

Forthcoming in *Antipode* 40 (4), 2008.

The Provocations of Neo-liberalism: Contesting the Nation and Liberation after Apartheid

Gillian Hart*

University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa
hart@berkeley.edu

Abstract

This essay is part of an ongoing effort to make sense of the turbulent forces at play in South Africa in relation to other parts of the world. Engaging debates over neo-liberalism from a South African vantage point, I show how currently influential theories of neo-liberalism cast in terms of class project, governmentality, and hegemony are at best partial. A more adequate understanding is not just a matter of combining these different dimensions into a more encompassing model of “neo-liberalism in general.” The challenge, rather, is coming to grips with how identifiably neo-liberal projects and practices operate on terrains that always exceed them. A crucially important dimension of what is going on in South Africa is that escalating struggles over the material conditions of life and livelihood are simultaneously struggles over the meaning of the nation and liberation, as well as expressions of profound betrayal. These processes underscore the analytical and political stakes in attending to interconnected historical geographies of specifically racialized forms of dispossession, and how they feature in the present. The essay concludes with a call for a properly post-colonial frame of understanding that builds on the synergies and complementarities between a Gramscian reading of Fanon and relational conceptions of the production of space set forth by Lefebvre.

***Acknowledgements**

This is a revised version of the *Antipode* lecture delivered at the Association for American Geographers meeting, San Francisco, April 20 2007, and includes a Postscript written December 21-22, 2007. I am deeply grateful to Jean Lave and David Szanton, who have borne up valiantly under endless discussions; to Noel Castree and Melissa Wright for their invitation, support, and suggestions; and to many students and colleagues who have provided valuable feedback.

Introduction

Deeply rooted in the current conjuncture in South Africa, this essay engages broader debates around neo-liberalism. It is also about the political stakes in how we try to theorize the conditions in which we find ourselves, and is deeply indebted to Allan Pred for whom political and intellectual commitments were always inseparable. Through Allan I came to understand knowledges as more than partial and situated. He constantly reminded us that knowledges are also always relationally produced through situated practices and their associated discourses and power relations - as are situated ignorances and forgettings.

Let me start with a formative geographical moment. In 1965, the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) invited Martin Luther King to deliver an address to mark the Day of Affirmation of Academic and Human Freedom. King agreed to come to South Africa – but the apartheid regime refused him a visa. He then helped to arrange for Bobby Kennedy to come in his stead. On June 6 1966, in the Great Hall at the University of Cape Town, Kennedy delivered what is widely regarded as his finest speech. Here is his introductory paragraph:

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Professor Robertson, Mr. Diamond, Mr. Daniel, Ladies and Gentlemen: I come here this evening because of my deep interest and affection for a land settled by the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, then taken over by the British, and at last independent; a land in which the native inhabitants were at first subdued, but relations with whom remain a problem to this day; a land which defined itself on a hostile frontier; a land which has tamed rich natural resources through the energetic application of modern technology; a land which was once the importer of

slaves, and now must struggle to wipe out the last traces of that former
bondage. {PAUSE} I refer, of course, to the United States of America.

The audience gave forth an audible gasp of recognition before erupting in riotous applause.

In retrospect I realize that this was my first encounter with relational comparison, in the sense that grasping relations and connections between the US and South Africa enabled different understandings of both. I vividly recall excited discussions after the speech. For all the similarities and interconnections between the two settler societies that Kennedy had highlighted, at least some in my generation of South African students came to an understanding of what was profoundly different: unlike their North American counterparts, European settlers in South Africa had failed to decimate indigenous populations, and were still engaged in an ongoing struggle to subdue them. It is important to recall that 1966 was the height of apartheid repression, and at the time this insight seemed capable of punching at least a small hole in the armory of oppression.

Also in retrospect, what remains so important about this moment is that it placed interconnected global histories of racialized dispossession front and center, forcing attention to specifically racialized forms of dispossession as ongoing processes – and disrupting situated ignorances and forgettings.

In this essay I return to the theme of racialized dispossession and to debates over so-called primitive accumulation as an ongoing process, as opposed to an historical event. My ambition is to move beyond an earlier *Antipode* essay that engages these debates (Hart 2006a) to think about the contemporary salience of Fanon, and suggest the importance of a properly post-colonial frame of understanding that builds on the synergies and complementarities

between a Gramscian reading of Fanon and relational conceptions of the production of space á la Lefebvre.

This framing grows out of my efforts to grapple with turbulent forces at play in South Africa over the past several years. They include, as we shall see, the collapse of what are labeled new social movements, the rise of what I call “movement beyond movements,” and the relationship of these shifting expressions of popular discontent to intense conflicts within and between the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). The key challenge, both analytical and political, is to produce concrete concepts that are adequate to the conditions with which it they are seeking to come to grips.

Most immediately, these unfolding processes compel one to confront questions of “neo-liberalism”, which functions in South Africa as a site of popular contention (and term of insult!), as well as a set of analytical categories informed by larger debates. My concern here is less with the question of what is or is not “neo-liberal” than with the analytical traction and political stakes in different conceptions of neo-liberalism. Engaging debates over neo-liberalism from a South African vantage point, I show how currently influential theories of neo-liberalism cast in terms of class project, governmentality, and hegemony are at best partial. A more adequate understanding is not just a matter of combining these different dimensions into a more encompassing model of “neo-liberalism in general”, as some have suggested. The challenge, rather, is coming to grips with how identifiably neo-liberal projects and practices operate on terrains that always exceed them.

A crucially important dimension of what is going on in South Africa, I will argue, is that escalating struggles over the material conditions of life and livelihood are simultaneously

struggles over the meaning of the nation and liberation, as well as expressions of profound betrayal. More generally, these struggles underscore the analytical and political stakes in attending to the interconnected historical geographies of specifically racialized forms of dispossession, as well as to the contemporary salience of Gramsci, Fanon, and Lefebvre.

Unfolding Challenges in South Africa

After an absence of nearly 20 years, my re-engagement with South Africa in the early 1990s was through research on transformations in the first phase of post-apartheid order. *Disabling Globalization* (Hart 2002) was an effort to engage with these transformations in two radically globalized sites in northwestern KwaZulu-Natal. A crucial moment came on June 30 1996, when the ANC government unilaterally inaugurated GEAR (an acronym for Growth, Employment and Redistribution), a home-grown version of structural adjustment. Strategically-placed government officials announced unequivocally that GEAR was non-negotiable – because of globalization there is no alternative. Contrary to what I'd expected when I started out in 1994 in the afterglow of the first democratic election, an important part of my research came to focus on the devolution of massive responsibility to newly constituted local governments, concurrent with policies of fierce fiscal austerity that starved them of resources. I also witnessed the dramatic contraction of labor-intensive forms of production as the new government dismantled tariffs more rapidly than required at the time by the GATT, and cheap goods poured in from China. While GEAR had promised huge increases in employment, the 1990s saw the sharp contraction of jobs, especially in labor-intensive sectors.

My book came to an end with the Bredell land occupation in early July 2001 when thousands of impoverished settlers “bought” plots of land for \$3 – and were promptly thrown off the land by agents of the post-apartheid state who bore an uncanny resemblance to their predecessors. The moment was vividly captured in a declaration by Thoko Didiza, then Minister of Land and Agricultural Affairs, that “these people must go back to where they came from.”

Bredell represented a profound moral crisis of the post-apartheid state (Hart 2002; 2006a). It also fed into and accelerated the rapid rise of oppositional movements such as the Landless People’s Movement (LPM) protesting the snail’s pace of land redistribution, the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) – an umbrella for widespread protests over electricity and water cutoffs – and the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), among others. Two prominent international events - the World Conference Against Racism in Durban in early September 2001, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg a year later – provided hugely important platforms for these movements, as well as opportunities for forging connections with related movements in other parts of the world, and with sympathetic donors. Of great significance at the close of the WSSD was the sharp contrast between the huge, rollicking March of Movements bedecked in red T-shirts, and the embarrassingly meager turnout for the simultaneous counter-march by the ANC and its Alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Cosatu, the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Following the bitter disappointments of the 1990s, the rise of this first round of post-apartheid “new social movements” (NSMs) renewed faith in South Africa as a site of hope for many on the left. What made these movements so compelling was their appearance as a

“bottom up” set of resistances to neoliberal capitalism, as well as their transnational connections. Widely heralded as embodiments of global civil society and counter-hegemonic globalization, South African NSMs have pulled masses of researchers along in their wake. They have also provided grist for bigger theoretical mills. Both David Harvey (2005) and Hardt and Negri (2004), for example, invoke South African movements in support of very different theoretical and political positions.

Recent developments have overtaken the celebratory accounts of NSMs. Many of the oppositional movements that burst on to the international stage in the early 2000s are in a state of decline. Some (like the LPM) appear to have imploded, and others are significantly weaker than they appeared in 2002.¹ State repression has undoubtedly played a role, but so too have internal conflicts and problems associated with donor funding – transnational connections are no guarantee of success.

At the same time, we have witnessed the emergence of what I call “movement beyond movements” – vitally important processes taking place largely *outside* the scope of NSMs, about which most research focused *on* such movements has had very little to say.

First is the massive outburst of angry protests that erupted after the national elections in April 2004, and spread throughout the country. In October 2005, the Minister of Safety and Security announced that his department had recorded 881 illegal protests during the 2004/5 financial year – during which period there were 5,085 legal protests.² The frequency of municipal revolts seemed to subside after local government elections in March 2006, but they re-emerged in early 2007 and are becoming increasingly violent. Many uprisings are directed at local government officials and councilors, and are framed in terms of failure to deliver basic services and housing. Yet they encompass a range of grievances and forms of

politics that extend well beyond the technocratic language of “service delivery”, as well as the “spontaneous” or “non-ideological” labels that are often attached to them.³ On a most general level, these protests exemplify the failure of the first round of post-apartheid NSMs to tap into huge reservoirs of popular anger and discontent – a point to which leaders of several of NSMs concede more readily than do many of those who study them.

Second, contrary to widespread expectations of massive boycotts of local government elections in March 2006, the ANC Alliance actually increased its share of the vote from 60% in the 2000 local elections to 66%, with a very similar turnout rate. These aggregates unquestionably mask significant shifts. Yet, as Susan Booysen (2007) has observed, it is also the case that many of the poorest South Africans have come to regard protest as a legitimate and necessary form of political action – at the same time that they continue to support the ANC vis-à-vis other political parties.

A third key dimension of what I am calling “movement beyond movements” is popular support for Jacob Zuma, who stands at the center of the “succession debate” that is producing massive upheavals within and between the ANC, SACP, and Cosatu. Part of what is going on, no doubt, is opportunistic jostling for position in provincial, national, and local political arenas in the run-up to the ANC national conference in December 2007 that will elect a new party president. Yet the challenge to Mbeki and his followers has been made possible by powerful currents of popular support for Zuma, despite his having been charged with rape (for which he was acquitted) and threatened with charges of corruption. Indeed, for many of his followers, these charges are evidence of an anti-Zuma conspiracy.

On the left as well as the right, distaste for Zuma is authorizing condescending and at times bizarre assertions of the reasons why millions of ordinary people throw their support

behind him. The tendency on much of the left is to regard such support as false consciousness, or as an unpleasant populist resurgence of Zulu ethnic nationalism that the figure of Zuma is somehow capable of interpellating from above – an interpretation which fails to take into account support for him well beyond KwaZulu-Natal and *isiZulu* speaking populations.⁴ Perhaps the most extravagant claim is that of Achille Mbembe (2006), who likens support for Zuma to a collective suicide impulse akin to the 1856-7 Xhosa cattle killings – “a populist rhetoric and millenarian form of politics which advocates, uses and legitimises self-destruction, or national suicide, as a means of salvation” (Mbembe 2006: 21).⁵ Yet “populism” and “millenarianism” are totally inadequate in coming to grips with multiple sources of support for Zuma, and the multiple manifestations of intense and seething popular anger within and beyond the ANC Alliance that far exceed the reach and organizational capacity of social movements – or the sort of liberal solutions proposed by Mbembe.

Over the past several years I have been able to witness the upsurge of this roiling discontent in the regions of KwaZulu-Natal where I have been engaged in research since 1994. Especially in areas of historically strong ANC support, anger is palpable. Some of it has been channeled into a local chapter of the Umkhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA), with many “non-veterans” clamoring to join. ANC Local Election Committee meetings in the second half of 2005 became increasingly contentious; on one notable occasion an infuriated man jumped up shouting “The leadership must not privatize knowledge!” When Thabo Mbeki campaigned in the area shortly before the local government election, an angry crowd forced him to remove his ANC T-shirt and throw it into the crowd – and other dignitaries were compelled to follow suit.⁶

These uneven and changing forms of popular discontent pose urgent challenges, both political and analytical, precisely because they can potentially move in radically different directions. Most immediately, they call into question celebratory claims – often bolstered by invocations of Polanyi’s (2001 [1944]) “double movement” – of an inevitable, cumulative rising tide of progressive working class and popular opposition springing from below to challenge the devastation wrought by the top-down extension of neo-liberal market forces into all forms of life and livelihood. One of the limits of this currently popular “optimistic” reading of Polanyi is its neglect of the possibility – if not likelihood – that what he called “enlightened reactionaries” may well become major forces in protective counter-movements, “seeking to re-embed neoliberalism in society, to make it more acceptable socially and politically, and to ensure that it is environmentally sustainable” as Jessop (2002: 467) puts it.

One could argue that this is precisely what has been happening in South Africa and many other parts of the world under the guise of what Mohan and Stokke (2000) term revisionist neo-liberalism, and Peck and Tickell (2002) dub the shift from roll-back to roll-out neo-liberalism. Yet ideal-type categories run the danger of obscuring as much as they reveal. The imperative, rather, is to grasp the complex back-and-forth processes of contestation and acquiescence through which multiple, interconnected arenas in state and civil society have been remaking one another – and to the slippages, openings, contradictions, and possibilities for alliances.

Of necessity in a very schematic way, let me situate the changing shapes of popular discontent in relation to re-embedding strategies within and beyond the post-apartheid state. In 2001, at precisely the moment that the new social movements were gathering force, Padayachee and Valodia (2001) discerned signs of “changing GEAR” – including a more

interventionist stance in infrastructural investment, industrial policy, and labor market interventions. These shifts, they argued, were the product of changing global conditions – including “post-Washington Consensus” debates provoked by the Asian financial crisis – combined with growing pressures from within the ANC Alliance over the palpable failure to meet targets laid out in GEAR for growth, employment, social infrastructural development, and redistribution.⁷

This was also a moment in which biopolitical pressures were gathering force. The height of the Mbeki faction’s denialism over the HIV/Aids pandemic coincided with a severe cholera epidemic in 2000/1 (Sitas, 2002). The spread of cholera was linked in turn to water-cutoffs prompted by practices of cost-recovery. In September 2000 Ronnie Kasrils, then Minister of Water Affairs, announced a Free Basic Water policy that would provide a minimal free household allocation of 6 kilolitres a month, regardless of household size. This has since developed into a full-blown Municipal Indigence Policy that resembles in some ways the Poor Laws in early 19th century England (Hart 2007a).

In the first phase of the post-apartheid era (1994 – 2000) local government emerged as a key site of contradictions, encapsulating in an intense form the tensions between stern rhetorics of efficiency, fiscal discipline, and responsibility on the one hand, and invocations of local participation, social justice, and democracy on the other. My recent research in northwestern KwaZulu-Natal makes clear how Municipal Indigence Policy embodies reconfigured but equally intense contradictions – but also how these tensions are constituted and fought over in locally specific ways. That townships in this region and beyond have not exploded in rage seems to have a great deal to do with the inability of municipal officials to impose water restrictions.

Municipal Indigence Policy has its counterpart in the invention of a First and Second Economy in mid-2003. In introducing the Second Economy, Mbeki pointed with disarming frankness to a relatively uneducated, unskilled, stratum of the population that is “not required in terms of modern society”, but in need of protection. Subsequent official statements embody fierce denials that the ANC government is neo-liberal. For instance, a series of papers on the Second Economy published on the ANC website in 2004 launched a searing critique of the Washington Consensus in terms of how it serves the interests of the “developed countries” and fails to address poverty:

Contrary to arguments about minimal state intervention in the economy, we must proceed on the basis of the critical need for the state to be involved in the transformation of the Second Economy. This state intervention must entail detailed planning and implementation of comprehensive development programmes, fully accepting the concept of a developmental state.⁸

At the same time, leading ANC figures were quick to make clear that planned intervention in the Second Economy did not in any way reduce official commitment to rapid capital accumulation driven by market forces.

The ANC government’s embrace of the Second Economy needs to be understood in relation to pressures from first round of social movements. In the second half of 2002, immediately following the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Mbeki and other strategically-placed figures in the ANC launched a vicious attack on “ultra-leftists”, accusing them of acting in alliance with “real neo-liberals” (i.e. the predominantly white Democratic Party) and foreign elements hostile to the national democratic revolution (Hart 2006a). The ANC policy conference in December 2002 clamped down heavily on the left within the

Alliance. Simultaneously, the government increased “pro-poor” spending on the Child Support Grant, and funding going to local governments to finance Municipal Indigence. These strategies to identify and treat a “backward” segment of society go a long way towards explaining the vehemence with which powerful figures in the ANC dismissed proposals set forth in 2002 for a modest universal Basic Income Grant (BIG) in favor of an Extended Public Works Program: precisely because the BIG is universal, it lacks points of leverage for instilling “correct” behavior (Hart 2006b).

Yet the inadequacy of these responses - essentially strategies of containment - are evident in the escalating municipal protests. Deep tensions within the Alliance also burst into the open at the ANC National General Council conference in June 2005 when opposition to an additional set of Second Economy proposals to waive labor protections in the “lower segment” of the labor market merged with anger over growing perceptions of “second class citizenship.” The conference coincided with Mbeki’s dismissing Zuma as Deputy President following the conviction on fraud charges of Zuma’s financial advisor. This potent combination of forces amplified popular support for Zuma and intensified powerful anti-Mbeki sentiment (Hart 2007b).

Crucial to grasping these processes are resurgent forms of nationalism in South Africa today. On the left, there is a strong tendency to see the first round of post-apartheid social movements as embodying a post-nationalist cutting edge capable of slicing through the ANC government’s self-serving deployment of what is often termed “exhausted nationalism.” In contrast, I suggest that we are witnessing the rise of diverse new forms of popular nationalism that are highly ambiguous, and can potentially move in very different directions. Struggles in multiple arenas over the meaning of the nation and liberation have become a key driving force

in the remaking of state and civil society in relation to one another in the post-apartheid era – and will crucially shape the possibilities for something different to emerge. In short, the conjunctural moment in South Africa is radically open – which is why the analytical and political stakes in how we understand it are so high.

On one level these arguments are part of an effort to build a set of concrete concepts adequate to the dangerous conditions in which we find ourselves in South Africa today. At the same time, this effort to grapple with the current conjuncture in South Africa also speaks to broader debates around neo-liberalism, and a more general imperative to focus on specifically racialized forms of dispossession.

The Provocations of “Neo-liberalism”: Engaging Debates

At the risk of oversimplifying complex and changing debates, it seems to me that a broad consensus has emerged over the past several years that an adequate analysis of neo-liberalism entails joining understandings of it as a class project (and/or economic policy) with conceptions of neo-liberalism as governmentality and as hegemony.⁹ Advocates of this approach also seek to identify and deploy “the abstraction we might provisionally term neoliberalism in general” (Peck 2004:395), generated through a comparative synthesis of similarities shared by different variants of neo-liberalism.

A provocative intervention by Clive Barnett (2005) is deeply critical of what he calls this trouble-free amalgamation of Foucault’s ideas into a Marxist (or Gramscian) narrative of “neoliberalism.” Conceptions of “neoliberalism-as-governmentality” and as hegemony, he asserts, suffer from the precisely the same problems – both are caught up in an account of subject-formation in which subject-effects are automatically secured. He recommends that

we do away with the concept of “neoliberalism” altogether, and focus instead on liberal democratic impulses springing up from below.

In addition to questions about melding Gramsci and Foucault, there are important methodological stakes in this debate. The attraction of “neoliberalism in general”, Noel Castree points out, is that it seems to allow us to link our “local” research findings to a “much bigger and apparently important conversation” (Castree 2006: 6; see also Castree 2005). Yet trying to abstract neoliberal practices from what are always more-than-neoliberal contexts involves “simply listing generic – albeit historically specific – characteristics found in multiple geographical contexts” (Castree 2006: 4).

Precisely what is important about in-depth historical geographies and ethnographies grounded in relational conceptions of the production of space is their capacity to illuminate constitutive processes and interconnections, and thereby contribute to the production of concrete concepts. Thus, while concurring with Castree’s critique, I suggest that refusing to chase after the chimera of “neoliberalism in general” does not simply consign us to the idiographic specificities of “case studies.” Accordingly, in engaging debates over neo-liberalism from a South African vantage point I am *not* positing South Africa as a specific “case” or variant of a more general or abstract genus of neo-liberalism, but what Doreen Massey (1994) would call a nodal point of interconnection in socially produced space. Essentially I want to show how understandings of neo-liberalism as class project, governmentality, and hegemony – either singly or in combination – are at best partial, and how the turbulent processes underway in South Africa sharply delineate their limits.

Let me start with the question of neo-liberalism as a class project. Pressures emanating from the growing power and reach of finance capital undoubtedly played into the

advent of GEAR in 1996, as did the negotiated end to apartheid that made major concessions to corporate white-owned capital. It is also indeed the case that IMF and World Bank emissaries along with South African capitalists moved quickly in the early 1990s to try to purge the ANC leadership of socialist (and indeed Keynesian) ambitions and understandings, and imbue them with appropriate knowledges. Yet arguments about a socialist-inclined ANC having been steamrollered by external forces into accepting neo-liberal economic policies are totally inadequate. A far more useful understanding, spelled out most fully by Hein Marais (1998), attends to complex struggles in the ANC Alliance in which a conservative power bloc with increasingly close ties to domestic and foreign capital emerged triumphant.

From one perspective, GEAR can undoubtedly be seen as a wide-ranging class project that has been stunningly successful on its own terms. On July 9, 2006, the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* reported the Merrill Lynch World Wealth Report finding that South Africa had produced 5,880 new dollar millionaires during the previous year – the highest per capita rate of increase in the world. At the same time, the collapse of formal employment that has accompanied the opening up of the economy has devastated the livelihoods of millions of South Africans and severely weakened the labor movement.¹⁰

The political stakes in understanding neo-liberalism as a class project are laid out unequivocally by David Harvey:

The more neoliberalism is recognized as a failed if not disingenuous class project masking a successful attempt at class power, the more it lays the basis for a resurgence of mass movements voicing egalitarian political demands, seeking economic justice, fair trade and greater economic security, and democratization...The more clearly oppositional movements recognize...that

their central objective must be to confront the class power that has been so effectively restored under neoliberalization, the more they will likely themselves cohere. (Harvey 2006: 157-8)

In other words, the central task confronting the left is to rip away the mask that obfuscates neoliberal class power – and such an exposé will help pave the way for a coherent resurgence of mass movements. We must, in other words, move beyond race, ethnicity, gender, and other dimensions of difference in order to achieve class-based solidarity in an increasingly dangerous world.¹¹

Pace David Harvey, the task confronting the left in South Africa and elsewhere is considerably more complex than that of exposing neo-liberal class power. Nor is it adequate to posit a shift from race to class apartheid. Most immediately, the ANC government's embrace of GEAR constitutes a *re-articulation* of race and class that is also very much part of an activist project of rule. Elements of this project include the consolidation of conservative forces working in alliance with white corporate capital to create a black bourgeoisie nominally more responsive to "development"; creating the conditions in which the coalition in control of the state can hold not only its agencies but also non-state bodies to its principles; and inciting not only the black bourgeoisie but the population more generally to embrace freedom and democracy by becoming "entrepreneurs of themselves."

How useful, then, are conceptions of neo-liberal governmentality – strategic interventions exercised delicately and at a distance to transform citizens into consumers and entrepreneurial subjects who will take responsibility for themselves? In fact, increasingly influential claims about neo-liberal governmentality derive less from Foucault's quite circumscribed observations on neo-liberalism than from a self-described group of English

Foucauldians who became disillusioned with Marxist theory – most notably Nikolas Rose (1996; 1999; 2006).¹² For the Anglo-Foucauldians, neo-liberalism (or what Rose terms “advanced liberalism”) embodies a new rationality of government in the name of freedom that emerged as a sustained critique of the welfare state in the 20th century.¹³ Whereas the “state of welfare” entailed government through “the social” – characterized by discretionary authority and defined in terms of the territorial space of the nation – neo-liberalism works through individual allegiances to multiple, overlapping communities “whose vectors and forces can be mobilized, enrolled, deployed in novel programmes and techniques which encourage and harness active practices of self-management and identity construction, of personal ethics and collective allegiances” (Rose 1999: 176). Hence his claim that neo-liberalism entails “the death of the social” – endorsing, in effect, Thatcher’s declaration that “there is no such thing as society.”

Viewing post-apartheid South Africa through an Anglo-Foucauldian lens undoubtedly brings into view some important dimensions that tend to be obscured by economic understandings of neo-liberalism. From this perspective, GEAR inaugurated not just a set of conservative economic policies that strengthened the hand of white corporate capital and a reinvigorated black bourgeoisie. In addition, it can be seen as having installed a new political rationality of rule that can contrast itself with apartheid precisely because it takes the market as its model, to which it can articulate freedom, democracy, and flexibility as opposed to apartheid state repression and rigidity.¹⁴

In South Africa today, one can easily come up with any number of instances of neo-liberal rationalities of rule. In addition to prepaid water and electricity meters, they include the proliferation of NGOs heavily engaged in governmental practices; the “responsibilization”

through new practices of audit of state education, health care and local government; privatized forms of security, and many other examples of the extension of market models into realms that were heavily bureaucratized under much of apartheid rule.¹⁵ The revamping of parts of the bureaucracy along neo-liberal lines and devolution of responsibility to non-state agencies also makes sense when one recalls that the negotiated end to apartheid included a “sunset clause” for apartheid state employees whom the new ANC government inherited. In addition, as Jim Ferguson (2007) has noted, some proponents of a Basic Income Grant are deploying neo-liberal logics in their efforts to pressure the Mbeki government to provide a minimum income to every South African.

At the same time, what one might identify as neo-liberal rationalities of rule in themselves provide very little leverage into the some of the most urgent and compelling forces at work in South Africa today – the ANC government’s efforts to identify and cordon off the ‘deserving poor’ and the groundswell of popular anger that such strategies are unable to contain. These processes throw into sharp relief the limits of Anglo-Foucauldian explications of neo-liberal (or advanced liberal) governmentality more generally.

Several critics of such notions (including some quite sympathetic ones) have pointed out that it is one thing to identify a project of rule, and quite another to presume that it is accomplished in practice.¹⁶ In a revealing recent response to their critics, Rose et al. (2006) explicitly reject attention to “messy processes of implementation” – their focus, they insist, is precisely on diagnosing rationalities and technologies of rule.¹⁷ They are not, in other words, concerned with the question of whether or not subject-effects are secured.

These methodological limits that the Anglo-Foucauldians themselves concede undermine some of their key claims. John Clarke (nd: 6), for instance, punctures a large hole in Rose's sweeping assertion about the death of the social in "advanced liberal" Britain:

Governmental technologies – and their conceptions – represent specific attempts at mapping (and institutionalising the maps), but they have to negotiate both pre-existing and emergent mappings. They do not, so to speak, have the social all to themselves...The social remains a conflicted and contested terrain – with struggles to mobilize collective identities taking place alongside, at the same time as, and in conflict with political-cultural projects that aim to 'de-socialize' ... contested inequalities.

Significantly, Clarke's insistence on a richer conception of "the social" is simultaneously spatial; indeed, he draws his metaphor of mapping from Catherine Hall's (2002) focus on "mapping difference" in her study of metropole and colony in nineteenth century England and Jamaica. A related point is not just that projects of rule are congenitally failing operations that continually generate new and revised projects, as the Anglo-Foucauldians maintain; it's that Anglo-Foucauldian conceptions of neo-liberal governmentality are congenitally incapable of coming to grips with the constitutive role of contestation.¹⁸ What also falls out of sight in Anglo-Foucauldian formulations is Foucault's own emphasis on liberalism as the effective practice of security.¹⁹

Let me turn now to the question of hegemony, and underscore that what Barnett (2005) and others gloss as Gramscian theories of neo-liberalism-as-hegemony in fact refers to interpretations of neo-liberalism cast in terms of regulation theory. There is a fundamentally important difference between these regulationist accounts, and a fully Gramscian conjunctural

analysis of the terrain on which identifiably neo-liberal policies and practices take hold, along with the multiple, contradictory trends and tendencies that such policies and practices reflect and reconfigure. This Gramscian conception of hegemony is also closely attentive to the cultural politics of articulation in the sense laid out by Stuart Hall. As I have argued more fully elsewhere (Hart 2007b), Hall's concept of articulation was honed through his engagement with the race/class debate in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s as well as with Thatcherism, and remains powerfully salient.

Crucial to any understanding of the contested terrain on which GEAR was launched are issues of popular mobilization – both in terms of the fierce opposition to apartheid that gathered force during the 1980s, and the intense contests within the liberation movement in the early to mid-1990s over the role of popular mobilization in what is widely termed the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).²⁰ Reflecting the dominant position of conservative elements within the liberation movement following the assassination of Chris Hani in 1993, GEAR can be seen in part as a fundamental redefinition of the NDR that embodies a powerful drive to contain popular mobilization, as well as a re-articulation of race and class. More than just a neo-liberal rationality of rule or a narrowly defined class project, it is part of a vanguardist project to exercise a new *form* of activism defined in technocratic and hierarchical terms, and to assert the dominance of a transnationally-connected technocratic elite over mass mobilization and action.²¹

This broader project *also* works in and through articulations of the nation and liberation. To grasp the hegemonic power and limits of official articulations of nationalism, we also have to attend carefully to ongoing invocations of “the national question” – a profoundly evocative term in South Africa that conjures up struggles against colonialism and

imperialism, the indignities and violence of racial injustice and dispossession, the sacrifices and suffering embodied in movements for national liberation, and the visions of social and economic justice for which many fought and died.

Articulations of national liberation are not just cynical manipulations from above; they carry powerful moral weight and connect with specific histories, memories, embodied experiences and meanings of racial oppression, racialized dispossession, and struggles against apartheid. Precisely because official articulations of nationalism tap into popular understandings of freedom, justice, and liberation from apartheid racial oppression, they bolster the ANC state's hegemonic project in crucially important ways. At the same time, because such articulations of nationalism are linked to histories, memories, and meanings of freedom struggles, redress for the wrongs of the past, and visions of a new nation, they are vulnerable to counter-claims of betrayal – which is exactly what has been happening.

In other words, the capacity of the ruling bloc to tap into deep veins of popular understandings of “the national question” has been simultaneously the lynchpin of its hegemonic power *and* a key source of vulnerability. Thus, for example, what are ostensibly “service delivery” protests over housing, water, sanitation, electricity and so forth are simultaneously expressions of betrayal – intensified and sharpened by obscene and escalating material inequalities, and the crisis of livelihood confronting many in South Africa today. At the same time my recent research highlights some of the contradictory processes through which the capacity of Municipal Indigence Policies to produce governable subjects are severely limited in practice (Hart 2007a).

The double-edged character of official deployments of nationalism in the context of escalating inequality and persistent deprivation is also crucial to grasping popular support for

Jacob Zuma. As I have argued more fully elsewhere (Hart 2007b: 97-8), part of what Zuma represents is a move to seize the mantle of the liberation struggle, and present himself as its rightful heir. Positioning himself as the hero of national liberation is the key to Zuma's capacity – at least for the time being - to articulate multiple, often contradictory meanings into a complex unity that appeals powerfully to “common sense” across a broad spectrum. They include his asserting himself as a man of the left (much to chagrin of many on the left who point to his support for GEAR, as well as his links to certain fractions of capital); as a traditionalist who dons leopard skins on key occasions; as a peace-maker who helped to end the violent civil war in KwaZulu-Natal in the early 1990s; and as an anti-elitist (as displayed in his regular reference to himself as “not educated” - but, by implication, extremely smart). Together, they constitute a direct attack on the technocratic elite surrounding Mbeki, often portrayed by Zuma supporters as arrogant and self-serving, and as not having served in the trenches of the revolutionary struggle. These rearticulations of race, class, and nationalism are also shot through with gender and sexuality – overtly, as in the phallic symbolism of Zuma's signature song about his machine gun, as well as in some more of the more complex ways that Mark Hunter's (2007) important analysis of the Zuma rape trial makes clear.

Recent fascinating developments underscore the importance of different contemporary expressions of nationalism, and their relationship to one another and to (neo)liberalism. Early in 2007, folk rock singer Bok van Blerk issued a music video entitled *De la Rey*, an ode to the Anglo-Boer War general Jacobus de la Rey, that captivated white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and quickly became a spectacular hit.²² With its chorus “De la Rey, De la Rey, sal jy die Boere kom lei [will you come and lead the Boers],” the song sparked widespread speculation of a right-wing Afrikaner call-to-arms. Yet it can also be read as an

insistent recollection of white Afrikaner struggle for liberation from British imperialism at the turn of the last century. Sung by a young Boer soldier in the blood and mud of the battle field, *De la Rey* depicts courageous Boer men confronting the overwhelming might of British forces, their farms burnt to the ground by the “khakies”, and their women and children dying in concentration camps.²³ The English language press and the liberal opposition Democratic Alliance were quick to draw parallels between *De la Rey* and Zuma’s theme song, *Awaleth’ umshini wami* (Bring me my machine gun), debating which of the two nationalist (and hyper-masculinist) anthems was more dangerous. When Zuma invited Bok van Blerk and several other prominent white Afrikaners in the popular culture industry to a *braai* (barbeque) in March 2007, the *Mail & Guardian* responded with the telling headline *Generaal Jacobus Zuma?*²⁴ The irony intensifies when one recalls that rapprochement between British and Boers at the end of the war came about through the political exclusion, economic exploitation, and further dispossession of black South Africans – and that the ANC has its origins in demands for inclusion in the post-war order by an African landholding class, many of them groomed in Protestant mission schools and imbued with a tradition of liberal politics stretching well back into the 19th century.

In other words we are confronting resurgent popular nationalisms, both African and Afrikaner, in which historical geographies of colonialism and imperialism are insistently being inserted into the present through struggles over the meaning of the nation and liberation. What makes these struggles so urgent and compelling is that articulations of nationalism have no necessary class belonging; they can potentially be linked to multiple projects, and move in many different directions. While these struggles are unquestionably bound up with identifiably neo-liberal projects and contestations in the post-apartheid era, they also exceed

understandings of “neo-liberalism” as class project, governmentality, or hegemony either individually or in combination. Further, any effort to abstract from such excesses to identify a more generic model of “neo-liberalism in general” is analytically untenable and politically dangerous.

Instead of a generic model to which we link our “local” research, what we need are properly post-colonial understandings of interconnected processes unfolding in different regions of the world. In elaborating what seems to me a more productive way forward, I want to return to questions of primitive accumulation, and attend closely to the stakes in focusing on specifically racialized forms of dispossession.

The Past is not Dead: Revisiting Racialized Dispossession

One of the most important debates of recent years turns around efforts to understand what Marx termed “so-called primitive accumulation” as an *ongoing process* as opposed to an event that can be relegated to the past. In a comprehensive review of unfolding debates, Jim Glassman (2006) calls attention to the political implications of different conceptions, both in terms of how they have operated in the past and in relation to the imperatives of the present. He notes how, historically, the focus by many Marxists in the Global North on the vanguard role of the urban-industrial working class in effect pushed primitive accumulation into the theoretical background while forefronting its status as an historical event. In the Global South, by contrast, the focus historically has been on far more heterogeneous popular-nationalist movements.

Part of what is at stake in focusing on specifically racialized forms of dispossession is bridging this sort of divide. In laying out what I mean by a properly post-colonial

understanding, let me start with Henri Lefebvre's ([1974] 1991) observations on the limits of a binary model that opposes capital to labor. This framing makes it possible to grasp their conflictual development in a formal manner, he pointed out, but presumes the disappearance from the picture of the figure Marx called Madame la Terre in the "trinity formula" that he sketched out at the end of Volume III of *Capital*. In speaking of the earth, Lefebvre reminds us, Marx did not simply mean agriculture. Nor was he only concerned with natural resources, but also with "the national state confined within a specific territory, and hence, ultimately, in the most absolute sense [with] politics and political strategy" (Lefebvre 1991: 325).

Fernando Coronil (1996; 1997; 2000) has made an enormously important contribution in elaborating Lefebvre's arguments, and extending them in a post-colonial direction:

A perspective that recognizes the triadic dialectic among labor, capital, and land leads to a fuller understanding of the economic, cultural and political processes entailed in the mutual constitution of Europe and its colonies, processes that continue to define the relation between postcolonial and imperial states. It helps to specify the operations through which Europe's colonies, first in America and then in Africa and Asia, provided it with cultural and material resources with which it fashioned itself as the standard of humanity – the bearer of a superior religion, reason, and civilization embodied in European selves. (Coronil 2000: 357)

In other words, we have to attend closely to the complex and uneven reverberations and articulations in the present of much longer historical geographies of colonialism and imperialism, along with their specifically racialized – as well as gendered, sexualized, and ethnicized – forms. Relational conceptions of the production of space bequeathed to us by

Lefebvre are crucially important in attending to specifically racialized forms of dispossession as ongoing processes, precisely because of their capacity to illuminate spatial interconnection and mutual processes of constitution at play in different regions of the world. Building on these conceptions, the first phase of my research drew on connections between South Africa and East Asia to suggest how methods of relational comparison and critical ethnography could be made to do analytical as well as political work (Hart 2002; 2006a).

My efforts to grapple with the processes currently unfolding in South Africa reinforce the stakes in focusing on specifically racialized forms of dispossession as ongoing processes, while also suggesting new dimensions to what I am calling a properly post-colonial frame of understanding. Along with several others, I want to suggest the contemporary salience of a Gramscian reading of Fanon, and how this complements, extends, and enriches Lefebvrian understandings of spatial interconnection and mutual processes of constitution.²⁵ Indeed, Lefebvre's own Gramscian provenance makes him a natural, as it were, for linking with Fanon in mutually enriching ways.

Let me start with one of many passages in *The Wretched of the Earth* that resonate painfully in South Africa today:

During the struggle for liberation the leader awakened the people and promised them a forward march, heroic and unmitigated. Today, he uses every means to put them to sleep, and three or four times a year asks them to remember the colonial period and to look back on the long way they have come since then. Now it must be said that the masses show themselves totally incapable of appreciating the long way they have come. The peasant who goes on scratching out a living from the soil, and the unemployed man who never finds

employment do not manage, in spite of public holidays and flags, new and brightly-coloured though they may be, to convince themselves that anything has really changed in their lives....The intellectuals who on the eve of independence rallied to the party, now make it clear by their attitude that they gave their support with no other end in view than to secure their slices of the cake of independence. The party is becoming a means of private advancement. (Fanon 1963: 169-171)

Not surprisingly, the chief use of Fanon in South Africa today is to excoriate a comprador national bourgeoisie.²⁶ This deployment of Fanon is often linked to claims that nationalism is rapidly becoming exhausted, and that oppositional movements embody a post-nationalist sensibility.

Yet Fanon did not just posit the first, most prescient – and to my mind still the most powerful – critique of the betrayals of post-colonial promises. *The Wretched of the Earth* is also a plea for a transformative new humanism and internationalism that has to be grounded in national consciousness forged in the struggle for liberation:

National claims, it is here and there stated, are a phase that humanity has left behind...We however consider that the mistake, which may have very serious consequences, lies in wishing to skip the national period...National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension. (Fanon 1963: 247)

National consciousness for Fanon was a unifying force, essential to bridging rural-urban, racial, ethnic, and other divisions produced or reinforced by colonialism. At the same time, he insisted, “if nationalism is not made explicit, if it is not enriched and deepened by a very

rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into humanism, it leads up a blind alley” (Fanon 1963: 204). Fanon’s insistence on an international dimension, along with his focus on the racialized spaces of the colonial city and connections between the city and the countryside, resonate powerfully with Lefebvrian understandings of spatial interconnection and mutual processes of constitution.²⁷

The contemporary salience of Fanon’s work is elaborated in important recent re-readings through a Gramscian lens by Ato Sekyi-Otu (1996) and Nigel Gibson (2003).²⁸ Both are writing against interpretations of Fanon as the prophet of violence. They are also writing in critique of cultural discourse theorists like Homi Bhabha whose “postmodernist commitments result in the evisceration of Fanon’s texts; they excise the critical normative, yes, revolutionary humanist vision which informs his account of the colonial condition and its aftermath” (Sekyi-Otu 1996: 3). Reading Fanon’s texts “as though they formed one dramatic dialectical narrative”, Sekyi-Otu acknowledges Fanon’s debt to Hegel while making a powerful case that Fanon’s dialectic of experience is far closer to Gramsci: “So strikingly similar are Gramsci’s and Fanon’s idioms and programs – to say nothing of their supportive concepts – that I am tempted to call Gramsci a precocious Fanonist” (Sekyi-Otu 1996: 118). At the same time, Sekyi-Otu shows how bringing Gramsci and Fanon into relation with one another compels careful attention to the specific historical-geographical conjunctures with which each was grappling – and serves as a powerful warning against any mechanistic applications of their insights. A key point of overlap between Gramsci and Fanon – albeit with their own historically and geographically specific differences – turns around engagements between intellectuals and ordinary people, and the reciprocal processes through which they transform one another. Noting how realists and scientific analysts have ridiculed

the romanticism of Fanon's account of the mutual embrace of urban intellectual revolutionaries and country dwellers, Sekyi-Otu (1996:177) urges us to read the text "as a symbolic account of what is to be done if the nascent nation's disparate resources are to be gathered for its self-renewal."

Of necessity in a skeletal way, let me suggest some of the analytical and political leverage that Gramsci, Fanon, and Lefebvre together provide in South Africa and beyond. Most immediately, they sound a strong warning against presumptions that one can read political struggles directly off the structure of economic relations – or that top-down neo-liberalism (or "accumulation through dispossession") necessarily calls forth bottom-up resistance. By the same token they are adamantly opposed to vanguardist understandings that define the role of intellectuals in terms of specifying the level of development of productive forces (or unmasking the class basis of neo-liberalism), and supposing that progressive popular opposition will follow in some automatic fashion. Together they alert us to how there are always slippages, openings, contradictions, and possibilities for something different to emerge – but that these have to be grounded in what Gramsci called common sense, through a process of "renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity" (Gramsci 1971: 330-1).

A closely related set of points concerns the imperative of intellectuals' engaging deeply and seriously with popular understandings and the processes that produce them, recognizing that "the educator must him(her)self be educated" – and is also in part a product of these forces. This challenge is rendered all the more complex by the enormous diversity of historically and geographically specific conditions, as well as their interconnections with forces at play elsewhere. At the same time, understandings of space and place as actively

produced, and of relational interconnections, mutual processes of constitution, and the ongoing reverberations of the past, are key resources. Let me end where I began, with Allan Pred:

In Sweden, as anywhere else, the connection between locally situated practices and locally occurring racialization and racist relations ... is not to be confused with a purely local production and experience of “race” [and racialized dispossession] ... Even under the most isolated of circumstances, “local” social forms have always to some extent been synonymous with a hub of material and relational flows, with a more or less developed mesh of interactions and interrelations across multiple geographical scales, with comings and goings that have made a virtual impossibility of the unselfconsciously “local.” (Pred 2000: 23) .

Postscript

I write this Postscript in South Africa in the immediate aftermath of the ANC’s conference held in the northern town of Polokwane from December 16-20, 2007. Zuma and his supporters came sweeping into power on what some have called a Zunami, while the Mbeki-ites suffered a deeply humiliating defeat at the hands of delegates elected by ANC branches. Popular anger towards the ruling bloc was powerfully evident at the conference, especially on the first day when thousands of delegates hissed Thabo Mbeki, and broke into singing *Mshini wam* immediately following his speech that lasted for two and a half hours. Delegates then

shouted down conference chair Mosiuoa (“Terror”) Lekota – a strong Mbeki supporter, openly critical of Zuma – who was forced to cede the platform to Zuma’s chosen deputy, Kgalema Motlanthe. On a national scale, these expressions of popular anger and discontent mirrored precisely the dynamics that I have been observing in ANC meetings in Ladysmith since the second half of 2005.

Not surprisingly, there is intense speculation about the direction in which the Zuma-ites will steer the ANC – and indeed the state, if Zuma evades the corruption charges hanging over his head and takes over the presidency of the country in national elections scheduled for 2009. In his acceptance speech at the close of the conference on December 20, Zuma assiduously reassured domestic and international capital that nothing would change in terms of macro-economic policy – at the same time that he spoke of the importance of the SACP and Cosatu in the ANC Alliance, and the imperatives for redistributive policies. As is often the case, the most astute political commentary came from the cartoonist Zapiro:²⁹



Mail & Guardian, December 21 2007.

Shortly before the Polokwane conference, Zuma traveled to India, the UK and the US to calm the jitters of nervous capitalists, and impress upon them his good intentions. I was able to observe one version of this performance at first hand on December 5, 2007, when Zuma addressed a small group of academics and business people at a lunch sponsored by the Institute for International Studies at UC Berkeley.³⁰ In his speech, delivered with considerable élan, Zuma started out emphasizing the need for political stability and economic growth. He went on to outline the role of the ANC in bringing about the transition from apartheid, along with the inclusive, democratic process through which the constitution emerged: “This is not a country that depends on a leader,” he insisted, going on to note that “we play in a framework determined by the constitution; no individual or party can take us in a different direction.” Zuma then turned to the question of the economy – carefully separated in good liberal fashion from that of politics. Here are some of his comments, taken from my notes:

We have established a political system that no-one can complain about. Our economic policies have been balanced up to now. They have withstood turbulences in different parts of the world. However we are still faced with a first economy and a second economy. The question is how to put them together. This goes with [the question of] the plight of the poor. Some say that the gap between the rich and the poor has increased. There has been a big increase in the number of people in the cities living in informal settlements. We need thinking people to say how to address the poverty issue. This is the issue we are debating within the Alliance and the progressive forces. What policies do we need? We are having this debate with the participation of the trade unions and the SACP. Where do we go? The challenge is to bridge the gap

between the first and second economies to address the plight of the people. How to address this problem? We want scholars to help: how do we grow the economy and address the plight of the people? Education is critical. A high percentage of the unemployed people are unskilled. A big chunk of them are unemployable because they have no skills. The country cannot develop when people are not educated. Human capital is essential. We have not done enough to address this issue. Rural development is also very important – how do you do that? People are flocking into the cities because there is no economy in the rural areas. We do have policies in general terms. But how do we implement them? I come from a university situated in a rural area. I am the chancellor [an honorary position in South Africa]. I am running a pilot project of toilets in rural areas. You can't solve problems of sewage in rural areas in the same way as in the cities. I spoke to Billiton – they understand. They put in septic tanks in rural areas. [More generally] sewage, water and electricity must be put in rural areas. We want to establish a relationship with this university. Professor Vilakazi in South Africa says that development must go from rural to urban. This is an issue we are debating all the time... We have a surplus while people are starving. The system has tried to do something – but we need to do more.

Zuma's appropriation of Mbeki's discourse of a first and second economy in this context is especially interesting and significant – and was notably absent from his crowd-pleasing acceptance speech at the ANC conference, where themes of social justice were far more overt.

In the wake of the Zuma victory that caught many by surprise, intense debate is currently unfolding on the independent left about whether – and, if so, how – to engage with the left of the ANC Alliance. That this debate is happening at all represents a significant shift

from the era of the new social movements when the predominant position was to maintain a careful distance from Alliance politics.

Much of course depends on how one analyzes the present conjuncture. One emerging line of argument, articulated most fully by Patrick Bond, is that the fall of Mbeki and the rise of Zuma is simply a smokescreen.³¹ Bond argues that, for all his left-leaning talk, Zuma represents neo-liberal business-as-usual, and class apartheid will rapidly reassert itself. Since grassroots protests are directed primarily against the ANC's neo-liberal economic policies we can expect them to continue, and the independent left represented by the new social movements should position itself to capture this discontent: "Only then," he says, "will South Africa enjoy the possibility of a fully liberatory, post-Mbeki set of politics, not personalities, as the far-sighted left-left makes common cause with serious comrades in labour and the Communist Party, egged on no doubt by increasingly angry feminists and other democrats."

My argument throughout this paper has been that the challenges confronting the left are far more complex. The drama that exploded at Polokwane was as much about contesting the meaning of the nation and liberation as it was about the fallout from a neo-liberal class project and socio-economic structure, and we ignore these sentiments and struggles at our peril. It is useful here to recall Gramsci's warnings about the complexities of grasping the dialectical nexus between organic and conjunctural movements, along with his observation that "if error is serious in historiography, it becomes still more serious in the art of politics, when it is not the reconstruction of past history but the construction of present and future history which is at stake."

Polokwane also stands as a profound warning against the dangers of vanguardism. When the news of Zuma's victory broke, a friend in Ladysmith turned to me and said "you

must understand, Gill, that this is about the masses versus the intellectuals.” It seems to me that those of us who occupy the formal position of “intellectuals” need to take very seriously the subtext of this statement. What it suggests, among other things, is that we should be attending far more carefully to the complex dynamics unfolding in “ordinary” places.

References

- Barnett C (2005) The consolations of “neoliberalism”. *Geoforum* 36: 7-12.
- Barry A, Osborne T and Rose N (eds) (1996) *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism, and Rationalities of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Benjamin N (2004) Organization building and mass mobilization. *Development Update*:73-93.
- Bond P (2005) *Fanon’s Warning: A Civil Society Reader on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development*. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press.
- Booyesen S (2007) With the ballot and the brick: The politics of attaining service delivery. *Progress in Development Studies* 7: 21-32.
- Castree N (2005) The epistemology of particulars. *Geoforum* 36: 541-44.
- ___(2006) From neoliberalism to neoliberalisation: Consolations, confusions, and necessary illusions. *Environment and Planning A* 38: 1-6.
- Clarke J (nd) Consumerism and the remaking of state-citizen relationships. Unpublished paper.
- Coronil F (1996) Beyond occidentalism: toward nonimperial geohistorical categories. *Cultural Anthropology* 11:51-87.
- ___ (1997) *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- ___ (2000) Towards a critique of globalcentrism: speculations on capitalism's nature. *Public Culture* 12:351-374.
- Desai A (2006) Vans, Autos, Kombis and the Drivers of Social Movements. <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs/default.asp?3,28,10,2680>. (last accessed 4 April 2007)
- Fanon F (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth..* New York: Grove Press.
- Ferguson J (2007) Formalities of poverty: Thinking about social assistance in neoliberal South Africa. *African Studies Review* 50: 71-86.
- Gibson N (2003) *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*. Cambridge UK: Polity Press.
- Glassman J (2006) [Primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession, accumulation by 'extra-economic' means](#). *Progress in Human Geography* 30: 608-625.
- Hall C (2002) *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Hardt M and Negri A (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- ___ (2004) *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Hart G (2002) *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ___ (2006a) Denaturalizing dispossession: Critical ethnography in the time of resurgent imperialism. *Antipode* 38: 977-1004.
- ___ (2006b) Post-apartheid developments in historical and comparative perspective. In V. Padayachee (editor) *The Development Decade? Economic and Social Change in South Africa 1994-2004* (pp13-32). Pretoria: HSRC Press.
- ___ (2007a) The New Poor Laws and the Crisis of Local Government," *Amandla* 2: 5-6. (Available at www.amandla.org).
- ___ (2007b) Changing concepts of articulation: Political stakes in South Africa today. *Review of African Political Economy* 111: 85-101.
- Harvey D (2003) *The New Imperialism*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- ___ (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- ___ (2006) Neo-liberalism as creative destruction. *Geografisker Annaler* 88 B (2) 145-158.

- Hunter M (2007) Left behind in a KwaZulu-Natal township: Thinking about state, gender and class after the Zuma rape trial. Paper for the Development Dilemmas workshop, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 16-18 November.
- Jessop B (2002) Liberalism, neoliberalism and urban governance: A state-theoretical perspective. *Antipode* 34: 452-472.
- Johnson K (2003) Liberal or Liberation Framework? The Contradictions of ANC Rule in South Africa. In H Melber (ed) *Limits to Liberalism in Southern Africa: The Unfinished Business of Democratic Consolidation* (pp200-223). Pretoria: HSRC Press.
- Kipfer S (2007) Fanon and space: Colonization, urbanization, and liberation from the colonial to the global city. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25: 701-726.
- Kipfer S and Goonewardena (2007) Colonization and the new imperialism: On the meaning of urbicide today. *Theory and Event* Spring.
- Larner W (2000) Neoliberalism: Politics, ideology, governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy* 23: 5-25.
- ___ (2003) Neoliberalism? *Environment & Planning D-Society & Space* 21: 509-512.
- Lefebvre H (1991 [1974]) *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Li T (1999) Compromising power: Development, culture and rule in Indonesia. *Cultural Anthropology* 14: 295-322.
- ___ (2007) *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Marais H (1998) *South Africa Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition*. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Massey D (1994) *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mbembe A (2006) South Africa's second coming: The Nongqawuse syndrome. http://www.opendemocracy.net/author/Achille_Mbembe.jsp. (last accessed 4 June 2007).
- Mohan G and Stokke K (2000) Participatory development and empowerment: The dangers of localism. *Third World Quarterly* 21: 247-68.

- Moore D (2000) The crucible of cultural politics: reworking 'development' in Zimbabwe's eastern highlands. *American Ethnologist* 26: 654-89.
- O'Malley P, Weir L and Shearing C (1997) Governmentality, Criticism, Politics. *Economy and Society* 26:501-517.
- Padayachee V and Valodia I (2001) Changing Gear? The 2001 budget and economic policy in South Africa. *Transformation* 46: 71-83.
- Peck J and Tickell A (2002) Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode* 34: 380-404.
- Peck J (2004) Geography and public policy: constructions of neoliberalism. *Progress in Human Geography* 28: 392-405.
- Pithouse R (2006) The necessity, promises and pitfalls of global linkages for South African movements. In N Gibson, N (ed) *Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- ___ (2007) The University of Abahlali baseMjondolo. www.abahlali.org/node/2814 (last accessed December 27 2007).
- Polanyi K (2001 [1944]) *The Great Transformation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Pred A (2000) *Even in Sweden: Racisms, Racialized Spaces, and the Popular Geographical Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rose N (1999) *The Powers of Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose N, O'Malley P and Valverde M (2006) Governmentality. *Annual Review of Law & Social Science* 2: 83-104.
- Sekyi-Otu A (1996) *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sitas A (2002) Love in the time of cholera? Unpublished paper.
- Wright M (2006) Differences that matter. In N Castree and D Gregory (eds) *David Harvey: A Critical Reader* (pp 80-101). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Endnotes

-
- ¹ See for example Benjamin (2004), Desai (2006) and Pithouse (2006).
- ² These figures are contained in an article entitled ‘66 cops injured in illegal service delivery protests,’ *Cape Argus* October 13, 2005. I am indebted to Patrick Bond for this reference.
- ³ For a pointed critique of the language of “service delivery” in relation to the Durban shackdwellers’ movement (the Abahlali baseMjondolo), see Pithouse (2007).
- ⁴ A 2006 survey in Soweto by the Centre for Sociological Research at the University of Johannesburg found that Zuma support was strongest among relatively low income households, but that there were no marked differences between men and women, or among language groups (Terreblanche 2007).
- ⁵ His recommendation is that fractions of the Communist Party, the trade unions, and the ANC Youth League should leave the Alliance to form their own political party: “What should emerge is a new political mainstream committed to a liberal constitution, to an explicitly social democratic agenda and to an Afropolitan cultural project” (ibid.).
- ⁶ The immediate source of popular anger was that the ANC leadership had replaced a popularly elected (male) candidate for ward councillor with a woman. She was elected, but died six months later.
- ⁷ Between 1996-9, fiscal restraint, tariff reduction and inflation control exceeded GEAR targets. At the same time, real private sector investment growth fell far short (1.2% per annum in contrast to the 11.7% projected by GEAR), as did GDP growth (2.4% as opposed to a projected 4.2% per annum). Formal non-agricultural employment is estimated to have shrunk by over 125,000 per year, in contrast to the project annual increase of 270,000 new jobs (Padayachee and Valodia, 2001: Table 1).
- ⁸ <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2004/text/at47.txt> ; accessed December 19, 2004.
- ⁹ Harvey (2003, 2005, 2006) offers the most comprehensive statement of neo-liberalism as a class project. Claims about the relationships between neo-liberalism as economic policy, governmentality and hegemony emerge from a set of back and forth engagements between Larner (2000); Peck & Tickell (2002); Larner (2003); and Peck (2004).
- ¹⁰ The following week the *Sunday Times* carried results of research showing that more than 15% of South Africa’s 46.9 million people live on less than \$1 a day. The report also

cites figures published by Global Insight Southern Africa indicating that the number of desperately poor people had risen from 1.9 million to 4.49 million between 1994 and 2002.

¹¹ As Melissa Wright (2006: 101) points out, Harvey's claims rest on "the dual assumption that differences can be recognized as such and then that, through negotiation or agreement or some other enlightenment appeal to reason, these differences can be put aside for strategic purposes." Harvey is, she notes, susceptible to some of his own criticisms of Hardt & Negri's (2000; 2004) assertions that an amorphous multitude will, as he himself puts it, "magically rise up and inherit the earth." A recent volume devoted to critical appreciations of Harvey's work (Castree and Gregory 2006) contains several other incisive engagements with these sorts of claims - contributions by Castree, Gregory, and Katz are especially salient.

¹² See also the collection edited by Barry, Osborne and Rose (1996).

¹³ "Like critics from the radical left, [neo-liberal critics] regarded social government as generating government overload, fiscal crisis, dependency, and rigidity. Yet unlike those critics, they created another rationality for government in the name of freedom, and invented or utilized a range of techniques that would enable the state to divest itself of many of its obligations, devolving these to quasi-autonomous entities that would be governed at a distance by means of budgets, audits, standards, benchmarks, and other technologies that were both autonomizing and responsabilizing" (Rose et al. 2006: 91).

¹⁴ Elsewhere (Hart 2002: 25) I have made broadly similar points within a Gramscian framework.

¹⁵ It is important to note, however, that some moves in this direction were underway in the later phases of apartheid.

¹⁶ See for example O'Malley et al. (1997), Li (1999; 2007); Larner (2000); and Moore (2000). This is also the thrust of Barnett's (2005) critique.

¹⁷ In response to the charge that the Anglo-Foucauldian governmentality approach is limited to studies of the mind or texts of the programmer, Rose et al. (2006: 100) respond as follows: "If the alternative is thought to be the sociological study of how programs are actually implemented, or the proportions and numbers of subjects who adopt or refuse governmental problematics or agendas, or whether or not according to their own criteria programs succeed or fail, then there is a limited truth to the statement. Governmental analysis does not aspire to be such a sociology."

¹⁸ Rose et al (2006) complain that the tripartite division of liberalism, welfarism and advanced liberalism was initially a heuristic device, but that it has become formalized as a set of chronologically-arranged ideal types into which everything else is fitted. Yet the resolute focus on diagnosis encourages precisely the latter interpretation.

¹⁹ I develop this argument more fully in a forthcoming book provisionally entitled *The Government of Freedom*.

²⁰ I discuss the NDR more fully in Hart (2007b). For a fascinating set of reflections on debates over popular mobilization within the liberation movement in the early 1990s, see Helena Sheehan's interview with Jeremy Cronin, available at <http://webpages.dcu.ie/~sheehan/za/cronin02.htm>. Last accessed December 8, 2007.

²¹ Johnson (2003) argues that Mbeki and his followers have found the reorganization of the state along conventional (neo)liberal lines quite compatible with their Leninist understanding of the primacy of vanguard party leadership over mass action.

²² See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAhHWpqPz9A>. Last accessed July 30, 2007.

²³ The visuals are very precise about the number of British (346,693) and Boer (82,742) forces – but make no mention of the very large numbers of black South Africans directly entangled in the war.

²⁴ http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=303365&area=/insight/insight_national/. Last accesses July 30, 2007.

²⁵ See also important recent work by Kipfer and Goonewardena (2007) and Kipfer (2007), who have drawn attention to key sections of the second volume of Lefebvre's *The Critique of Everyday Life* and *De l'Etat* that are deeply complementary with Fanon.

²⁶ Patrick Bond (2005) extends what he calls "Fanon's warning" to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), a South African-led reform initiative which many see as entrenching neo-liberal policies and economic dependence throughout the African continent.

²⁷ See Kipfer and Goonewardena (2007) and Kipfer (2007) for a useful elaboration of these points.

²⁸ Along with Richard Pithouse, Gibson has also written about how a shackdweller's movement that emerged in Durban in 2005 embodies Fanonian understandings. These and other articles (including Gibson's earlier work on Fanon in relation to Steve Biko) are available on the websites of the Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu Natal and the Abahlali baseMjondolo.

²⁹ Zuma has brought a R15 million (over \$2 million) lawsuit against Zapiro for three cartoons relating to Zuma's rape trial in 2006 (the shower attached to Zuma's head is now a permanent fixture of Zapiro cartoons – a reference to Zuma's claim during the rape trial that he showered to reduce his risk of infection following sex with an HIV-positive woman).

³⁰ I was told that Zuma was interested in meeting academics, and a student in the Political Science department at UC Berkeley had connections with him. South African press reports subsequently explained that Zuma had been invited by Stratfor (Strategic Forecasting Incorporated), described by Fortune magazine as “one of the elite but low-profile private intelligence agencies that are increasingly relied on by multinational corporations, private investors, hedge funds and even the [US] government’s own spy agencies, for the analysis of geopolitical risks” (reported in an article entitled “US intelligence firm sponsors Zuma trip” December 6, 2007 <http://www.thetimes.co.za> (accessed 12/6/2007). George Friedman, the CEO of Stratfor, was favorably impressed by Zuma, according to this and other reports.

³¹ Patrick Bond, “Zuma, the centre-left, and the left-left” (December 21, 2007) distributed on the debate listserve (debate@lists.kabissa.org).