

# THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT.

# NEWSPAPER

Editors:  
**LAKESHA BRYANT**  
and  
**SAQUAN SCOTT**

"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."  
Antonio Gramsci  
(Prison Notebook 8)



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**JOSEPH A. BUTTIGIEG**


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Bronx, NY 10456

Saturday

Chance of Storm

 **88** °F | °C

Precipitation: 20%

Humidity: 46%

Wind: 10 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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# GRAMSCI AND EDUCATION

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Joseph Buttigieg

careful readers of Gramsci have found in it (specifically in its treatment of the question of the intellectuals) the core, or the central point of reference, around which the huge and fragmentary ensemble of the *Quaderni* revolves.

The note from which I extracted the epigraph addresses a very specific issue (as is typical of Gramsci)—namely, the reform of the educational system devised by Giovanni Gentile and implemented by the Fascist government in 1923. It is important to bear this in mind in order to avoid the temptation and resist the tendency to remove Gramsci's ideas out of their specific historical context and apply them simplistically and unproblematically to the present situation. At the same time, it is equally important to remember that Gramsci's ideas on education form part of a much broader reflection on a number of problems and issues that he regarded and inextricably connected—i.e., the role of intellectuals in society, modernity and the phenomenon of Fordism, civil society, subalternity, "common sense," hegemony, and, above all, the question of how best to prepare the ground for radical social transformation. The isolation of single propositions or particular observations from the intricate fabric of Gramsci's thought for the purpose of supporting or refuting a given position in today's heated debates about education can only lead to distortions, misunderstandings, and cynical instrumentalizations.

I mention this not because I intend to provide a systematic or comprehensive account of Gramsci's views on education within the context of his times and of the *Quaderni* as a whole. That would take too long; and, besides, much of that work has already been done and is readily available—see, for example, Mario Alighiero Manacorda's excellent study, *Il principio educativo in Gramsci: Americanismo e Conformismo*, which remains as valid today as when it was first published in 1970 (in fact, it has recently been translated into Japanese). My motivation, rather, is this: Gramsci's views, properly understood, can shed valuable light on the questions pertaining to education that preoccupy us today; they can also help clarify some issues that have become quite confused in the heated and often vicious debates swirling around the question of which educational policies and pedagogical practices are most appropriate for (or adequate to) a modern democracy in the age of globalization. This applies even to the current debates in the United States where the passionate polemics on education are at the heart of the extremely politicized and divisive "culture wars" that have been going on for well over a decade—they are, in fact, one of the most damaging legacies of the Reagan era. Gramsci has been invoked (positively and negatively) rather frequently in the

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## Education, the Role of Intellectuals, and Democracy: A Gramscian Reflection

Joseph A. Buttigieg

In the present school, the profound crisis in the traditional culture and its conception of life and of man has resulted in a progressive degeneration. Schools of the vocational type, i.e. those designed to satisfy immediate, practical interests, are beginning to predominate over the formative school, which is not immediately "interested." The most paradoxical aspect of it all is that this new type of school appears and is advocated as being democratic, while in fact it is destined not merely to perpetuate social differences but to crystallize them in Chinese complexities. (SPN, p. 40; QC, p. 1547)

Antonio Gramsci expresses this judgement in a relatively long note devoted to "Observations on the School: In Search of the Educational Principle." It is the second of the three notes (composed out of reflections he had articulated earlier in Notebook 4) that constitute the entirety of the "special notebook" that Gramsci entitled: "Notes and Jottings for a Group of Essays on the History of the Intellectuals" (Notebook 12). In spite of its brevity, this particular notebook occupies an especially important place in Gramsci's *oeuvre*; indeed, many

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lignant or fruitful. What I wish to do, then, is offer some observations, from a Gramscian perspective, on certain aspects of the current U.S. debate on education—a debate that is almost always connected, at least rhetorically, with the question of democracy.

The first big salvo in the current debate on education in the U.S. was fired by William Bennett—an ex-Democrat, a repentant convert from the protest movements of the 1960s and early 1970s, who was chosen by Reagan to direct the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and, subsequently, to serve as the Secretary of Education. In a monograph entitled *To Reclaim a Legacy* (published by the NEH in 1984), Bennett lamented the poor state of the nation's educational system and linked it directly with what he considered to be the malaise of society as a whole—a malaise he attributed to the general decline of ethical and moral values and to the fragmentation of the social fabric of the nation as a whole. The first thing that needed to be done to remedy the situation, he argued, was to restore to health and revitalize the country's educational system. His simple prescription: a core curriculum that would expose all students to the great documents of Western civilization, and steep the minds of the young generations in the supposedly universal and timeless values embodied by the "canon" of the Western tradition (that, sometimes, is referred to by different participants in these debates as the Judeo-Christian tradition, or simply as "the great tradition"—by which is meant the tradition of *litterae humaniores*). Bennett quickly found an audience and a following, for a variety of reasons. There is no doubt that in most parts of the country public education, and the schools as such, were and continue to be in a state of crisis. Furthermore, the country was then, as it is now, not only socially fragmented (or, as Gramsci would say, "*disgregata*") but also deeply and dangerously divided, especially along ethnic and religious lines. (See, for example, how easily an incident or an event of a racial, ethnic, or religious nature can polarize the nation, and even spark off violent confrontations within or among communities.)

William Bennett's views coincided with those of certain university academics who were unhappy with and hostile to the theoretical and methodological shifts that had been taking place for some time in the study of the humanities, and most especially in the study of literature. In 1982, a renowned literary scholar, W. Jackson Bate, published an article, "The Crisis of English Studies," in *Harvard Magazine*, excoriating the wave of post-structuralist critical theory which, in his view, fatally exacerbated the "centrifugal heterogeneity" that had been corroding literary studies since at least the 1950s. Once upon a time, Bate maintained, "unity of knowledge [. . .] was taken for

granted" (p. 46). That was the time when the values of *litterae humaniores* held sway; it was the time when the study of literature transmitted the glorious tradition that stretches back to ancient Greece and Rome and that "carried Europe through the Renaissance with brilliant creativity, and, in the process, also produced the Enlightenment" (p. 48). Now, however, everything is fragmented; there is no longer a stable center and, consequently, the study of the humanities is no longer of central importance to life. Bate attributes the collapse to two major factors: the tendency towards specialization, and the enormous expansion of the universities that started in the 1950s, which saw an unprecedented increase in the enrollment of students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is important to note that in his analysis of the crisis, Bate evinces only a minimal interest in the world outside the university. He excludes almost completely from his account of the regress of *litterae humaniores* any serious consideration of economic, political, and social factors. He alludes only in passing to the great shortage of teachers in the post-war period that led to the rapid expansion of American universities, and to the subsequent devastating effects of the economic crisis and the public disillusionment with higher education that contributed to the collapse of the academic job market in the 1970s. He makes no mention of the relationships between universities and corporations, the government, the military, and the culture industry; he provides no sense of the changing role of intellectuals in society during the past hundred years; he does not acknowledge the importance of technology, national and international politics, the cold war and the like. What is worse, when Bate encounters evidence of legitimate contemporary sociocultural-political concerns making their mark upon the university curriculum, he considers such evidence indicative of the fragmentation and lack of seriousness that bedevil the humanities. He finds no justification for the introduction of courses in women's studies and "ethnic" literature into the curriculum; they simply pander to "current enthusiasms"; the issues they address would be better treated in the context of the lost tradition of *litterae humaniores*.

Bate's nostalgic lament and Bennett's militant call for fundamental educational reform foreshadowed the publication, in 1987, of Allan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. This work, which has a foreword by the Nobel Prize winning novelist Saul Bellow, has had a greater impact than any other book or article on the debate on education and on the cultural polemics in the U.S. during the past decade. One confused and confusing aspect of Bloom's work is its treatment of the relationship between the

involvement or even by concerns regarding family, career and the like. They simply have to be present in society so that they "become models for the use of the noblest human faculties and hence are benefactors to all of us, more for what they are than for what they do. Without their presence (and, one should add, without their being respectable), no society [. . .] can be called civilized" (p. 21).

For Bloom, the intellectual is and deserves to be recognized as an aristocrat. Therefore, his real complaint in *The Closing of the American Mind* is not that higher education has failed democracy but, rather, that democracy has failed higher education by seducing the intellectuals. The failure of higher education, as Bloom sees it (and here he echoes the views of Jackson Bate), consists in its inability to protect itself from the incursion of the *demos*, and its capitulation to the demands of the less privileged and marginalized members of society. Much of the resentment that underlies Bloom's jeremiad stems from his sense that the intellectuals have lost their privileged status because many of them have betrayed their own class—a new kind of *trahison des clercs*. Bloom's concept of the intellectuals as a special, privileged class has a long history; nonetheless, at first sight, it might seem odd that this concept was so readily accepted and endorsed by Bloom's American readers. After all, there has been a long and powerful tradition of anti-intellectualism in the United States. But, in fact, it is precisely because many Americans are suspicious towards intellectuals that Bloom's book was so successful. The conservatives were able to argue, following Bloom, that university professors had betrayed their vocation by: (a) failing to inculcate in their students the values of the great tradition of *litterae humaniores*; and (b) becoming involved in social and political issues, and especially by advocating the causes of minorities, women, and other marginalized groups. The corrosion of American society, the conservatives maintained, citing Bloom, was taking place on university campuses. Some right-wing commentators, such as Michael Novak and Rush Limbaugh, perceived in all this a Gramscian plot to bring about revolution by an assault on the cultural (instead of the economic and political) front.

Gramsci, however, is pertinent to this discussion for a very different reason. A reading of Gramsci's discussion on the intellectuals (which, we must not forget, is intertwined with his reflections on education) would: (a) bring into relief the undemocratic thrust of Bloom's views; and (b) reveal how Bloom's concept of the role of the intellectual in society fails to take into account the realities of the modern world. Whereas Bloom starts by establishing a sharp distinction between intellectuals and nonintellectuals, Gramsci asserts that "all men are intellectuals [. . .] but not all men in society have the function of

intellectual/university professor and democratic society. In the opening pages, Bloom describes his monograph as "a meditation on the state of our souls, particularly those of the young and their education" (p. 19). He then states that his assessment of the spiritual and intellectual condition of America is based on his observations of "thousands of students of comparatively high intelligence, materially and spiritually free to do pretty much what they want with the few years of college they are privileged to have—in short, the kind of young persons who populate the twenty or thirty best universities" (p. 22). In other words, for Bloom, the privileged elite represents the entire American population; its spiritual and intellectual well-being or malaise stands for the state of mind of the nation as a whole. The story of this elite is presented as nothing less than the story of the nation, much in the same way as the traditional historians' account of kings, nobles, generals, and so on were presented as descriptions of whole nations and peoples. About the hundreds of thousands of students who frequent the less prestigious universities—not to mention community colleges and other two-year schools—Bloom has nothing to say other than: "They have their own needs and may very well have different characters from those I describe" (p. 22). If Bloom were indeed interested in explaining the current state of higher education in the context of an American society that considers itself democratic, then he would have been led to ask some very complex questions about those "other kinds of students," as he calls them. Questions such as: what exactly are the circumstances that prevent those students from having the freedom to pursue a liberal education? In other words, how has democracy failed them? Such questions never occur to Bloom; worse, he cannot afford to pursue this line of questioning because the very idea of the masses—the *demos*—invading the sacred precincts of the elite university constitutes his worst nightmare. Liberal education must not be wasted on those "other kinds of students"; it is the "advantaged youths" who possess "the greatest talents" that have the most legitimate claim on "our attention and our resources" (p. 22). These "advantaged youths" are the ones most likely "to have the greatest moral and intellectual effect on the nation" (p. 22).

How, then, do these privileged recipients of a liberal education from the elite universities exercise their "moral and intellectual effect on the nation"? They do it, according to Bloom, by spending "their lives in an effort to be autonomous" (p. 21). They need not do anything other than spend their lives in the philosophical pursuit of the good and the untrammelled contemplation of the true. Their contribution to society does not consist in any practical activity; their total freedom to philosophize must not be curtailed by practical worldly

intellectuals" (SPN, p. 9; QC, p. 1516). To be an intellectual, for Gramsci, is a job. Bloom's concept of the intellectual as a kind of aristocrat is antithetical to Gramsci's. To illustrate what I mean I will quote a few lines from the last section of Notebook 12:

When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional category of the intellectuals [. . .]. This means that, although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist. [. . .] Each man, finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher," an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is to bring into being new modes of thought. [. . .] The traditional and vulgarized type of the intellectual is given by the man of letters, the philosopher, the artist. (SPN, p. 9; QC, pp. 1550-51)

Gramsci also makes us realize that Bloom's vision of intellectuals as a restricted group has been rendered obsolete by modernity: "In the modern world the category of intellectuals [. . .] has undergone an unprecedented expansion" (SPN, p.13; QC, p. 1520). Bloom remains attached to the idea of what Gramsci calls the "traditional" intellectual so that he can defend the notion that the intellectual is (or should be) autonomous. As Gramsci explains, the traditional intellectuals constitute a

*noblesse de robe*, with its own privileges [. . .]. Since these various categories of traditional intellectuals experience through an esprit de corps their uninterrupted historical continuity and their special qualification, they thus put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group. (SPN, p. 7; QC, p. 1515)

This self-conferred autonomy, however, is an illusion—and a dangerous one. Among other things, this illusion perpetuates the separation of the intellectuals from the people. There is not enough space here to recapitulate Gramsci's extensive discussion of this issue in various sections of his notebooks. For the sake of brevity, I will quote just one observation of Gramsci's; it consists of an attack on Croce, but here one can substitute the name of Bloom for that of Croce:

What matters to Croce is that the intellectuals should not lower themselves to the level of the masses [. . .]. The intellectuals must govern and not be governed; they are the ones who construct the ideologies with which to govern others [. . .]. The position of the "pure intellectual" becomes either a real and proper form of retrograde "Jacobinism" [. . .] or a despicable "Pon-

tius Pilatism" or first the former, then the latter, or even both of them simultaneously. (QC, pp.1212-13)

Like Pontius Pilate, those who pose as "pure intellectuals" are unwilling to assume any real responsibility and do not want to be subjected to the judgement of the people. Their professed detachment from politics is merely a pose; in reality, they play a fundamental political role.

The primary role of the traditional intellectuals in society, Gramsci explains, is to produce consensus—hence their work is carried out in the context of civil society rather than political society, but their work is not for that reason any less political. Hence, Bloom's posture of detachment from the worldly political scene is disingenuous at best. In fact, what lies behind Bloom's fear of what he calls the "relativism" of our times is an awareness of the unraveling of consensus. The principles that once generated consent are no longer seen as self-evident; the authority of the permanent and universal truth upon which the legitimation of the current hegemony depends is no longer authoritative. Social groups and classes with different needs and different concepts of the social order have found a voice—i.e., they have their own intellectuals, they have produced their own version of the worldly reality they inhabit. It is not the case, as Bloom would have his readers believe, that the intellectuals have betrayed their class by presenting themselves as defenders and spokesmen of marginalized social strata in order to enhance their own status. Rather, the subaltern "others" have finally started to produce their own defenders and spokesmen so that their "otherness" is now hard to ignore. It is this otherness (which a true democracy should have a place for) that so profoundly troubles and threatens Allan Bloom that he wants to close the American mind against it. His bastions are the great books; or, rather, not so much the great books as his way (and only his way) of reading and interpreting the great books.

Allan Bloom, William Bennett, and Jackson Bate are convinced that American society has lost its cohesion because the intellectuals in the universities have failed to transmit the eternal verities of the Western tradition of *litterae humaniores*. Gramsci, by contrast, believed that the educational crisis of his time was not the cause but, rather, a consequence and a reflection of a much broader moral, social, and cultural crisis. Yet, even those who are familiar with Gramsci often fail to grasp this fundamental point. This is the case, for example, with E. D. Hirsch. Hirsch has written two influential books on the crisis of the schools in the U.S. The first book, *Cultural Literacy*, was first published in 1987 (the same year as Bloom's *Closing of the*

forms as much as they are influenced by it" (1987, p. 104). Here, Hirsch reveals that his knowledge of Gramsci is partial and selective. Nobody familiar with Gramsci's writings on hegemony and subalternity would say that "mainstream culture is not a class culture." Even the so-called "facts" of history are not established and transmitted in a "neutral" manner—on this one can see Gramsci's notes on the *Risorgimento*, or even his remarks on the history of subaltern social groups. (As Walter Benjamin reminds us, history and tradition in general are always in danger of becoming a tool of the ruling classes.) Nor is this simply a question that concerns the schools. Gramsci has shown us how powerful hegemony is, how it penetrates every aspect of life. The power relations that constitute hegemony cannot be reversed simply through the correction of teaching methods.

Leftist theorists of education are opposed to any form of curriculum based on a uniform canon of "great books" or on a "common cultural vocabulary." They want to discover educational methods that would not result in the uncritical transmission, reproduction, and hence the perpetuation of dominant values and interests. Some of the alternative approaches they offer are sensible. Henry Giroux, for example, has proposed the development of "a critical pedagogy [that] rejects a discourse of value neutrality" (1990, p. 127). In practice, critical pedagogy would do the following: (a) study "the privileged texts of the dominant or official canons" in order to arrive at a better understanding of "the important role they have played in shaping, for better or worse, the major events of our time"; (b) study the "noble traditions, histories and narratives that speak to important struggles by women, blacks, minorities and other subordinate groups that need to be heard so that such groups can lay claim to their own voices as part of a process of both affirmation and inquiry" (p. 126).

The problem is: how does one achieve all this? How does one plan the various stages of the educational process in order to attain this goal? In order to answer these questions, it would help to turn to Gramsci's plan for the common school. There is one point in particular that Gramsci insists on and that needs to be underlined. The basic problem with the educational system, Gramsci observes, is that

Each social group has its own type of school, intended to perpetuate a specific traditional function, ruling or subordinate. If one wishes to break this pattern one needs, instead of multiplying and grading different types of vocational school, to create a single type of formative school (primary-secondary) which would take the child up to the threshold of his choice of job, forming him during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling—or controlling those who rule. (SPN, p. 40; QC, p. 1547)

*American Mind*); the second book, *The Schools We Need*, appeared much more recently (1996). Many of Hirsch's admirers and critics have regarded his work and the positions it espouses to be in the same mold as Bloom's. Hirsch himself, however, has repeatedly tried to distance himself from the political conservatism of Bennett and Bloom. He has argued that his socio-political agenda is liberal and progressive; but at the same time he has maintained that progressive social goals can only be achieved through conservative forms of schooling. "I would label myself a political liberal and an educational conservative" (1996, p. 6), he writes. As if to reinforce this point, he dedicates his second book to William Bagley (a scholar in the field of education, and a contemporary of John Dewey's) and to Antonio Gramsci—describing them as "two prophets who explained in the 1930s why the new educational ideas would lead to greater social injustice." Hirsch contends that American education is in ruins because the dominant pedagogy is inspired by a Romanticism which seeks to foster the "natural" aptitudes of the child and has a "deep aversion to and contempt for factual knowledge" (1996, p. 54). The teaching of literacy has become a contentless teaching of skills. But literacy, Hirsch maintains, "is far more than a skill and [. . .] requires large amounts of specific knowledge" (1987, p. 2). The goal, then, is not literacy pure and simple, but "cultural literacy." In other words, Hirsch wants to make sure that all students in the course of their schooling from kindergarten through high school acquire a "cultural baggage," a "national vocabulary," and "a whole system of widely shared information" (1987, p. 103). He calls for a return to the "Ciceronian ideal of universal public discourse" (1987, p. 109). Hirsch is convinced that a common school system (i.e., a national system of education with a common curriculum that is based on the acquisition of shared/common knowledge and not just pure skills) would "create a literate and independent citizenry" (1996, p. 17), and by doing so reinforce democracy. These views, as one can see, are quite similar to some of the ideas expressed by Gramsci in his critique of the *risforma Gentile* (that is, the Fascist overhaul of the Italian educational system implemented by Mussolini's minister of public instruction in 1923).

Why then do leftist critics reject Hirsch's views? The answer is provided by Hirsch himself: "Some have objected that to publish the contents of our national vocabulary would have the effect of promoting the culture of the dominant class at the expense of minority cultures" (1987, p. 103). Hirsch rebuts these criticisms with the following affirmations: "To regard a standardized cultural instrument as a class culture is a facile oversimplification. [. . .] mainstream culture is not a class culture and [. . .] outsiders and newcomers influence its

In most debates on education, there is an underlying assumption that the basic problem identified by Gramsci has been overcome. That is why the main debates have focussed on curricular issues. On the surface, it appears that everyone goes to the same type of school. The reality, however, is different, at least in the United States. There are big disparities between one school and another. Some schools are well funded, others are not. Some schools are almost entirely made up of young people from more or less affluent families. These schools may adopt the same pedagogical methods as the schools populated by the poor and other subordinate groups. Yet, in the rich schools the general atmosphere is infinitely more conducive to learning, for a variety of reasons that need hardly be spelled out. The remedy to this situation cannot be found in curricular reform. It requires a radical transformation of social relations in the nation as a whole. But the will to confront the issue at its basic level is missing. And things are getting worse. The source of the problem, in fact, is the current fashion of exalting civil society—i.e., the drive to dilute the power of intervention of the State. How can the State ensure equal education for all, when it is deprived of the means to do so—both the financial means that come from taxation, and the political means that come from investing the State with a measure of authority?

Our current educational system still educates the few to become the leaders of the future, and the many to become productive, efficient workers. To be sure, many workers in post-Fordist society are in some sense or other "professionals"; they are certified as such by diverse educational institutions. This is a travesty of the concept of "education" as such; and yet even the universities have become for the most part professional schools. What does this mean in a democracy? Gramsci's reflections on this matter are quite disturbing:

The multiplication of types of professional school tends to perpetuate traditional social differences; but since, within these differences, it tends to encourage internal diversification, it gives the impression of being democratic in tendency. The labourer can become a skilled worker, for instance, the peasant a surveyor or petty agronomist. But democracy, by definition, cannot mean merely that every "citizen" can "govern" and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this. Political democracy tends towards a coincidence of the rulers and the ruled (in the sense of government with the consent of the governed), ensuring for each non-ruler a free training in the skills and general technical preparation necessary to that end. But the type of school which is now developing as the school for the people does not tend even to keep up this illusion. (SPN, pp. 40-41; QC, p. 1547)

According to Gramsci's criteria, we are still a long way from an educational system worthy of a true democracy.

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### Abbreviated Titles

- QC: *Quaderni del carcere* (V. Gerratana, Ed.). Edizione critica dell'Istituto Gramsci. 4 vol. Torino: Einaudi (1975).
- SPN: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, Eds. and Trans.). London: Lawrence & Wishart (1971).

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**Joseph A. Buttigieg's** main interests are modern literature, critical theory, and the relationship between culture and politics. In addition to numerous articles, Buttigieg has authored a book on James Joyce's aesthetics, *A Portrait of the Artist in Different Perspective*. He is also the editor and translator of the multi-volume complete critical edition of *Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks*, a project that has been supported by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Several of his articles on Gramsci have been translated into Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese. He was a founding member of the International Gramsci Society of which he is president. The Italian Minister of Culture appointed him to a commission of experts to oversee the preparation of the "edizione nazionale" of Gramsci's writings. Buttigieg serves on the editorial and advisory boards of various journals, and he is a member of the editorial collective of *boundary 2*.

### Selected Publications

- Criticism Without Boundaries: Directions and Crosscurrents in Postmodern Critical Theory*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1987.
- A Portrait of the Artist in Different Perspective*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1987.
- Borg, Carmel, Joseph A. Buttigieg, and Peter Mayo, eds. *Gramsci and Education*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.
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"Until Joseph A. Buttigieg's meticulous translation and critical attention to Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, this invaluable text, a testimony to the most emancipatory thinking of our time, was available to English readers only in an artificially contrived form. Now Buttigieg's monumental and magisterial work is available in paperback. Scholars, teachers, students, activists, general readers—rejoice!"  
 —Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Columbia University

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) is widely celebrated as the most original political thinker in Western Marxism and an all-around outstanding intellectual figure. Arrested and imprisoned by the Italian Fascist regime in 1926, Gramsci died before fully regaining his freedom. Nevertheless, in his prison notebooks he recorded thousands of brilliant reflections on an extraordinary range of subjects, establishing an enduring intellectual legacy.

Columbia University Press's multivolume *Prison Notebooks* is the only complete critical edition of Antonio Gramsci's seminal writings in English. The notebooks' integral text gives readers direct access not only to Gramsci's influential ideas but also to the intellectual workshop where those ideas were forged. Extensive notes guide readers through Gramsci's extraordinary series of reflections on an encyclopedic range of topics. Volume 1 opens with an introduction to Gramsci's project, describing the circumstances surrounding the composition of his notebooks and examining his method of inquiry and critical analysis. It is accompanied by a detailed chronology of the author's life. An unparalleled translation of notebooks 1 and 2 follows, which laid the foundations for Gramsci's later writings. Most intriguing are his earliest formulations of the concepts of hegemony, civil society, and passive revolution.

"A poignant record of [Gramsci's] thoughts from a Fascist prison cell, adding a human touch to a key political figure."  
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"Buttigieg's work is a monument of scholarship and of supple, deeply sensitive translation."  
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 —Fredric Jameson

Joseph A. Buttigieg is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English and a fellow of the Nanovic Institute for European Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *A Portrait of the Artist in Different Perspective* and has edited or coedited *The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci, Criticism Without Boundaries, Gramsci and Education*, and *European Christian Democracy*.

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES  
 A SERIES IN SOCIAL THOUGHT  
 AND CULTURAL CRITICISM



ANTONIO  
GRAMSCI

PRISON  
NOTEBOOKS

VOLUME  
I



Antonio Gramsci  
PRISON NOTEBOOKS

VOLUME I Edited with an Introduction by Joseph A. Buttigieg

VOLUME 1

VOLUME 2

VOLUME 3



Joseph A. Buttigieg

THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

EDITION (3 VOLUMES)

# A DAILY LECTURE

## WRITTEN BY MARCUS

### STEINWEG

*41th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 10th August 2013*

**SUBJECT OF PRECIPITATION**

*Marcus Steinweg*

1. *À bout de souffle* / *Breathless* is first of all the title of one of Godard's films.
2. Apart from that, this phrase links at least the two moments of subjectivity and flight.
3. The subject is essentially a breathing subject.
4. Strictly speaking, subjectivity comprises breathlessness.
5. The subject does not breathe only to maintain itself, to survive.
6. Just as flight in the strong sense of the word reactivated by Deleuze, can only be a flight forward, to breathe means to open oneself breathlessly to a future that remains undetermined, contingent.
7. The subject is breathless because it involves itself with the incommensurable which can only be blindly affirmed because it marks the limit of what is knowable.
8. To breathe means already to be out of breath, opened to the indeterminacy which life is.
9. One does not live simply by breathing.
10. The life of a subject begins with the acceleration of breathing beyond the vegetative imperative.
11. Breathlessly, the subject gives itself its future by receiving it as a surprise.

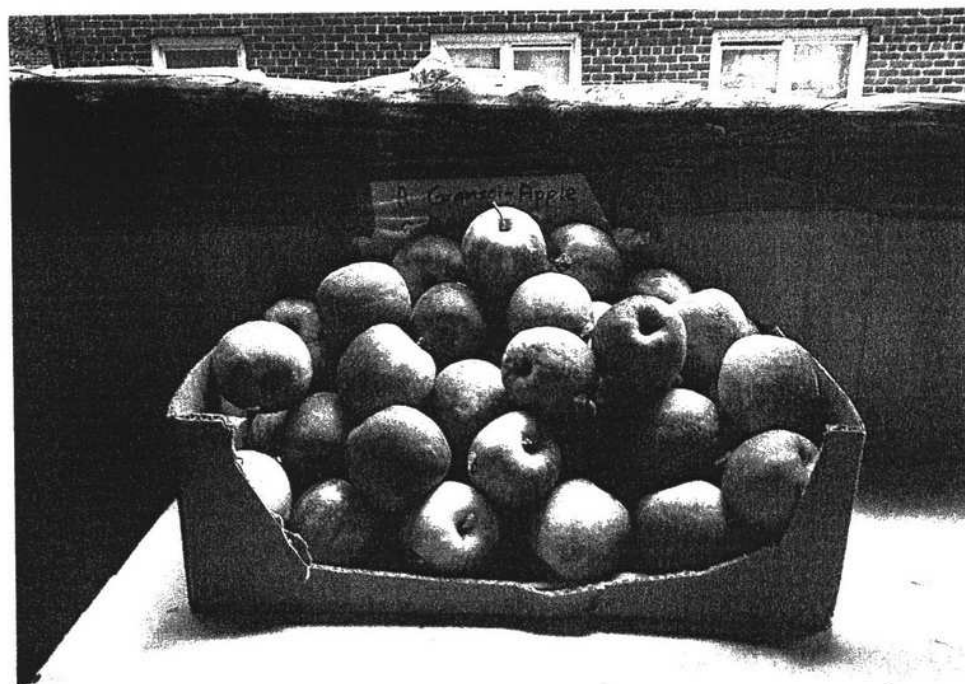
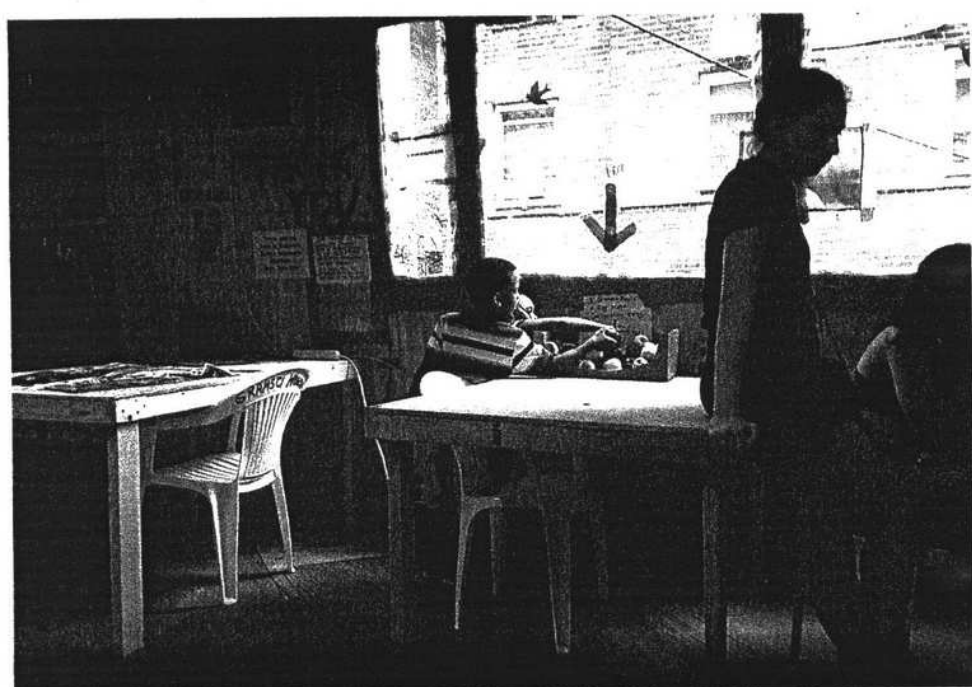


JEAN SEBERG  
FROM THE MOVIE "À BOUT DE SOUFFLE" / "BREATHLESS" (1960) BY JEAN-LUC GODARD



# AMBASSADOR'S NOTE # 25 BY YASMIL RAYMOND

Anybody who has visited the monument knows that there are at least three types of visitors to the Gramsci Library: those who like books, those who like apples, and those who like both, books and apples. The average visitor spends one or two minutes browsing through the shelves, and occasionally sits down to read a preface or a full chapter. The children, and this is no secret, they come in for one purpose only, to get a free apple, sometimes even two and run back to the Internet Corner or the Workshop. In some ways, the empty box at the end of the day, reassures us that a new association between books and apples is in the making. Furthermore, it strikes me that the apples help create an atmosphere of ease and hospitality inside the library, that visitors are more likely to start a conversation or ask me a question more easily there than elsewhere in the monument. We tend to think of libraries as silent spaces, we relate reading with silence, and we do so because, evidently, because the aim of reading and talking are quite different. However, the number of conversations and interactions happening in the Gramsci Library reminds me of something Marcus Steinweg mentions regularly in the Daily Lectures, how even though writing is a solitary act, you are never alone, that one is always in the company of other authors. In this sense, the library is a perfect example of this conviviality, a generator of spontaneous dialogues among books and mouths full of apples.



# A TEXT FROM THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

## STATEMENT : « Kiosks »

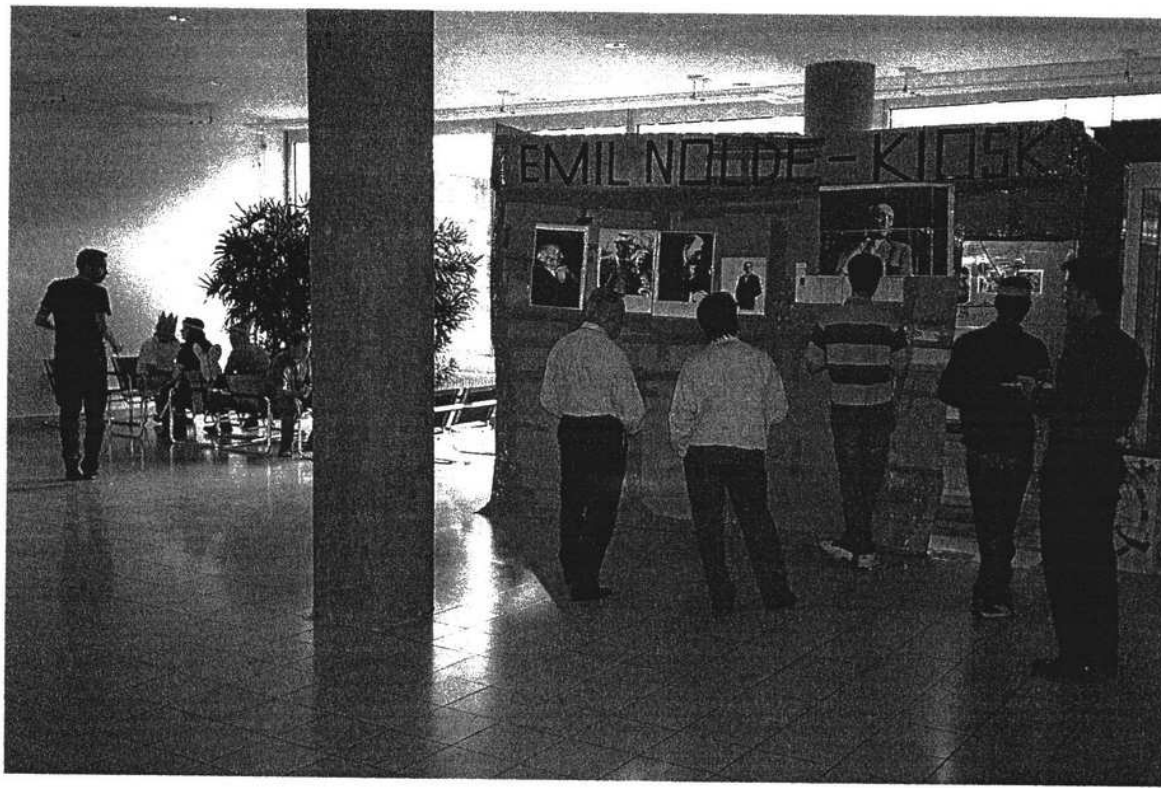
This « Kunst am Bau Projekt » was intended for the new building for the brain research and molecular-biology research department of the University of Zürich. The work is a « work in progress » made for the entrance hall of this department. This hall is a public space although mostly frequented by students, professors and laboratory technicians. The project is to build eight kiosks within four years, a new kiosk every half year. The kiosk is set up each time in a different location of the entrance hall, which is designed in a specifically neutral and functional way, as the architecture of the whole building. The kiosk is installed in this interior hall like a compact cell, an independent implant in the existing space, like an airport kiosk, train station or hospital kiosk that sell newspapers, cigarettes and candy. I want to show its' integrated presence in a building. Whether used or not, it just stands there, present. Thus, this kiosk is important as a mobile object, that stands out from the existing surroundings by its' handmade, quickly made form. It is in contrast with the top quality architecture, with the top technicity and functionality. With this voluntary contrast, I wanted to propose an outlook towards a different reality. This reality can liberate new or unknown energies. I want to confront the reality of this institution ; biologists, technicians, researchers, with the reality of other researchers in other fields, artists, writers. They too are committed in their research. They too make researches. The small size of the kiosk is made to receive one spectator so that he can isolate himself and concentrate on the informations given within the kiosk, for one minute, for one hour, or for a whole day long. The kiosk is built with a wooden structure covered by cardboard and lit with neon lights. On the top, outside, there is a sign with the name of the artist or the writer. Inside, all the available books of and about the artist or writer and video tapes are displayed to be consulted by the public. The inner walls are covered with photocopies of texts on his or her life, images, writings, and other documentary elements. Everything about the kiosk is made so that the person is plunged into a totally different world. The world of Robert Walser for example. I want the visitor to discover or complete his knowledge about the artists' work. I want to cut a window towards another existence. The presence of a work of art within this scientific-work world wants to question the fact of being committed and engaged with a human activity and with the precarity of this activity. This work in progress project, through its' rhythm of rotations, and by its' time limited form, is a statement about art commitment in public space. The fact that the project lasts four years, makes it long enough to give awareness and memory and it is not long enough to create habit and lassitude. Too often « Kunst am Bau Projekte » and work in public space create habit and lassitude. I want people to continue without kiosks to be interested in artists and writers. This work is video-documented with interventions of the spectators and users of the kiosks during four years. This documentation will become an important element of the project.

The kiosk project is a commissioned project, resulting from a competition organized by the University of Zürich. It will run from 1999 to 2002. The kiosks are made for : Robert Walser, Otto Freundlich, Ingeborg Bachmann, Emmanuel Bove, Meret Oppenheim, Fernand Léger, Emil Nolde and Ljov Popova.

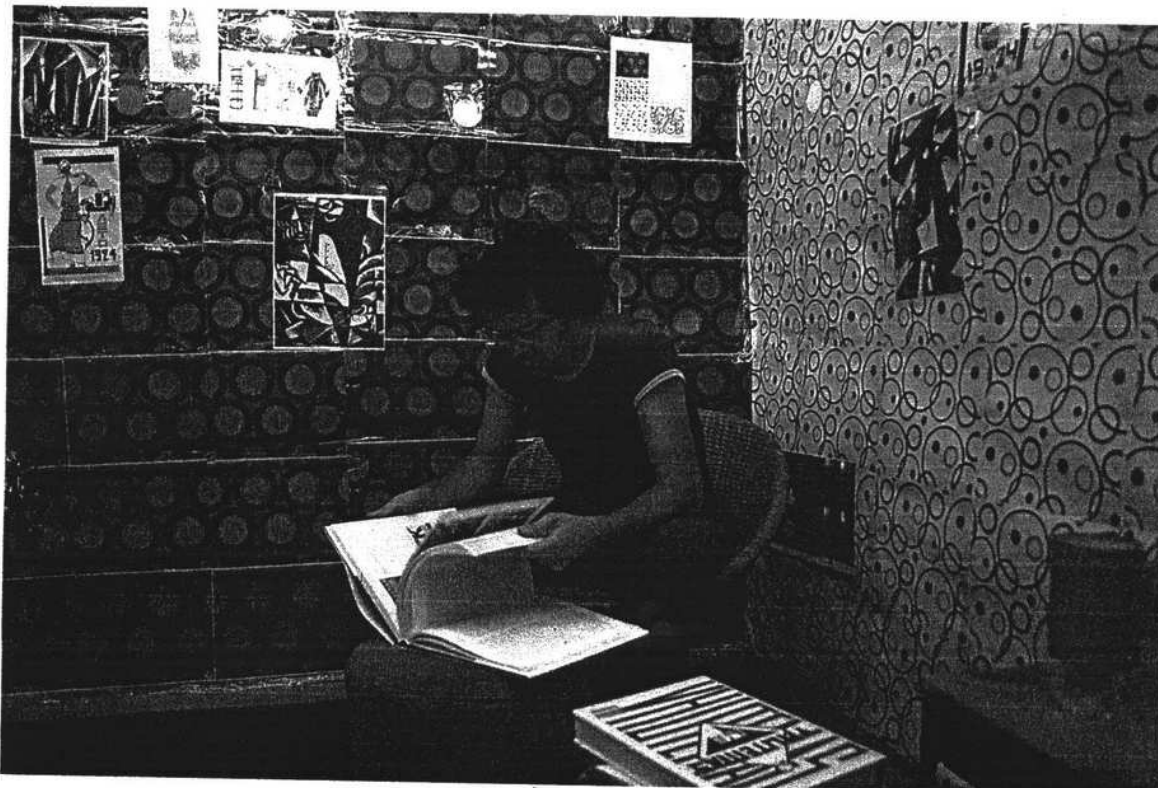
T.H. February 2000



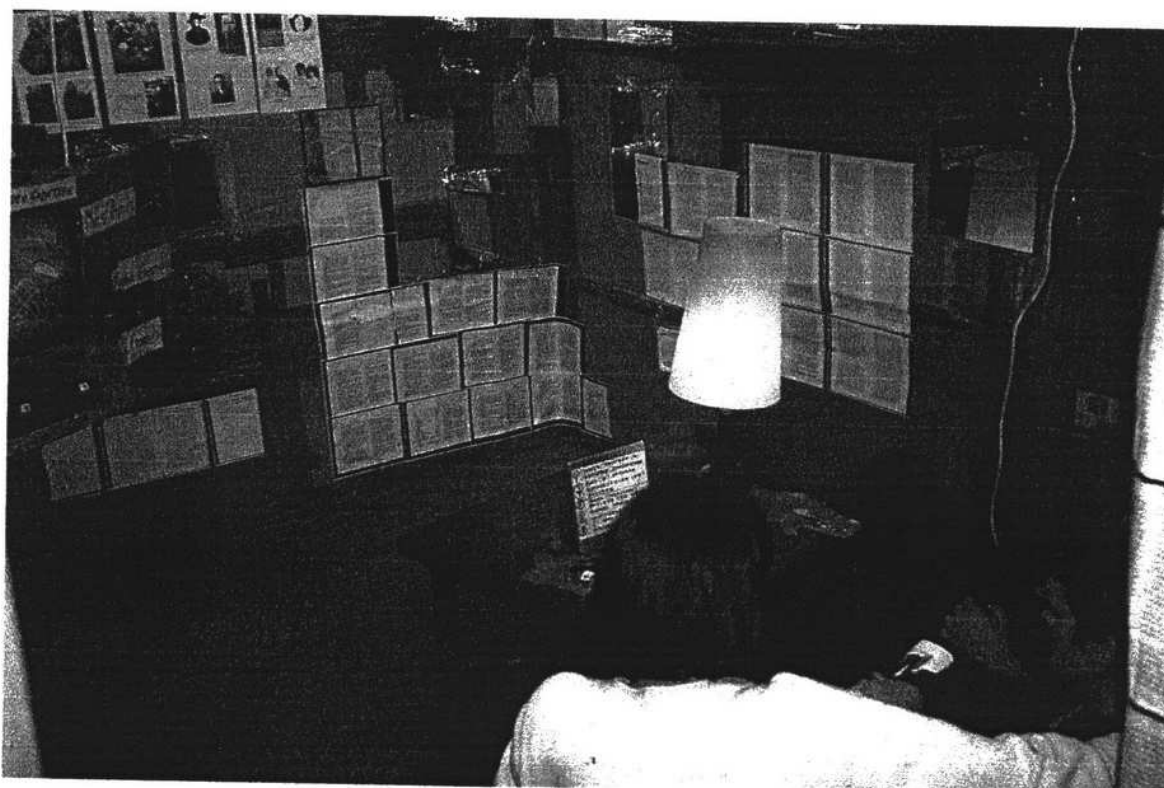
Thomas Hirschhorn « Ingeborg Bachmann Kiosk », 1999  
Irchel University, Zurich, 1999



Thomas Hirschhorn « Emil Nolde Kiosk », 2001  
Irchel University, Zurich, 2001



Thomas Hirschhorn « Liubov Popova Kiosk », 2002  
Irchel University, Zurich, 2002



Thomas Hirschhorn « Emmanuel Bove Kiosk », 2000  
Irchel University, Zurich, 2000



Thomas Hirschhorn « Meret Oppenheim Kiosk », 2000  
Irchel University, Zurich, 2000

# POEMS BY ROGER MCGOUGH

## The Lesson

Chaos ruled OK in the classroom  
as bravely the teacher walked in  
the nooligans ignored him  
hid voice was lost in the din

"The theme for today is violence  
and homework will be set  
I'm going to teach you a lesson  
one that you'll never forget"

He picked on a boy who was shouting  
and throttled him then and there  
then garrotted the girl behind him  
(the one with grotty hair)

Then sword in hand he hacked his way  
between the chattering rows  
"First come, first severed" he declared  
"fingers, feet or toes"

He threw the sword at a latecomer  
it struck with deadly aim  
then pulling out a shotgun  
he continued with his game

The first blast cleared the backrow  
(where those who skive hang out)  
they collapsed like rubber dinghies  
when the plug's pulled out

"Please may I leave the room sir?"  
a trembling vandal enquired  
"Of course you may" said teacher  
put the gun to his temple and fired

The Head popped a head round the doorway  
to see why a din was being made  
nodded understandingly  
then tossed in a grenade

And when the ammo was well spent  
with blood on every chair  
Silence shuffled forward  
with its hands up in the air

The teacher surveyed the carnage  
the dying and the dead  
He wagged a finger severely  
"Now let that be a lesson" he said

Roger McGough

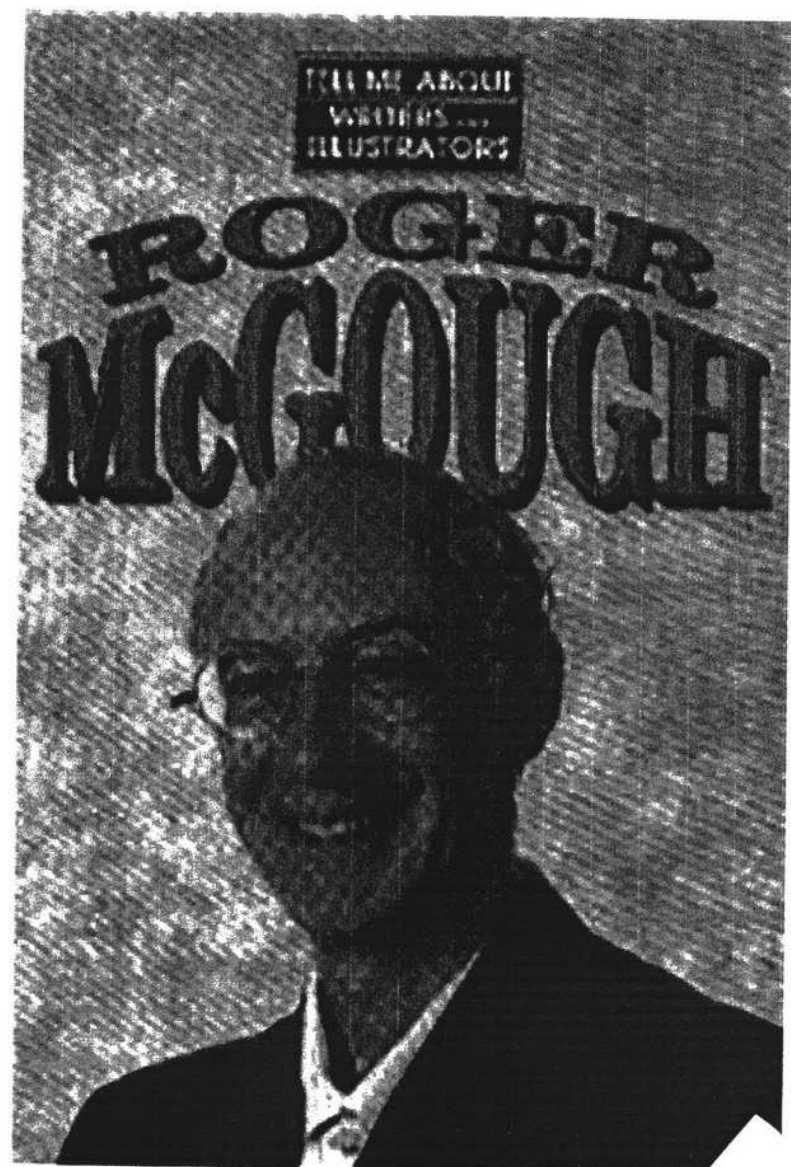
## First Day at School

A millionbillionwillion miles from home  
Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)  
Why are they all so big, other children?  
So noisy? So much at home they  
Must have been born in uniform  
Lived all their lives in playgrounds  
Spent the years inventing games  
That don't let me in. Games  
That are rough, that swallow you up.

And the railings.  
All around, the railings.  
Are they to keep out wolves and monsters?  
Things that carry off and eat children?  
Things you don't take sweets from?  
Perhaps they're to stop us getting out  
Running away from the lessins. Lessin.  
What does a lessin look like?  
Sounds small and slimy.  
They keep them in the classrooms.  
Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.

I wish I could remember my name  
Mummy said it would come in useful.  
Like wellies. When there's puddles.  
Yellowwellies. I wish she was here.  
I think my name is sewn on somewhere  
Perhaps the teacher will read it for me.  
Tea-cher. The one who makes the tea.

Roger McGough



# RESIDENT OF THE DAY



ABAYOMI VINCENT

AKA "B00"