

7. Stefano Selenu, *Elaborando le tracce della storia. Linguaggio, metafora e alterità in Antonio Gramsci*

Gramsci's prison work constitutes both a reflection on Italian, European, and world history, and a working-through-and-out of the trauma of the political defeat and detention. His critical elaboration is the source for his dialogic philosophy (Gerratana, Baratta), whose starting point, recasting the Vichian tradition, is the idea that every human being should make a «philological» inventory of the traces that history left in his or her consciousness. This inventory allows human beings the possibility of knowing how their consciousness is historically constituted. By knowing it they are in a better position to actively and critically narrate themselves instead of being narrated by others. In this paper, which will also take into consideration the question of the Italian anti-Semitism that Gramsci discussed in the *Prison Letters* with his sister-in-law Tania Schucht and friend Piero Sraffa, I will argue that Gramsci's critical method informs his worldly reflection on history and language, and that his writing on history relates to his lived experience as well as to his reflection on language. As a development of this interconnection between history, lived experience, and language, I will also discuss Gramsci's insight that language is always metaphoric. This idea relates to his critique of both neogrammarians' positivist and Croce's idealist conceptions of language. According to Gramsci, language is a historical and social product as well as a producer of history and social relationships. This makes language a continuous process of the creation of metaphor. I argue that Gramsci did not intend metaphor as an individual elocutionary and stylistic utterance, but as the inner dispositive of language. By stating that language is metaphoric, Gramsci reveals that language and history are always open to an indissoluble immanent otherness. I will argue that Gramsci's thought itself, in its variety, worldliness, and criticism of any totalizing idea and ideology, mirrors this continuous dialogic opening up to otherness.