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### **Title**

Auerbach and Gramsci on Dante: Criticism and Ideology

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rv9n36k>

### **Journal**

Carte Italiane, 1(1)

### **ISSN**

0737-9412

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### **Publication Date**

1980

### **DOI**

10.5070/C911011184

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# AUERBACH AND GRAMSCI ON DANTE: CRITICISM AND IDEOLOGY

BETSY EMERICK

With its dramatic encounters, vivid characterizations, and an intriguing mixture of the personal, the historical-political, and the metaphysical, the tenth Canto of the *Inferno* has caught the imagination of many scholars and critics, among them Erich Auerbach and Antonio Gramsci. Both men took up their discussions of Canto X under extreme and unusual circumstances which profoundly affected their conclusions. And considering the diversity of these conclusions, it is interesting to note the similarities in the situations in which each man found himself.

Auerbach had been studying Dante for a long time and in a particular vein when he came to write the essay on Farinata and Cavalcante which forms a key chapter in his book, *Mimesis*. In fact, in the Epilogue to the book, he states that "Dante's assertion that in the *Commedia* he presented true reality" was one of the starting points for the investigation of the representation of reality in literature which culminated in the writing of *Mimesis*.<sup>1</sup>

Auerbach wrote the book in Istanbul, where he had been forced into exile by World War II. His feeling of isolation was strong both in a physical and in a scholarly sense: "the book was written during the war and at Istanbul, where the libraries are not well equipped for European studies. International communications were impeded; I had to dispense with almost all periodicals" (*Mimesis*, p. 557). The uncertainty

of the circumstances of the writing of the book cast even its future into doubt. "Nothing now remains but to find him — to find the reader, that is. I hope that my study will reach its readers — both my friends of former years, if they are still alive, as well as all the others for whom it was intended" (ibid.). This then is no ordinary critical study. Auerbach states his true purpose and the true meaning of the book in his last sentence, "And may it contribute to bringing together again those whose love for our western history has serenely persevered" (ibid.). Love for western history informs this work and is its function. In a time when the world was in chaos and history itself in doubt, Auerbach was one who wrote to save something from the chaos.

Through his writing, Gramsci, too, was seeking to save something from chaos and an even more profound isolation. In the autumn of 1926, when he was 35 years old, Gramsci was arrested by the Italian Fascist government. In 1928, after a trial, he was sentenced to more than 20 years in prison. In precarious health all his life, Gramsci did not survive his prison sentence. At the end of 1933, he was transferred to a clinic in Formia where his room was transformed into a prison cell. Ultimately he was granted provisional liberty and moved to a clinic in Rome in 1935. He died there on 27 April 1937, six days after his shortened sentence had expired. During this imprisonment, when his health and the authorities permitted, Gramsci wrote what have been published as *I quaderni del carcere*. At the beginning of the project he outlined his purpose in a letter to his sister-in-law: "Sono assillato (è questo fenomeno proprio dei carcerati, penso) da questa idea: che bisognerebbe far qualcosa 'fur ewig', secondo una complessa concezione di Goethe.... Insomma, vorrei, secondo un piano prestabilito, occuparmi intensamente e sistematicamente di qualche soggetto che mi assorbisse e centralizzasse la mia vita interiore."<sup>2</sup> Among the subjects which Gramsci later listed as topics for study was the position of Cavalcante in the structure and art of the *Divine Comedy*.<sup>3</sup>

We have two versions of Gramsci's ideas on Canto X, one in the *Quaderni* and one in a letter to his sister-in-law (LC, pp. 490-3). Neither is a polished essay such as Auerbach wrote. As with all of his prison writings, those on Canto X are fragmentary. Because of his health and the restrictions of prison life, he was unable to work regularly. His access to the texts and articles he needed was sporadic,

and he also feared censorship. Thus, he wrote in phrases, skipping from one topic to another, jotting down notes, outlining arguments. Sometimes he returned to a topic years later and polished the fragments into a more organized form, but much of the material never reached even a second draft state. Beyond the practical reasons for his fragmentary, incomplete style, however, lies a deeper reason which is linked to his very purpose in writing. Gramsci was writing "für ewig," but he was also writing to prove to himself that he was alive and that, against all physical and political evidence, he had a future. As long as the essays were not finished, the dialogue with himself and with the world continued. His biographer, Giuseppe Fiori, put it this way: "For Gramsci, this work became life itself: these memoranda and brief notes, these sketches of the first germ of ideas, these tentative ideas left open for endless development and elaboration, were all his way of continuing the revolutionary struggle, his way of remaining related to the world and active in the society of men."<sup>4</sup>

For both Auerbach and Gramsci, their writing at this time was a kind of life-line; it was a monument to their struggles and a proof of existence. Both the texts under consideration, Auerbach's essay in *Mimesis* and Gramsci's notes on Dante, take on new meaning when seen in terms of the circumstances which affected their writing.

Auerbach's chapter on Canto X begins with a long quotation taken from the section of the Canto where Farinata appears, through the point where Cavalcante sinks back in despair, and ending where Farinata again picks up his conversation with Dante. Auerbach sees the structure of the Canto as a series of encounters and interruptions: first, Dante is seen with Virgil; next comes Farinata's interruption and Dante's alarm, continuing with their conversation; this in turn is interrupted by Cavalcante's appearance, his exchange with Dante and disappearance; and finally the renewal of the conversation between Farinata and Dante. The first point Auerbach makes about the passage is that through their actions and words, both Farinata and Cavalcante show that although they are dead and in Hell, they still have the same personalities they had while on earth. By the manner of his sudden appearance, "Farinata's moral stature is developed, larger than life as it were, and unaffected by death and the pains of Hell. He is still the same man he was in his lifetime" (*Mimesis*, p. 177). When Cavalcante

talks with Dante about his son, "he breaks into anxious questions which show that he too continues to have the same character and the same passions that he had in his lifetime, though they are very different from Farinata's" (ibid.). This observation is one key to Auerbach's reading of Canto X and in fact to *Mimesis* as a whole, but he drops it for the moment and continues with a minute stylistic analysis of the language used in each of the interruptions.

His conclusion is that Dante mixed levels of styles and linguistic devices to an astonishing degree, not simply following one style with another, but using "such an immeasurably greater stock of forms, he [expressed] the most varied phenomena and subjects with such immeasurably superior assurance and firmness, that we come to the conclusion that this man used his language to discover the world anew" (*Mimesis*, p. 183). According to Auerbach, Dante represents a sort of turning point in the history of the representation of reality because of his technique of mixing the sublime with the trivial or the grotesque, and his way of raising what would, in the antique sense, be considered low to a sublime level. As Auerbach says:

nowhere could one find so clear an instance of the antagonism of the two traditions — that of antiquity, with the principle of the separation of styles, and that of the Christian era, with its mingling of styles — as in Dante's powerful temperament, which is conscious of both because its aspiration toward the tradition of antiquity does not imply for it the possibility of abandoning the other; nowhere does mingling of styles come so close to violation of all style (*Mimesis*, p. 185).

Auerbach's insistence on the importance of the mixing of styles reveals part of his view of the function of literature and language. If Dante is violating style, it is style in the ancient, limited sense of the term. According to Auerbach, exactly because he violates ancient canons of style Dante succeeds in capturing a reality in language. Only by writing as he does can he embrace the complete range of human experience and thus approach with language the historical, social, political 'reality' which is out there. Auerbach believes in the ability and necessity of the power of language to capture historical reality in all of its dimensions. As he says of Dante, "this man used his language to discover the world anew." What Auerbach values in Dante is his

achievement in having captured, or imitated, the world in all its infinite aspects. Dante's mixing of literary levels of style is crucial to the 'truth' of his representation of that reality.

At this point in his essay Auerbach returns to the discussion of the characters of Farinata and Cavalcante and their presence in Hell. For Auerbach, the unique aspect of Dante's presentation of these souls is his handling of the paradoxical situation of having to present 'real' characters in a realm where there is no time, no change, no sensory experience. What Dante emphasizes, without altering the essentially timeless nature of Hell, is a strong sense of the individuality of the characters. With Farinata and Cavalcante, the contrast in their personalities and behavior is very strong, especially since they are in the same circle of Hell and suffering the same punishment. Yet, Farinata remains the completely political man who rises up, "com'avesse l'inferno a gran dispetto,"<sup>5</sup> and Cavalcante is retiring, only motivated to action by his great love for his son.

Their differing attitudes toward their common fate distinguish Farinata and Cavalcante and these attitudes are distillations of their characters on earth. As Auerbach sees it:

earthly life has ceased so that it cannot change or grow, whereas the passions and inclinations which animated it still persist without ever being released in action; there results as it were a tremendous concentration. We behold an intensified image of the essence of their being, fixed for all eternity in gigantic dimensions, behold it in a purity and distinctness which could never for one moment have been possible during their lives upon earth (*Mimesis*, p. 192).

The significance of this union of the earthly and the heavenly realms through intensification-realization relates to Dante's concept of history. Beyond simply embracing the totality of historical reality through his use of levels of language, Dante has taken "earthly historicity into his beyond" (*Mimesis*, p. 193). Farinata and Cavalcante and the other beings in the *Commedia* do not change by virtue of being transferred to the other world. Instead, their existences there are manifestations and intensifications of their earthly existences. So that in Hell:

Farinata is greater, stronger, and nobler than ever, for never in his life had he had such an opportunity to prove his stout heart; . . . The same hopeless futility in the continuance of his earthly being is displayed by Cavalcante; it is not likely that in the course of his earthly existence he ever felt his faith in the spirit of man, his love for the sweetness of light and for his son so profoundly, or expressed it so arrestingly, as now, when it is all in vain (*Mimesis*, pp. 192-3).

What this means is that, for Dante, life after death is a continuation or fulfillment of life on earth and that the telos of human, earthly history lies in this realization of God's plan, not only in the sense of the approaching millenium, but in the sense that every earthly event is connected to its heavenly aspect in a vertical as well as horizontal way (*Mimesis*, p. 194).

This is Auerbach's concept of *figura*. Basically a Christian idea, it comes from the way the Old Testament was reinterpreted in the light of the New Testament so that all the Old Testament personages were seen as 'figures' of New Testament personages. The key to Auerbach's use of this idea is his stressing of the fact that:

a figural schema permits both its poles — the figure and the fulfillment — to retain the characteristics of concrete historical reality, in contradistinction to what obtains with symbolic or allegorical personifications, so that figure and fulfillment — although the one 'signifies' the other — have a significance which is not incompatible with their being real (*Mimesis*, p. 195).

According to Auerbach, it is by means of his figural presentation that Dante captures the historical 'reality' of the Christian universe in the *Commedia* and does so with a full sense of its tragic nature. The reality of Farinata, Cavalcante, and the other souls in the *Commedia* lies in their status as tragic, sublime individuals, damned or saved, existing in a history which embraces all levels and all time even into eternity.

This view of history and of its representation in literature is a high point for Auerbach. Obviously he, too, believes in history as a reality with a telos and in the function of literature being to imitate that reality, thereby preserving history and individual man's place in it.

When we read Dante, says Auerbach:

we experience an emotion which is concerned with human beings and not directly with the divine order in which they have found their fulfillment. Their eternal position in the divine order is something of which we are only conscious as a setting whose irrevocability can but serve to heighten the effect of their humanity, preserved for us in all its force. The result is a direct experience of life which overwhelms everything else, a comprehension of human realities which spreads as widely and variously as it goes profoundly to the very roots of our emotions, an illumination of man's impulses and passions which leads us to share in them without restraint and indeed to admire their variety and their greatness (*Mimesis*, pp. 201-2).

As Auerbach points out, the effect of the power of Dante's realism is to turn the attention to the individual and away from the Christian realization of the figure in the beyond. Thus, Dante is both the high point of Christian figural realism and the beginning of a secularization. What remains for Auerbach when the figural-Christian view of the universe breaks down is history in the sense of the individual working out his destiny in terms of the community. This, too, Dante has captured. His characters, such as Farinata and Cavalcante, exist in terms of their human reality. One perceives them through their pasts, their memories, and their development.

The value of Dante's achievement for Auerbach lies in the accuracy of his representation of this reality. In Dante, "we are given to see, in the realm of timeless being, the history of man's inner life and unfolding" (*ibid.*). This is the function of the word and of literature for Auerbach; to imitate, to represent, and, above all, to preserve and promote this view of the individual in history in all its complexity, variety and depth. Auerbach has defined his views this way: "The general image which seems to me capable of representation, is the view of a historic process; something like a drama which contains no theory but a paradigmatic exposition of human fate. Its subject, in the broadest sense, is Europe; I try to seize upon this in a number of individual critical attempts."<sup>6</sup> Auerbach does this in an evangelistic way. He is not merely describing the representation of reality as it has evolved through history, but proselytizing for a particular type of representation of a particular reality. Auerbach values in Dante a view of history and a use of language to promote that view which coincide



with his own concept of the historic process and its representation in literature. Both in methodology and in conclusions, Gramsci differs from Auerbach's definitions of history and reality.

Gramsci's comments on Canto X in the *Quaderni* begin with a series of notes: "Quistione su 'struttura e poesia' nella *Divina Commedia*, secondo Benedetto Croce e Luigi Russo. Lettura di Vincenzo Morello come *corpus vile*. Lettura di Fedele Romani su Farinata. De Sanctis. Quistione della 'rappresentazione indiretta' e delle didascalie nel dramma: le didascalie hanno un valore artistico? contribuiscono alla rappresentazione dei caratteri . . ."7 These questions and remarks already indicate both the direction of Gramsci's interest in Canto X and a basic methodological difference between his work and Auerbach's. From the first it is clear that Gramsci sees himself as involved in a dialectic with other critics of Dante and that his observations take the form of an answer to other readings of the Canto. Auerbach never mentions other readings.

Gramsci's main disagreement with other critics lies in the emphasis they had given to Farinata. For example, Francesco De Sanctis, as reported by Gramsci, "notò l'asprezza contenuta nel canto per il fatto che Farinata d'un tratto muta carattere: dopo essere stato *poesia* diventa *struttura*...fa da Cicerone a Dante" (*LVN*, p. 34). That is, "Farinata, dopo essere stato rappresentato eroicamente nella prima parte dell'episodio, diventa nell'ultima parte un pedagogo" (*LC*, p. 490). This mistaken emphasis on Farinata's place in the Canto allowed a reading such as De Sanctis' with its judgment that Farinata, in Crocean terms, changes from "poesia" to "struttura." Gramsci counters this view by stressing the importance of both Cavalcante and Farinata to the Canto and, in order to prove his points, he reads the Canto as a whole, something Auerbach neglects to do.

In the section of the *Quaderni* entitled, "Il dramma di Cavalcante," Gramsci explains his reading. Cavalcante's torment lies in the fact that he can see into the future, where his beloved son will be dead, he knows the past where his son was alive, but he cannot know the present; therefore at every moment he is tortured by uncertainty over whether his son lives or not. When he asks Dante why Guido is not accompanying him through Hell, Dante replies using the verb 'ebbe' in the *passato remoto*. Cavalcante then fears the worst and continues

to question. When Dante hesitates in answering, Cavalcante is convinced that Guido must be dead and, in despair, his doubt unhappily resolved, Cavalcante disappears. Gramsci makes the point that in this passage, Dante, "suggerisce [il dramma] al lettore, non lo rappresenta; egli dà al lettore gli elementi perchè il dramma sia ricostruito, e questi elementi sono dati dalla struttura" (*LVN*, p. 35).

In the dramatic presentation of the scene, Gramsci distinguishes three parts: the appearance of Cavalcante on his knees and humble in contrast to the heroic man of politics, Farinata; the conversation with Dante where in his third question, "non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lume?" (*Inf.* X, 69) Cavalcante reveals "tutta la [sua] tenerezza paterna...; [e] la generica 'vita' umana è vista in una condizione concreta, nel godimento della luce, che i dannati e i morti hanno perduto" (*LVN*, p. 35); and the resumption of the conversation with Farinata who, although he is Guido's father-in-law, shows no interest in whether he is alive or dead. Gramsci's reading stresses the fact that it is through contrast that Dante develops the characters of Cavalcante and Farinata. Each enhances and enriches the presentation of the other. Read this way, then, Farinata's explanation of the damned souls' ability to see into the future but not to know the present, comes in response to Dante's question. And Dante asks not merely for information but because he was so struck by his encounter with Cavalcante. Gramsci concludes: "[Dante] vuole che sia sciolto il nodo che gli impedì di rispondere a Cavalcante; egli si sente in colpa dinanzi a Cavalcante. Il brano strutturale non è solo struttura, dunque, è anche poesia, è un elemento necessario al dramma che si è svolto" (*LVN*, p. 36).

Gramsci amplifies this point in another note entitled "Il disdegno di Guido," referring to the line where Dante says to Cavalcante, "Da me stesso non vegno:/ colui ch'attende là, per qui mi mena/ forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno" (*Inf.* X, 61-3). Gramsci again attacks the problem in terms of a dialectic with other critics. For Gramsci, the important word of the passage is again 'ebbe.' "Su 'ebbe' cade l'accento 'estetico' e 'drammatico' del verso ed esso è l'origine del dramma di Cavalcante, interpretato nelle didascalie di Farinata: e c'è la 'catarsi'; Dante si corregge, toglie dalla pena Cavalcante, cioè interrompe la sua punizione in *atto*" (*LVN*, p. 38). Again, Gramsci emphasizes the

necessity to see all parts of the Canto as working together forming a poetic whole. And Gramsci reiterates that Dante's method of presenting Cavalcante's drama with expressive techniques which serve to invite the reader's participation in the drama, is due not to any lack of ability to present the drama directly, but for reasons of expression which change through the ages. Dante intentionally used the means he had at hand.

Gramsci's reading of Canto X seems to make a needed correction in the emphasis other critics had placed on Farinata, assuming Gramsci's representation of their positions is correct. His approach is a much more scientific one than Auerbach's since it includes an analysis of the Canto as a whole, with its formal and structural elements. Auerbach and Gramsci do come to similar conclusions about the equal importance of Farinata and Cavalcante to the meaning of the Canto and the way Dante develops the characters by contrast with each other, but Gramsci nowhere touches on the mixing of linguistic and stylistic levels which Auerbach is so interested in. Nor does he write about Dante's 'realism.' And Auerbach's concept of *figura* with its implications for a theory of history and his concept of the place of literature in regard to history are very different from Gramsci's conclusions.

For Gramsci, literary criticism was a part of the political struggle he was continuing to engage in even in prison. The very structure of his criticism reflects this concept of struggle. Gramsci had watched the Fascists come to power in Italy and had been imprisoned for his anti-Fascist positions. While in prison he was writing in an attempt to understand and explain the Fascist takeover.

Gramsci considered it his task to delineate the conditions for a future victory on the part of the working class rather than to uncover the reasons for the immediate defeat: and he maintained that these conditions could be found only in the historical process — that is to say, through a Marxist analysis of the real forces operative in national and international life, an analysis made precisely with the idea of transforming capitalist society.<sup>8</sup>

Gramsci's notes on the Canto are a small step in his analysis.

Gramsci's concept of the place of literature and literary criticism in the historical process becomes even clearer when one reads his

remarks on another critic, one he did not respect as he respected De Sanctis and Croce. Vincenzo Morello gave a paper on Canto X at the Casa di Dante in Rome on 25 April 1925, which was later published. In his notes on Morello's article, Gramsci accuses him of having read the Canto only superficially and of completely misinterpreting the relationship between Farinata and Cavalcante. Morello claims that Canto X is "per eccellenza politico" (*LVN*, p. 45), something Gramsci says he does not demonstrate, nor could he because, "il canto decimo è politico come politica è tutta la *Divina Commedia*, ma non è politico per eccellenza" (*ibid.*). Basically Gramsci attacks Morello for being a bad critic and scholar, saying it doesn't take much to demonstrate his ineptitude and uselessness. He states that Morello's writing "è strabilante da parecchi punti di vista e mostra quanto sia deficiente la disciplina intellettuale del Morello" (*LVN*, p. 40), and later refers to Morello and those like him as "ruffiani intellettuali" (*LVN*, p. 45). Then, with heavy sarcasm, Gramsci asks:

Ma intanto la sua conferenza è stata tenuta alla Casa di Dante romana, da chi è diretta questa Casa di Dante della città eterna? Anche la Casa di Dante e i suoi dirigenti contano nulla? E se contano nulla perchè la grande cultura non li elimina? E come è stata giudicata la conferenza dai dantisti? Ne ha parlato il Barbi, nelle sue rassegne degli 'Studi Danteschi' per mostrarne le deficienze, ecc.? Eppoi, piace poter prendere per il bavero un uomo come [Morello] e servirsene da palla per un giuoco solitario del calcio (*ibid.*).

Here, in a bitterly humorous tone, Gramsci alludes to several key points of his philosophy which underlie his writing about Dante and all his writing in the *Quaderni*.

He devoted a large part of that work to analyzing the position of the intellectuals, particularly what he called the "organic" intellectuals who were to rise out of the working class to direct and organize the group without losing their "organic" connection with their class. In very simplified terms his theory states that:

the proletariat can be victorious and guarantee the stability of its new order only to the extent to which it wins over the other exploited classes to its cause, and above all the peasant class. But the peasant class is integrated into an historical 'bloc' where middle-class intellectuals have the function of disseminating a bourgeois *Weltanschauung*, a concep-

tion of life elaborated by the great intellectuals of the ruling class. In order to detach the peasants from the landowners within this structure, it is necessary to encourage the formation of a new stratum of intellectuals who reject the bourgeois *Weltanschauung*.<sup>9</sup>

Compounding this problem in Italy was the fact that there was no national consciousness among the people. Italian culture and literature were cosmopolitan, not 'national-popular.' What was necessary was the creation of a popular literature which would seize and form the imaginations of the people and the task of the intellectuals was to create this national-popular culture. Gramsci writes:

La 'bellezza' non basta: ci vuole un determinato contenuto intellettuale e morale che sia l'espressione elaborata e compiuta delle aspirazioni più profonde di un determinato pubblico, cioè della nazione-popolo in una certa fase del suo sviluppo storico. La letteratura deve essere nello stesso tempo elemento attuale di civiltà e opera d'arte (*LVN*, p. 81).

What Gramsci maintained was that the intellectuals on all levels of society were the key to the success or failure of a change in society since they operated in civil society, meaning the whole complex of social, cultural, and political organizations and institutions in a society. "Hegemony...is pictured as an equilibrium between civil society and political society — more specifically still, as an equilibrium between 'leadership' or 'direction' based on consent, and 'domination' based on coercion in the broadest sense."<sup>10</sup> Thus the importance of literature and literary criticism comes from its function as a tool for both understanding the balance that exists among the various forces in society and as a means of using the power of culture to maintain the hegemony.

To return to Gramsci's writing on Dante, especially his comments on Morello's article, we can see how his criticism works in the light of his philosophy. His rigorous analysis is an attempt to come to the most accurate understanding of how Dante's writing functions, but in a disinterested way. His remarks in a letter about whether his son will love Dante are illuminating here:

ora prevedi che egli leggerà Dante addirittura con amore. Io spero che ciò non avverrà mai, pur essendo molto contento che a Delio piaccia Puškin e tutto ciò che si riferisce alla vita creativa che sboccia le sue

prime forme. D'altronde, chi legge Dante con amore? I professori rimminchioniti che si fanno delle religioni di un qualche poeta o scrittore e ne celebrano degli strani riti filologici. Io penso che una persona intelligente e moderna deve leggere i classici in generale con un certo 'distacco', cioè solo per i loro valori estetici, mentre l'amore' implica adesione al contenuto ideologico della poesia; si ama il 'proprio' poeta, si 'ammira' l'artista 'in generale'. L'ammirazione estetica può essere accompagnata da un certo disprezzo 'civile', come nel caso di Marx per Goethe (*LC*, p. 440).

For Gramsci, the critic's or intellectual's task is to examine literary texts in terms of their function in a social-political process. Thus the 'text' includes the critic's dialogues with other intellectuals and the circumstances in which these dialogues take place. Gramsci's bitter questions about the paper given at the Casa di Dante, the circumstances of its acceptance coupled with his own criticisms of it show his awareness of a definition of text which is far broader than a typological one.

In Auerbach's work we have a powerful attempt to use language to promote a particular view of reality and history. His article on Dante is, on first reading, far more impressive than Gramsci's notes, for he convincingly uses language to enforce his view of reality and history on the reader. The interest Gramsci ultimately holds, by contrast, is in his attempt to come to terms with a new definition of language, literature, and critical activity; one which does not imitate, represent or interpret an existing reality, but one which participates in that reality, taking its meaning from that reality as it at the same time creates it.

## Notes

1. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (1946; trans. Willard R. Trask, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1953, rpt. 1968), p. 554. All further references are to this edition and will appear in the text.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere*, ed. S. Caprioglio and E. Fubini (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), p. 58. All further references will be to this edition, referred to as *LC*, and will appear in the text.

3. Antonio Gramsci, quoted in Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of A Revolutionary*, trans. Tom Nairn (1965; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1971), p. 26.

4. Fiori, p. 237.
5. Alighieri, Dante, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. G. Petrocchi (Verona: Mondadori, 1966), *Inf.* X, 36.
6. Auerbach in Wolfgang B. Fleischmann, "Erich Auerbach's Critical Theory and Practice: An Assessment," *Modern Language Notes*, 81 (1966), p. 539.
7. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere: Letteratura e vita nazionale, Opere di Antonio Gramsci*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1954), VI, p. 34. Hereafter referred to as *LVN*. Further references to this edition will appear in the text.
8. Lynne Lawner, Introduction to Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, selected and trans. Lynne Lawner (NY: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 41.
9. Fiori, pp. 237-8.
10. Lawner, p. 42.