

## GRAMSCI'S POLITICS OF LANGUAGE: ENGAGING THE BAKHTIN CIRCLE AND THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony have permeated social and political theory, cultural studies, education studies, literary criticism, international relations, and post-colonial theory. The centrality of language and linguistics to Gramsci's thought, however, has been wholly neglected. In *Gramsci's Politics of Language*, Peter Ives argues that a university education in linguistics and a preoccupation with Italian language politics were integral to the theorist's thought. Ives explores how the combination of Marxism and linguistics produced a unique and intellectually powerful approach to social and political analysis.

To explicate Gramsci's writings on language, Ives compares them with other Marxist approaches to language, including those of the Bakhtin Circle, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt School, including Jürgen Habermas. From these comparisons, Ives elucidates the implications of Gramsci's writings, which, he argues, retained the explanatory power of the semiotic and dialogic insights of Bakhtin and the critical perspective of the Frankfurt School, while at the same time foreshadowing the key problems with both approaches that post-structuralist critiques would later reveal. *Gramsci's Politics of Language* fills a crucial gap in scholarship, linking Gramsci's writings to current debates in social theory and providing a framework for a thoroughly historical-materialist approach to language.

PETER IVES is an assistant professor in the Department of Politics at the University of Winnipeg.

*This page intentionally left blank*

*Peter Ives*

# Gramsci's Politics of Language

Engaging the Bakhtin Circle and  
the Frankfurt School

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

Toronto Buffalo London

www.utppublishing.com

© University of Toronto Press Incorporated 2004  
Toronto Buffalo London  
Printed in Canada

Reprinted in paperback 2006

ISBN 0-8020-3756-9 (cloth)  
ISBN 0-8020-9444-9 (paper)



Printed on acid-free paper

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Ives, Peter R., 1968–  
Gramsci's politics of language : engaging the Bakhtin Circle  
and the Frankfurt School / Peter Ives.

Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 0-8020-3756-9 (bound). ISBN 0-8020-9444-9 (pbk.)

1. Gramsci, Antonio, 1891–1937 – Contributions in political science. 2. Gramsci, Antonio, 1891–1937 – Knowledge – Linguistics.  
3. Communism and linguistics. 4. Bakhtin, M.M. (Mikhail Mikhailovich), 1895–1975 – Friends and associates. 5. Benjamin, Walter, 1892–1940. 6. Frankfurt school of sociology. I. Title.

HX289.7.G73I84 2004 335.4'01'4 C2003-903298-1

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial assistance to its publishing program of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial support for its publishing activities of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP).