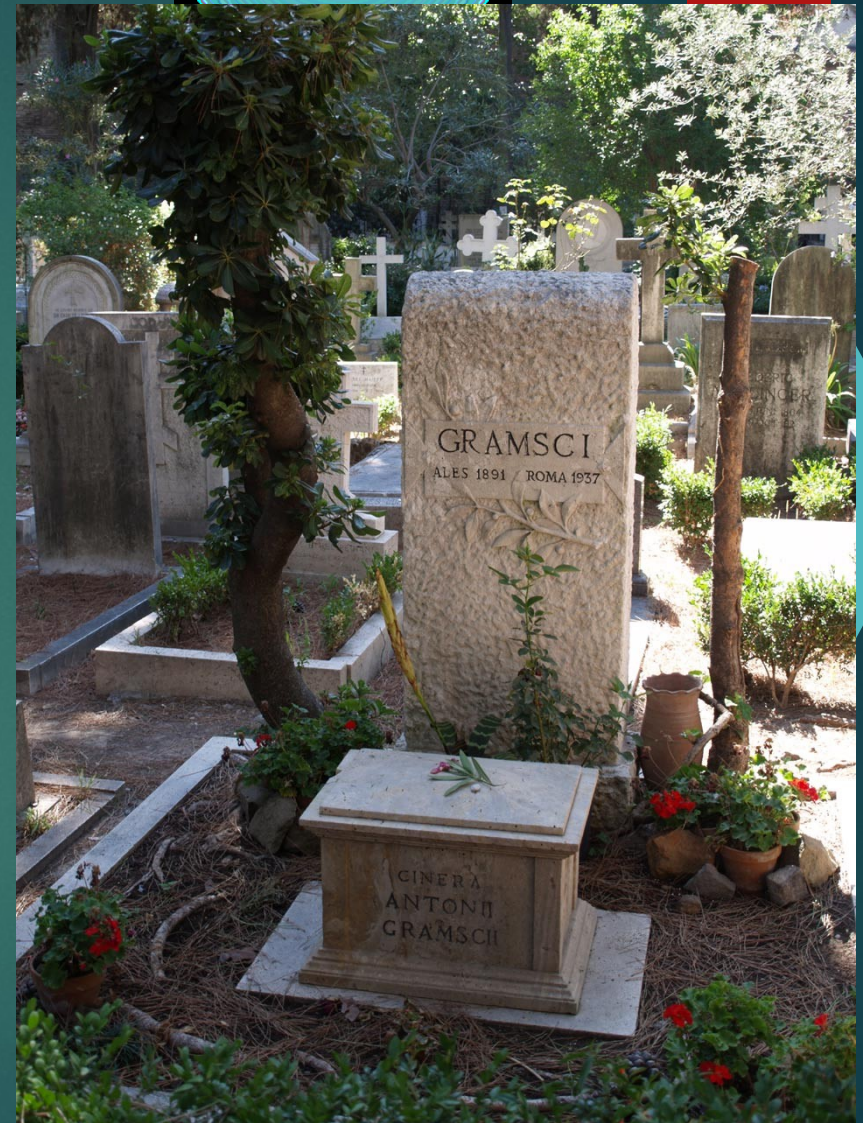


In prison

- ▶ despite his parliamentary immunity he was arrested and imprisoned in 1926
- ▶ at the trial, Gramsci's prosecutor stated: „For twenty years we must stop this brain from functioning“
- ▶ Gramsci actually received a sentence of 20 years' imprisonment, but due to his state of health he was released in 1937, only several days before he died
- ▶ the sentence however didn't stop Gramsci from „this brain functioning“ – he wrote more than 3000 pages of essays, first published in 1950s as Prison Notebooks

After death

- ▶ he never saw his second son
- ▶ his essays were first published in 1950s as Prison Notebooks
- ▶ thus Althusser, another Marxist theorist, influenced cultural studies before Gramsci, although the latter had an mental influence on the former



Ideology - History of Subaltern Classes

- ▶ - A historical method for understanding how the subaltern classes are formed
- ▶ - 2 groups: the ruling classes and the subaltern classes
- ▶ - Ruling classes: historically united and their unity is realized through their control of the State
- ▶ - Subaltern classes: part of the civil society, not united.

Subaltern classes can unite - in phases

- ▶ It is therefore necessary to study:
- ▶ 1. the objective formation of the subaltern social groups, their developments and transformations occurring in economic production; their quantitative diffusion and their origins in pre-existing social groups
- ▶ 2. their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, their attempts to influence the programmes of these formations, and the consequences of these attempts;
- ▶ 3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups to maintain control over subaltern;
- ▶ 4. the formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce
- ▶ 5. new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups, but within the old framework;
- ▶ 6. those formations which assert the integral autonomy

- ▶ Social groups come to power in two ways: as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership” - ideological control, given by consent (hegemony)

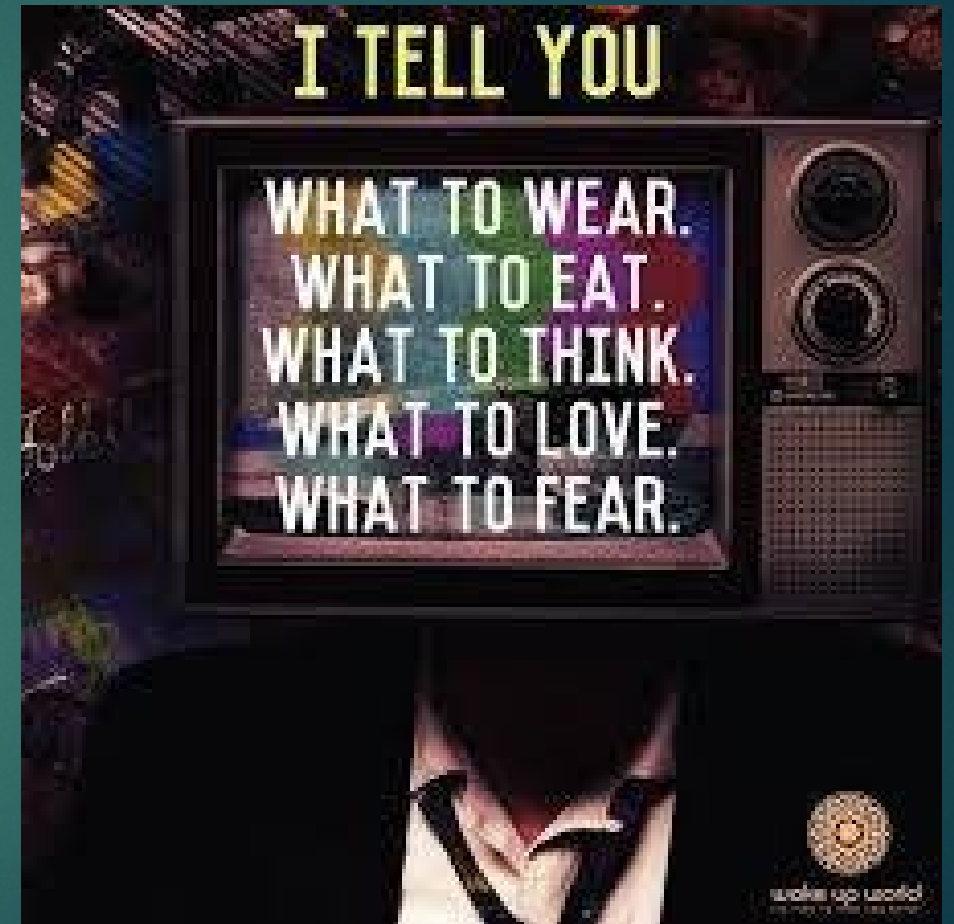


The Concept of “Ideology”

- ▶ “Ideology”: first aspect of “sensationalism”, “science of ideas” or “analysis of ideas”, “investigation of the origin of ideas”.
- ▶ The meaning changed with Marxist philosophy: now negative value judgment, suggests that “Ideology” itself must be analysed historically and as a superstructure.
- ▶ Gramsci: ideology is distinct from the structure: structure can change the ideology using different means such as mass media.
- ▶ 2 types of ideology – 1. historically organic, psychological, which organize masses, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc., 2. arbitrary, which create individual movements and controversy.

Cultural Themes: Ideological Material

- ▶ Material organizations: aimed at maintaining, defending and developing the theoretical or ideological:
 - ▶ - press (books, newspapers, publishing houses).
 - ▶ Ideology is moulded by culture and everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly, belongs to it:
 - ▶ - libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, architecture, names of streets



Hegemony

- ▶ the word hegemony originally comes from Greek
- ▶ it means domination and leadership
- ▶ he uses this concept for indication of more difficult domination type than was used traditionally
- ▶ Gramsci makes his concept of hegemony as the answer to the question: How is it possible that the western ideology could stay alive?
- ▶ Gramsci explains functioning of ideology in modern capitalist countries by the specific principle of domination in concept of hegemony



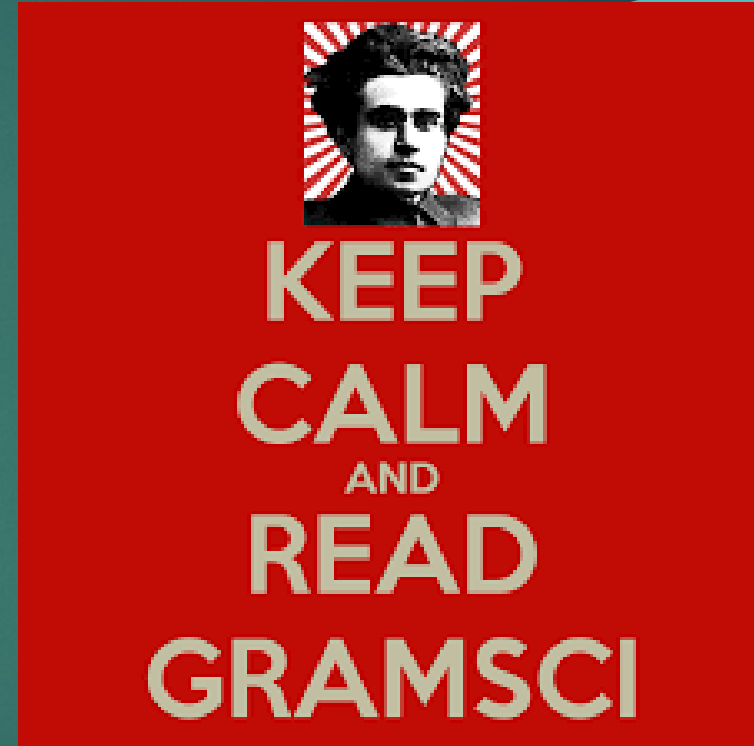
Gramsci vs. Marx



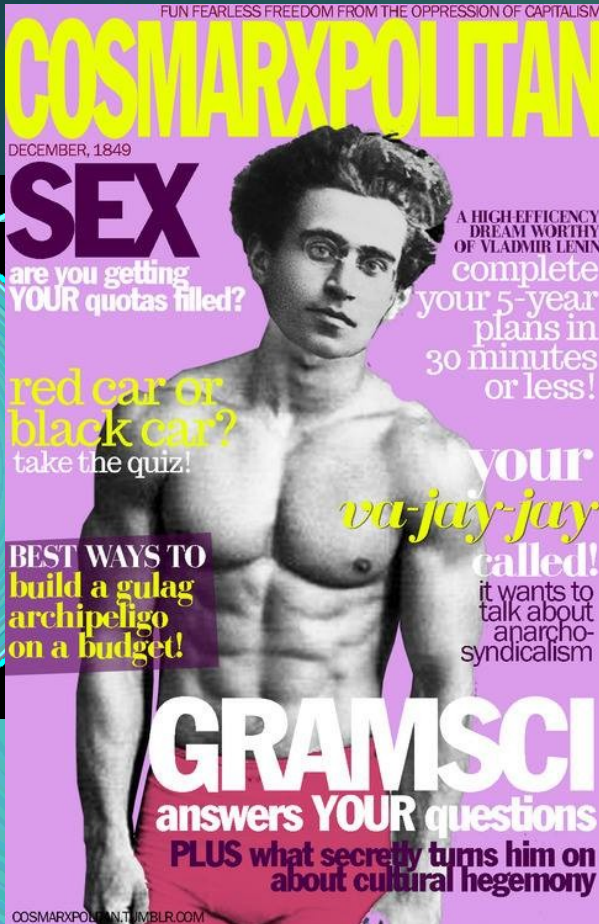
- ▶ in line with Marx Gramsci can see the simple fact that predominant ideas or ideologies of the epoch are identical to the ruling class ideology
- ▶ Gramsci did not want to argue with his claim that every form of government is a dictatorship
- ▶ but he does not share the claim that the dictatorship is the only form of government that directs the masses
- ▶ he asks why the Marxist movement did not win and did not control the society

Cultural Hegemony

- ▶ dominance of one social group over another
- ▶ it means that a diverse culture can be ruled or dominated by one group or class
- ▶ the theory claims that the ideas of the ruling class come to be seen as the norm
- ▶ everyday practices provide the foundation for complex systems of domination

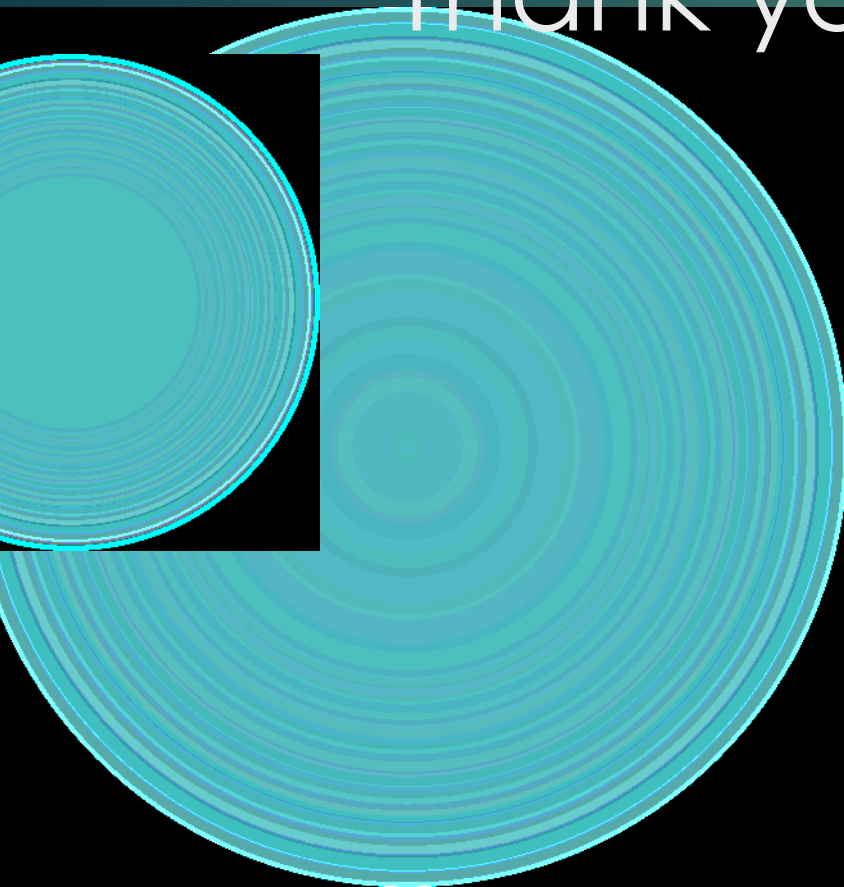
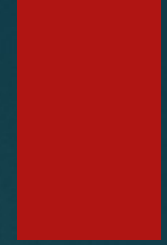
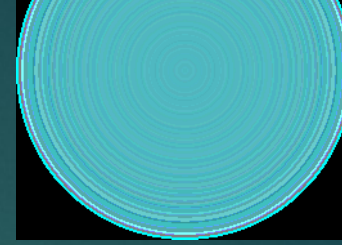


What else?



- ▶ the stability of Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony is provided by three basic pillars which are in continuous interaction
- ▶ they are ideological, institutional and process pillars
- ▶ a social class can dominate through cultural norms
- ▶ how media may serve as a propaganda tool to promote the dominant ideology of the power elite

Thank you for your attention!



Resources

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