

Introduction

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Gramsci

Space, Nature, Politics

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Introduction

In one of his so-called “special notebooks,” Antonio Gramsci (Q10II, §9; SPN 399–400) questions the well-known claim that historical materialism originates from the highest development of “classical German philosophy, English classical economics and French political literature and practice.” Rejecting the idea that each of these movements simply contributes its own discrete part to the philosophy of praxis, he goes on to argue that “in the new synthesis, whichever ‘moment’ one is examining, the theoretical, the economic, or the political, one will find each of the three movements present as a preparatory ‘moment.’” This is a springboard for Gramsci’s agile “new concept of immanence” at the heart of his philosophy of praxis and signals a translation from a speculative to an absolute understanding. In this note, Gramsci outlines the relational nature of his development of Marxism, something that consistently informs the form and content of his notes (see Buttigieg 1992). In highlighting how theoretical, economic, and political moments are mutually co-determining, Gramsci calls for an integral Marxism that refuses to address discrete social processes in isolation from a broader suite of relations. Commenting on this new concept of immanence, Peter Thomas argues that we find within the *Notebooks* “a *philology of relations of force*, that is, a study of the differential intensity, efficacy and specificity of social practices in their historical becoming” (Thomas 2009b: 449; emphasis original).

Gramsci: Space, Nature, Politics, First Edition.

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This collection takes forward Gramsci's absolute immanence, arguing that space, nature, and politics are constitutive moments within an overall philosophy of praxis. These three constitutive moments shape the possibilities within one another and are internally related. Moving between space, nature, and politics requires a process of translation and ultimately a new "moment" of synthesis and a distinctive approach to both geographical and Gramscian thought. The book is informed throughout by such a dialectical approach and by the ways in which it frames Gramsci's Marxism, highlighting his rich spatial sensibility, distinct approach to the political, and conceptualization of "nature." Interwoven throughout the themes of space, nature, and politics are repeated efforts to understand social difference through a Gramscian lens, which, at times, requires going beyond Gramsci, a point we will return to shortly. The project to foreground difference within the three moments of space, nature, and politics is an attempt to open up a distinctive, yet neglected approach to geographical questions while providing a set of interventions in broader Gramscian debates. This requires something of a double movement.

First, the contributions assess what Gramsci's distinct philosophy of praxis contributes to conceptualizations of space in disciplines such as geography, urban studies, urban sociology, and planning. Within these, Gramsci has had a spectral presence, often informing theoretical debates and concrete research programs, yet rarely positioned at the forefront of radical scholarship. This is odd given his central presence elsewhere in the humanities and social sciences where a "Gramscian moment" is evident. We argue that an engagement with Gramsci provides a rich approach to space, nature, politics, and difference through emphasizing a historicist and spatial method that is rich in possibilities for political practice.

Second, we seek to contribute to Gramscian debates. The sprawling character of these conversations, in numerous different contexts and languages, as well as the tireless recent philological engagements with the Sardinian's work, mean that to promise anything more than a modest contribution here would be hubristic. Nevertheless, we will draw attention to the *spatial historicism* that animates Gramsci's oeuvre. If Gramsci is widely recognized as a deeply historicist thinker (something that has, paradoxically, led to both denunciations and celebrations of his work: Althusser 1970; Morera 1990; Thomas 2009b), more recently several contributions have signaled the spatiality of his work. Edward Said claims that Gramsci "created in his work an essentially geographical, territorial apprehension of human history and society" (2000: 464). Bob Jessop (2006) goes so far as to describe Gramsci as a "spatial theorist" while Adam Morton (2007) argues that geographical concerns are

pivotal to a Gramscian understanding of state formation and resistance movements. Yet scholarship remains heavily weighted toward elucidating Gramsci's historicism at the expense of the geographical inflection in his writings.

We draw attention to the ways in which this historicism is deeply spatialized. When Gramsci grounds his analysis and his concepts within specific historical conjunctures, the discussion is more often than not spatially inflected, as evident in his writings on passive revolution (Q10II, §61; SPN 116–118), the city and the country (Q19, §26; SPN 9–99; Q22, §3; SPN 296), regional questions (SPWII 441–462), comparative international relations (Q13, §§2, 17; SPN 176, 182), and the making of solidarities (SPWII 441–462; on these issues, also see Kipfer, Chapter 4; Featherstone, Chapter 3; Morton, Chapter 2). Yet it would be wrong to see this spatial sensibility as somehow distinct from a clear advocacy of an absolute historicism. It would also be wrong to confine geographical sensibilities to a concern with spatial questions; rather, the chapters draw out the articulated relationships between space, nature, politics, and social difference.

Woven through the collection's double engagement is an attempt to identify and negotiate the limiting aspects of Gramsci's work. In this respect, we reject a hagiographic reading, recognizing that no blueprint is offered in the *Notebooks* for radical change. Nor is there an unproblematic discussion of difference within them. It goes without saying that the current conjuncture presents radically different social rhythms from the political processes Gramsci reflected upon in his own time. Alongside the rise of feminist, antiracist, queer, and postcolonial and anticolonial political movements, new intellectual traditions have sought to reflect on the successes and failures of these movements, as well as on the "subjects" that animate them. Out of such configurations, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue that the germs of radical democratic theory might be found within Gramsci's writings, but they go on to suggest that ultimately these are inadequately addressed. Gramsci's errors, they claim, are his reliance on an essentialized working-class subject, his assertion of determination by "the economic" in the last instance, and a teleological understanding of history. Richard Day (2005), in turn, has declared Gramsci to be "dead," claiming an inability in his writings to speak to the demands of the newest social movements. We work against both positions. Rather than concluding Gramsci is incapable of providing resources for understanding a new historical conjuncture, the authors in this collection engage with different social movements and intellectual traditions in order to examine the conceptual and political resources that Gramsci might provide, as we grapple with political movements that were either on the outside or on the fringes of his concerns.

Gramsci's own method is instructive for how one might negotiate his texts in a distinct historical and geographical moment. Thus, when engaging with historical texts, he explains that philological rigor is needed to carefully delineate the "rhythms of thought" (Q4, §1; PNII 173). Yet he is also careful to historicize texts such as Machiavelli's *The Prince*, within the particularities of a distinct historical conjuncture. This movement between the conceptual and particularities of history and geography is one of the hallmarks of Gramsci's method (see Buttigieg 1992), and is reflected in the chapters that follow. Such a philosophy of praxis involves situating a writer "within practical historical and intellectual specificities – while deciding what is relevant and what might be *historically* limited about their concepts" (Morton 2007: 36). In a similar vein, Lacorte argues:

[The] notion of "translation" ... includes also a methodological model for how we need to approach Gramsci's writings in our times. They require a further "translation" into the context of our times, both the economic and technological changes of electronic, global, "late" capitalism and also the very different ideological and cultural currents of the twenty-first century. (Lacorte 2010: 220)¹

Gramsci's was an absolute, not an austere historicism, leading to an engagement with and against him. As with Lacorte's insistence on translatability, this requires that we also "leave" (or betray, as Kipfer and Hart suggest in their conclusion to this volume) Gramsci, as well as traveling with him (see Morton, Chapter 2).

Translating Gramsci requires bringing his writings to bear on "new" situations, albeit always containing a number of historical and geographical social currents. As Buttigieg (1994) notes, what Gramsci describes as "living philology" is positioned against positivist forms of sociology that fall back on a set of predefined criteria to be applied universally. Gramsci's method demands of us that we refine concepts in relation to historically and geographically situated practices. Knowledge is arrived at "through 'active and conscious co-participation,' through 'compassionality,' through experience of immediate particulars, through a system which one could call 'living philology'" (Q11, §25; SPN 429). Thus, authors attempt such a "living philology," excavating what Gramsci wrote about space, nature, politics, and social difference while also considering how his work might confront, and also be challenged by, contemporary intellectual and political traditions. However, the move to write with and against Gramsci is not simply a matter of considering new intellectual traditions but also entails bringing insights from Gramsci to bear on spaces beyond the European-American context, which was the focus of

the Sardinian's work. Historicizing and spatializing Gramsci requires that we explore what different contexts and political movements mean for our understandings of his work (see Gidwani and Paudel, Chapter 13; Hart, Chapter 15; Karriem, Chapter 7; Whitehead, Chapter 14). Is Gramsci's oeuvre capable of understanding peasant movements in spaces such as Brazil and Nepal? To what degree can Gramsci adequately address the relationship of class and "race" in South Africa? Responding to these questions requires contributors to move beyond a philological reading of Gramsci, asking questions of how his writings might engage with and animate political movements in the present moment. Here, Gramsci is a companion in struggle, a fellow traveler with whom we might co-conspire for a more just and democratic world. The flourishing of Gramscian scholarship in recent years can only strengthen this co-conspiratorial relationship.

A Gramscian Moment?

Philological engagements

Since the mid-1990s, and gaining pace more recently, Gramscian scholarship has increased exponentially, animating both a new Marxist philosophy and new forms of praxis-based research. In part, this must be related to the rejuvenation of historical materialist thought elsewhere, as it has been liberated from the constraints of actually existing socialisms and transformed by feminist, antiracist, anticolonial, and queer scholarship. However, for anglophone scholars, such a "Gramscian moment" has also been fostered by the increasing availability of selected translations from the *Prison Notebooks*, in addition to the first three volumes of the critical edition edited by Joseph Buttigieg which bring readers tantalizingly close to Gramsci's "special notebooks." In part, this translation unshackles access to Gramsci's work from the selective judgments of particular editors: increasingly, it permits readers to see the development of concepts, enabling the philological reading that Gramsci's method implicitly and explicitly demands of us (Buttigieg 1992). Until recently, anglophone scholars have depended almost entirely on the superb, but nonetheless thematic, selections from the notebooks published by Lawrence & Wishart and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (SPN), David Forgacs (SCW), and Derek Boothman (FSPN). The first *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (SPN), in particular, followed the themes chosen to structure the Togliatti-sponsored Einaudi edition, edited by Felice Platone and published in Italy in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This project, more than successive

ones, was necessarily bound up in the Italian Communist Party's definition of itself in relation to the Soviet Union (among others, see Harman 1977; Davidson 2008). Critical editions of the *Notebooks* did not appear in Italy until 1976 and in Germany in 1991. As in recent years in the anglophone world, subsequent engagements with Gramsci's work in both Italy and Germany have been marked by a philological approach and far greater attention to the development of Gramsci's overall method, the philosophy of praxis. However, the work of both Femia (1981) and Hall (1980) demonstrates that such concerns do not rely on a philological approach, even if this has been one outcome of recent engagements.

In the Italian context, a series of debates has developed around the importance of Gramsci's linguistic background. Gramsci never finished his degree in linguistics with Matteo Bartoli, although he was considered to be the latter's star pupil, taking forward much of his work on "spatio-linguistics" (for an excellent summary, see Ives 2004a, 2004b). He appears to return to these ideas, as well as providing his own translations of both Marxist texts and folkloric tales, in several key passages in the *Notebooks*. Ives and Lacorte (2010) capture the main contributions to the subsequent debates around linguistics, including Lo Piparo's (2010[1987]) controversial claim that the roots to Gramsci's concept of hegemony are to be found not in his Marxism but in his linguistic studies. Some authors have rejected this claim of the non-Marxist roots to Gramsci's thought, thereby positioning the Sardinian's linguistic training within his broader philosophy of praxis (Borghese 2010[1981]; de Mauro 2010[1999]). Others have turned to specific concepts such as "translation" and "translatability" (Boothman 2010[2004]; Frosini 2010[2003]) as a means of delineating the specific contribution made by Gramsci. Carlucci (2009) makes the important connection between Gramsci's linguistic experience, his specialist research into language, and his commitment to both diversity and unification. Far from shirking questions of difference in a relentless pursuit of homogeneity, as is often suggested, Carlucci (2009) demonstrates the ways in which Gramsci was continually motivated by questions of difference, pluralism, and democratic transformation.

These linguistic debates also form a backdrop to Peter Thomas's (2009b) monumental work *The Gramscian Moment*. Although the book is, in part, structured around a confrontation with Althusser and Anderson (whose twin theses on Gramsci have had perhaps the most pervasive and arguably inhibiting influence in the English-speaking world), it is partially an attempt to bring Italian and German debates to an anglophone audience (see Negri 2011). Through engaging with these debates, Thomas demonstrates how the philosophy of praxis provides a

far more specific and fecund contribution to the history of Marxist thought than was earlier recognized. Haug (2000) refutes the suggestion that the philosophy of praxis was merely a code word for Marxism, a claim appearing in the first Einaudi edition of the *Notebooks*, arguing that this was a deliberate attempt to equate Gramsci's work with Marxism-Leninism. With the publication of critical editions, it has been possible to view the distinctiveness of Gramsci's contribution and advocate a more vigorous refutation of the attempt to enroll him as an apologist for Stalinism or a forerunner of the Eurocommunist movement.

The philosophy of praxis can be understood as "coherent, but non-systemic thinking which grasps the world through human activity ... It is a thinking that indeed addresses the whole, but from below, with a patient attention to particularity" (Haug 2000: 11). Similarly, Thomas provides a reading of the methodological contribution of the philosophy of praxis framed around Gramsci's claim that "the philosophy of praxis is absolute 'historicism,' the absolute secularization and earthliness of thought, an absolute humanism of history" (Q11, §30; SPN 465). Through an exhaustive philological examination of absolute historicism, immanence, and humanism, Thomas demonstrates how Gramsci resists ahistorical formulations, challenges reductionist readings of "base" and "superstructure," and reconfigures the political meaning of philosophy. Gramsci's contributions here, in turn, must be seen as intimately related to his dialectical approach.

Gramsci's development of the philosophy of praxis is made possible by, while also influencing, his dialectical approach. If the philosophy of praxis represents a philosophy "immanent to the things on which it philosophises" (Labriola, cited in Thomas 2009a: 33), with historically and geographically situated practices crucial to this immanence, we can begin to understand Gramsci's considered objection to splitting the philosophy of praxis in two. Thus, in a note entitled "The dialectic," he focuses his ire on Bukharin for whom the "philosophy of praxis is envisaged as split into elements: on the one hand a theory of history and politics conceived as sociology ... and on the other a philosophy proper" (Q11, §2; SPN 434). Against both Bukharin and Croce, he argues:

The true fundamental function and significance of the dialectic can only be grasped if the philosophy of praxis is conceived as an integral and original philosophy which opens up a new phase of history and a new phase in the development of world thought. It does this to the extent that it goes beyond both traditional idealism and traditional materialism, philosophies which are expressions of past societies, while retaining their vital elements. (Q11, §2; SPN 434)

This statement would seem to challenge Finocchiaro's (1988) Crocean-inspired reading of Gramsci's dialectical approach, which results in a contestable claim of "Two Gramscian concepts of dialectic." In our view, Haug provides much firmer foundations for interpreting Gramsci's dialectical thought by historicizing the specific development of the philosophy of praxis in a way that foreshadows the work of Thomas. Both Gramsci and Brecht are shown to develop "a philosophy of praxis under antagonistic conditions" (Haug 2005: 365). This differs profoundly from problematic interpretations of Lenin's "re-Hegelianisation of Marxist dialectics" (251). If not approached cautiously, this re-Hegelianization of the dialectic can suggest an evolutionist paradigm that has "lost all reference to the unexpected or the discontinuous, and denotes exactly a type of knowledge, derived from 'the philosophy of history, regarding the predetermination of the future'" (252). Gramsci's rejection of Bukharin can therefore also be taken as a rejection of the reading of dialectics found in Engels, Plekhanov, and Lenin.

Haug's condensed analysis of these different threads helps us to contextualize the philosophy of praxis. It also helps us to navigate our way through some of the profoundly divergent readings of Gramsci's approach in recent years. Thus, Finocchiaro's (1988) attempt to measure Gramsci's thought by the yardstick of Hegel strikes us as a contentious claim and reflects a failure to grasp the supersession of idealistic approaches within the *Prison Notebooks*. It imposes a Hegelian framework that obscures the innovations made within the philosophy of praxis, understood as a differentiated unity of thought and action. These different interpretations run throughout this volume and we have not sought to impose a singular reading on the different authors' work. Indeed, recent philological and conceptual debates have led to renewed interest in the Sardinian's work and Marxism more broadly that help us to negotiate these divergent traditions: historical materialism is enriched because of this. Nevertheless, despite the enduring lure and luster of theoretical debates, literature in this stream represents only one aspect of scholarly engagements with Gramsci. Alongside the philological debates, there have been numerous attempts to ground Gramsci's insights in the particularities of distinct geographies and historical conjunctures, to which we now turn our attention.

Historical and spatial engagements

The impressive philological work that is now underway should not eclipse that which was carried out prior to Buttigieg's ongoing translation of a critical edition. In part inspired by Gramsci's reading of a new

relationship between knowledges and historically and geographically situated practices, several strains of scholarship have sought to ground a philosophy of praxis within specific conjunctures. In this vein, engagements with Gramsci have been influenced by the concrete conditions in which scholar-activists have worked. Initially, Gramsci's reflections on the Southern Question and subaltern rural classes provided Sarkar and Guha with the conceptual starting points for understanding how subaltern classes were protagonists in the making of their own histories (see Arnold 2000). Subsequently, the concept of passive revolution has traveled to India where it has been worked through in the context of the country's breakneck modernization and newly emergent class constellations (Chatterjee 1986, 2008). More recent work has built critically on the early work of the subaltern school and attempted to retain its initial Marxist orientation while also generating insights into the relationship between identity formation and broader processes of capital accumulation (Ahmad 1992, 2000, 2002; Bannerji 2006). In a South African context, Gramscian insights have been taken forward in relation to the country's attempt to grapple with the constitutive relationship between race and class in the making of apartheid and also in relation to theorizing the conditions of possibility within the terrain of the conjunctural (Hall 1980; Sitas 1990; Hart 2002). At stake in these Gramscian-inspired analyses of the multiple political movements found within India and South Africa is a process of translation in which Gramsci is brought to bear on distinct geographies, refashioning in the process received understandings of his work, a project extended in this collection by Gidwani and Paudel (Chapter 13), Karriem (Chapter 7), Kipfer (Chapter 4), and Whitehead (Chapter 14).

Within the disciplines of international political economy and international relations theory, a neo-Gramscian approach became a cornerstone of attempts to develop critical approaches (Cox 1981, 1987; Gill 1990; for an excellent summary of these debates see Morton 2007). Until recently, the spatiality of this work was relatively fixed, with scholars privileging the relationship between the state and the global (Cox 1981), or, in Gill's (2003) somewhat deterritorialized approach, through an explicit focus on the global. Yet the emphasis on global processes and transnational institutions has tacitly erased the concreteness of space and its social and territorial differentiation. More recently, Morton's (2007) work has both furthered and transformed such a neo-Gramscian approach, through historicizing the territorial state. Far from fetishizing the state, Morton examines how the state is consolidated through passive revolutions that occur at the regional and international levels. Throughout Morton's work, one encounters Gramsci's reflections on urban space, including architecture, the planning of the built environment, and even

the politics of street names. Nevertheless, it is clear that his focus remains on the national and the international, thereby inviting a fuller interrogation of the urban-regional problematic (see Kipfer, Chapter 4).

The Birmingham School's engagement with Gramsci differed profoundly from the neo-Gramscian readings dominant within international relations. Whereas the latter tended to emphasize political economic relations and institutions, theorists such as Stuart Hall (1996; see also Hall et al. 1977) and Paul Willis (1981) interrogated the cultural aspects of Gramsci's work and his distinct understanding of ideology as a constitutive force in social life. While Hall is at times accused of underplaying political economic relations (Jessop et al. 1988), economic concerns feature as one moment within his broader focus on issues of culture, ideology, and difference (see Hall 1988). Overall, the Birmingham School trod a fine line between structuralism and a more empiricist British cultural studies. In the case of Hall, the Althusserian influence lingered, something that was later expressed in his turn to Foucault. Nevertheless, Hall's contribution to an understanding of Gramsci's method and relevance to theorizing race and class is seen in several other chapters in this collection (see Hart, Chapter 15, and Short, Chapter 10). In more concrete terms, Hall's key contribution was to capture the dialectics of consent and coercion in the populist appeal of authoritarian social, political, and economic measures in 1980s Britain. Against this authoritarian populism, Hall proposed a war of position through which the Left might challenge Thatcherism (Hall et al. 1978, 1979). In large part through Hall's work, Gramsci became a cornerstone of the attempt by some on the British Left to reinvent themselves as an oppositional force within the conservative political moment of the 1980s. In the current conjuncture, Hall (2011) again returns briefly to Gramsci to suggest that despite the permanent revolution waged by England's neoliberal coalition government, the hegemony of such a project is never complete and is always troubled by those excluded from the central historic bloc, as signaled by the recent "riots" in England, events we return to later.

In the last few years, this sustained interest in Gramsci has developed into a positive efflorescence of Gramscian scholarship. Much of the work coming from subaltern studies, international relations, and British cultural studies has been included in recent collections (see Martin 2002; Green 2011), while other collections have focused on Gramsci and the postcolonial (Srivastava & Bhattachaya 2012), cultural and social theory (Francese 2009), and lastly, the linguistic debates introduced previously (Ives & Lacorte 2010). John Cammett's bibliography of Gramscian scholarship, now collated by Marcus Green, captures the vast majority of these publications and articles appearing in journals: it brims with a

vibrancy that confirms that this is indeed something of a “Gramscian moment” for Marxist thought. Paradoxically, the justification for yet another new volume on Gramsci might seem dubious given this efflorescence. In what follows, therefore, we consider not simply what Gramsci might bring to disciplines such as geography but also what the excavation of his spatial historicism, attention to nature, and conceptualization of politics might bring to the renewal of Gramscian thought more generally.

Considering Gramsci’s Geographies

It goes without saying that politics – the organized practice of deliberately altering social life – was central to Gramsci’s life and writings. Indeed, Gramsci’s wide-ranging writings on philosophy, intellectuals, folklore, history, different political movements are all directed toward understanding the conditions, strategies, and conceptions of the world necessary for producing a communist, democratic history. Given the centrality of politics in Gramsci’s oeuvre, politics and understandings of “the political” represent one of the central “moments” of the collection. However, in foregrounding political concerns, we also contend that spatial and ecological relations and questions of difference are bound up with Gramsci’s consistent concern to make history differently. As Fontana (1996 and Chapter 6 in this volume) claims, Gramsci’s multiple conceptualizations of nature serve to “channel and focus his conceptual and theoretical energy toward his overriding project – the transformation of reality” (1996: 221). Authors in this collection engage with this claim while making similar arguments regarding the spatiality of Gramsci’s understanding of politics and his engagement with difference. In excavating Gramsci’s writings on nature and space we respond to what we see as two blind spots in Gramscian studies while at the same time building on the extensive work that investigates Gramsci’s understanding of politics and difference. Through examining Gramsci’s writings on space, nature, politics, and difference we seek to do far greater justice to the widely circulating claim that Gramsci’s thought was fundamentally geographical (Said 2000).

Space

Although the influence of a spatial turn has been widely felt within social theory, this has left Gramsci’s writings relatively untouched. This collection moves forward from early spatial readings of Gramsci and

repositions him as a historical-geographical materialist *avant la lettre*. As Berger (in this collection) argues, this spatial sensibility arises, in part, from Gramsci's engagement with the lived environment of Sardinia. Later, having immersed himself in the early debates of the Third International while spending time in Moscow in the early 1920s, it is not surprising that Gramsci was so deeply aware of the geographical questions that confronted the communist movement and that were to be closed off in Stalin's declaration of socialism in one country. Both this internationalism and incipient "cosmopolitanism" are captured, in part, in *The Lyons Theses* of which Gramsci was one of the coauthors. In many respects, his foregrounding of spatial questions, found in both the pre-prison and prison writing, goes against the one-sided historicism of many of Gramsci's contemporaries. Lukács's notorious claim that reification "degrades time to the dimension of space" (1971[1923]: 89) appeared to derogate space while positing time as the active moment in the development of a dialectical class consciousness. There is no such diminution of space or naturalization of spatial relationships in the *Prison Notebooks*: rather, as each of the chapters dealing with space seeks to show, space is one crucial moment within Gramsci's overall philosophy of praxis. If Gramsci's historicism is also a spatial historicism (the most direct claim made for this is found in Kipfer, Chapter 4), there are few clearer examples of this than in his last, incomplete, pre-prison essay "Some Aspects of the Southern Question." What emerges from this text is Gramsci's deep sensitivity to the socially produced territorial distinctions within the developing Italian state and the barriers and opportunities suggested within this geography for a communist movement. While Gramsci sees the possibility for new forms of solidarity (see Featherstone, Chapter 3), the starting point for the essay is the apparent *inability* to achieve an alliance between the southern peasantry and the northern proletariat. The centrality of space in Gramsci's analysis here and in the *Prison Notebooks* reflects his own biography, and in particular his move from provincial Sardinia to the industrial heartland of Turin (see Santucci 2010[2005]). Throughout the *Prison Notebooks*, space becomes a key moment: in his understanding of passive revolution (see Morton 2007) and of common sense (see Guha 1997); in a metaphorical sense to reconsider base-superstructure relations; and in his consideration of the relationship between town and country and the emergence of Americanism and Fordism. At a theoretical and historical level, Gramsci's understanding of hegemony, perhaps his core concept, is unthinkable outside of the spatial relations through which leadership is constituted. Thus when Lefebvre (1991[1974]) asks whether the exercise of hegemony leaves space untouched, a close reading of Gramsci's texts confirms that he understands space as, indeed, produced, differentiated, and

contested within any hegemonic project. While space is certainly central to all political projects, contributors also seek to illustrate the spatiality of many of Gramsci's key concepts while also demonstrating how his analyses of historical conjunctures are almost always geographically inflected (see Feathersone, Chapter 3; Mann, Chapter 5).

Nature

Gramsci's denaturalizing approach to questions of space, reflected in his continual historicizing of its production, can be related to a particular understanding of nature. In the "special notebooks," written during his *annus mirabilis* of 1932, he seems clear in his refusal to view nature as a realm discrete from human contact; rather, nature and society are co-evolving moments. Within such a framework, it is simultaneously far harder to see space as static, fixed, or given.

As early as his university studies, Gramsci worked against the common impulse to naturalize social differences, arguing that "The French Revolution eliminated many privileges and raised up many of the oppressed, but it did nothing more than replace one oppressing class with another. However, it left us a great teaching: privileges and social differences, being the product of societies and not nature, can be overcome" (SPWI 5). Here we see the foundations of one aspect of Gramsci's engagement with the question of nature, in the form of an argument against nature. Chapters by Short (10) and Ekers (11) interrogate the coherence of Gramsci's position on this front, asking whether his move to work against "nature" is achieved in his discussion of gender, sexuality, and "race."

Gramsci's conceptualization of nature is considered more directly within the chapters by Fontana (6), Karriem (7), Wainwright (8), and Loftus (9) and the contribution by Berger that frames the collection. Several notes that extend his pre-prison position are returned to repeatedly, in particular one headed "What is man?" (Q10II, §54; SPN 351–354) in which Gramsci writes of how humanity, as reflected in each "individual," is composed of various elements: "1. the individual; 2. other men; 3. the natural world." The latter two are shaped by active engagements. Praxis is what makes the natural world and reflects back on the humanity of which it is itself a part. Again this argument is developed through Gramsci's specific reading of dialectics. As Haug explains, for Gramsci, dialectics entails an active practice in nature and thus avoids "reducing dialectics to subject–object dialectics," adding that "he sought a path between objectivism and subjectivism" (2005: 259). Nature, as with space, is not simply static and immutable: it is

ever-changing, depending on interactions with other moments that might be historicized and situated within specific geographical contexts and practices.

With a more philological reading of Gramsci's writings on nature now possible, it would be wrong to take such extracts out of context. Instead, it is important to see how they develop alongside what appear to be contradictory positions on questions of nature. In the chapters that deal most directly with questions of nature, it becomes clear that what is taken by some as Gramsci's incipient ecological outlook is not always unambiguous with regard to the mutual co-evolution of nature and society. Indeed, at times Gramsci seems to carry over traces of productivism that are expressed in what appear to be positive comments surrounding humanity's domination of nature. Representative of this is a letter to his son Delio in which Gramsci muses on a question posed by the latter on whether

the elephant can (or could) evolve to the point of becoming a being capable, like man, of dominating the forces of nature and of using them for his own ends – in the abstract. Concretely the elephant has not had the same development as man and certainly will not have it because man uses the elephant, while the elephant cannot use man, not even to eat him. (LPI 380–381)

Similar claims can be found throughout the *Notebooks* and they run sharply against current ecological concerns, appearing to contradict the more promising suggestions for a philosophy of praxis that embraces nature as one of its crucial and active moments. This tension that arises when reading Gramsci on nature perhaps also signals the need for an engagement with and against him. However, in keeping with the overall historicist and geographical sensibility that informs this collection, Fontana (Chapter 6), Wainwright (Chapter 8), and Loftus (Chapter 9) each seek to assess how Gramsci can inform a contemporary environmental politics that is, unabashedly, simultaneously, social. Thus Lefebvre's question as to whether hegemonic projects could leave space untouched can be extended to the problematic of nature and, indeed, the ecological moment in political and social life.

Politics

Gramsci is sometimes considered one among a minority of Marxists to have treated politics as an active, independent force in historical development. Indeed his work is constantly animated by Marx's (1998[1845]: 569) claim that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various

ways; the point is to change it.” Gramsci consistently takes up this charge, seeking to understand the conditions, strategies, “philosophies,” spaces, and cultural and intellectual practices necessary for forging a radical historic bloc (see Glassman, Chapter 12). Yet politics for Gramsci is also a matter of geographical specificity and understanding how the success of the Bolshevik revolution in the “East” could be translated in the “West.” However distinct they may be, he viewed east and west simultaneously as spaces connected through the accumulation of capital and the internationalization of the state (see Thomas 2009a). As Gramsci (Q7, §16; SPN 238) explains, his *Prison Notebooks* were penned with the ambition of providing “a reconnaissance of the terrain and identification of the elements of trench and fortress represented by the elements of civil society” necessary for a renewed revolutionary moment.

We write this introduction in a time of heightened crisis, one which includes a number of historical and spatial rhythms: North American and European states are engaged in wars on a number of fronts; the successes and failures of the “Arab Spring” still hang in the balance; financial, fiscal, and industrial crises are now (as perhaps always) the norm rather than an aberration; and demonstrations in Greece, Spain, and most recently England signal challenges to social polarization and state- and capital-led austerity programs. In an article on the so-called riots in England, David Harvey (2011) turns the narrative of the “feral looter” on its head to ask “what will it take for the rest of us to see and act upon [the rampant dispossession and injustices]? How can we begin all over again? What directions should we take?” He responds: “Answers are not easy. But one thing we do know for certain: we can only get the right answers by asking the right questions.” Implicit in Harvey’s comments is a belief that if we get the analysis right, an adequate form of politics will follow. Gramsci was also interested in “asking the right questions” and in detailed study of particular historical and geographical conjunctures. However, he would, we think, ask a second question: What political strategies and institutional forms would be necessary and adequate for developing a “solidarity of interests among all the members of a social class” in a way that “transcends the corporate limits of the purely economic class ... [and] becomes [the] interests of other subordinate groups” (Q13, §17; SPN 181)? Fundamental to achieving this solidarity is his analysis of relations of force, ethico-political leadership, organization, and strategy, all of which are decisive factors – and not derivative objects of analysis – in Gramsci’s analyses of conjunctures. As Kipfer and Hart argue in the conclusion of this collection, these concrete dimensions of Gramsci’s politics lead to a very different understanding of politics from the metaphysical orientation of the contemporary speculative Left.

Difference

If politics is central to Gramsci's work, we must also examine which subjects are said to be the protagonists of historical change. It is clear from Gramsci's pre-prison and prison writings that the working class is afforded a leading role in progressive movements in Italy and internationally. Often, Gramsci describes the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as "fundamental" or "essential" classes. These classes, he suggests, enter "into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure" (Q12, §1; SPN 6–7). Such language enabled Laclau and Mouffe (1985) to claim that Gramsci's theorizations and political analysis relied on an essentialized and unified class subject, that is, the working class, which in their analysis has limited the capacity of Marxism to understand the rise of new social movements. It is tempting to suggest that Laclau and Mouffe's offensive is waged against a straw Gramsci and that little more can come from engaging in this lengthy debate. However, the inability to address social difference seriously continues to haunt many historical materialists. Peter Thomas's (2009b) magisterial text *The Gramscian Moment* thus remains completely silent on social difference, seeming to confirm Laclau and Mouffe's suspicion of a lingering essential class subject within Gramsci. Social classes are scarcely differentiated in *The Gramscian Moment*, nor is there any mention of gender, sexuality, or "race."

Nevertheless, any presentation of Gramsci as a thinker and political actor unable to deal with social differentiation abstracts from his nuanced understandings of class and social difference, understandings which, in turn, amount to complex political considerations and socially textured accounts of history and space. "Social group" is clearly used in the *Notebooks* not simply as a substitute for class, but rather to identify the different groupings of people that come together politically. Indeed, Gramsci was clearly aware of the processes of racialization, in which southerners were produced as distinct subjects in juxtaposition with northern Italians (see Kipfer, Chapter 4; Short, Chapter 10; and Featherstone, Chapter 3). Additionally, gendered differences are historicized and situated within the geographically specific sexual and laboring practices of different periods. In relation to gender, this comes out most clearly in Gramsci's discussion of "The Sexual Question" in his notes on "Americanism and Fordism" (Q22, §3; SPN 294–297), but it can also be detected in some of his pre-prison writings such as his review of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* for *Avanti!* (SCW 70–72) (see Ekers, Chapter 11; Short, Chapter 10). Gramsci often works against "naturalized" understandings

of social difference and is keenly aware of how relations of class, gender, sexuality, and “race” are deeply spatialized and mediated through processes of uneven development and distinctions between the city and the country. At times, Gramsci seems remarkably progressive for the period in which he was writing in relation to questions of the construction of gendered identities, though he can at the same time succumb to what appear to be the crudest stereotypes and the most knee-jerk moral responses to questions of sexuality more generally. Here, crucially, as with the productivist reading of the domination of nature, Gramsci seems at odds with the overall tendencies that define the philosophy of praxis. Again, addressing such concerns requires contributors to travel with Gramsci while traveling beyond him. Overall, this collection seeks to build on previous studies of Gramsci and difference (Hall 1980; Moe 1990; Haug 2005; Bannerji 2006), while at the same time positioning Gramsci as a much more subtle thinker than either Laclau and Mouffe or Thomas acknowledge.

Gramsci and Geography

Since the emergence of radical approaches in the 1960s and 1970s, Gramsci has occasionally emerged as a secondary but rarely a primary force within disciplines such as geography, urban studies, and planning. Thus, Gramsci’s influence has not been as great as in allied disciplines. To date, his writings have inspired the ethnographic work of many of those included in this collection as well as others. Anthropologists have also considered Gramsci’s writings in relation to spatiality. For British cultural geographers, Gramsci, often refracted through Stuart Hall, has provided something of a bridge between political, economic, and cultural perspectives in the so-called “cultural turn.” For others, Gramsci’s uptake has been heavily influenced by the Regulation School. In this vein of scholarship, Gramsci has been used to consider the linkages between accumulation strategies, hegemonic projects, and modes of socialization. This regulationist reading of Gramsci has also been deployed in order to understand urban governance and changing phases of urbanization. Work on the geopolitical has also developed alongside critical international relations theory in considering hegemony within the emerging world order. On occasions, Gramsci has been enrolled within David Harvey’s historical geographical materialism but, once again, never as a primary force that comes to shape his overall theoretical framework. More recently, and in part building on the pioneering work of those such as Donald Moore, there has been an effort to develop Gramsci’s writings in relation to political ecology.²

Overall, though, Gramsci remains more notable for his absence than his presence. This is deeply paradoxical given that some of the core concerns of radical and critical geographers for the last four decades are at the heart of Gramsci's oeuvre. Transforming his philosophy of praxis to a primary force within a redefined historical materialism requires the double engagement with Gramsci attempted in this collection. Gramsci's work will need to be engaged in a sustained fashion that pays careful attention to the rhythms of this thought and to Gramscian scholarship more broadly. At the same time, the bearing of Gramsci on geographical debates will depend on moving beyond the relatively high levels of abstraction featured in the recent flourishing of Gramscian scholarship. Realizing a "living philology" requires that conceptual debates be grounded more firmly within the lived realities of historically and geographically specific practices. On these grounds, the book is only a partial beginning and considerably more work remains to be done.

Summary of the Book

Considerations of space are laced through many contributions of this volume, often in a close relationship to questions of nature, difference, and politics. In Part I of the book, Gramsci's sensitivity to various modalities of producing space – territory, scale, place, network – is most explicit. Adam Morton (Chapter 2) draws out Gramsci's treatment of space through a discussion of passive revolution – a form of political restoration with progressive-transformative aspects. As Morton underlines, Gramsci develops the concept of passive revolution through an analysis of various moments in Italian history – the Risorgimento, Fordism, the formation of communism – which are intimately connected to interregional and international relations between north and south (in Italy), east and west (in Europe), and Europe and North America. But the relevance of Gramsci's passive revolution is not exhausted by the Italian situation. As Morton argues in Edward Said's terms, passive revolution can travel provided it is not applied mechanically but located carefully within the specific dynamics of uneven development in other contexts. Morton (2011) has done this himself successfully in the case of Mexico.

In deploying Gramsci's own approach to developing concepts from within the concrete, Morton's chapter shows that spatial concerns are integral to Gramsci's method. This point is also made by Kipfer in Chapter 4, who insists that Gramsci's peculiar historicism articulates both time and space. He shows how Gramsci weaves analyses of the city and the countryside into his discussion of the multiple rhythms of Italian

history and revolutionary strategy. In the manner of this “spatial historicism,” Gramsci sees the relationship between city and countryside not as linear and unequivocal. Rather than markers of civilization (tradition or modernity) or singular social forces (proletariat or peasantry, bourgeoisie or nobility), city and countryside are products of geographically uneven and historically contingent dynamics even as they mediate a variety of social and political forces. In fact, Gramsci goes as far as to say that political and intellectual claims to urbanity or rurality (like the ones made by fascist intellectuals in the 1920s) are themselves elements in the struggle for hegemony. In turn, for Gramsci, the construction of a revolutionary historic bloc will entail the transformation of “city” and “countryside” as we currently know them. This nuanced treatment of city and countryside remains crucial in today’s rapidly (but unevenly) urbanizing world because it avoids the “urbanist” trap of modernization theory while making it difficult to sustain “ruralist” critiques of imperialism.

Gramsci’s spatially sensitive historicism is also a form of strategic thinking, relating situated conjunctural analysis to considerations of political intervention. While Morton points to Gramsci’s search for the weakest link in the uneven composition of passive revolutions and Kipfer highlights Gramsci’s emphasis on wars of movement/position also as transformations of city–countryside relations, David Featherstone (Chapter 3) argues that Gramsci’s manifold engagements with internationalism and cosmopolitanism harbor “subaltern geographies of connection.” For Gramsci, who treated alliances among different subaltern groups not as instrumental additions but as co-constitutive and transformative of these very groups, internationalism was more than the sum total of national party strategies. It involved the production of translocal and transnational forms of solidarity. In contrast to his better-known critique of cosmopolitanism as an inorganic force in Italian history, Gramsci sometimes terms these subaltern and progressive geographical connections “modern” cosmopolitanism. Echoing Morton’s and Said’s point about making theory travel, Featherstone gives us insight into a mid-twentieth-century example of radical cosmopolitanism: Hamish Henderson’s attempt to translate Gramsci’s work across and against the orthodoxies of the Italian and British communist parties, an attempt which helped form the New Left in Britain.

Gramsci’s geographies are not without limits, of course. Whereas Kipfer points out that Gramsci’s argument about the historical contingency and variability of “city” and “countryside” is limited by his undertheorized insistence on these very terms, Geoff Mann (Chapter 5) deplores that Gramsci never developed a full-fledged analysis of the role of money in the suturing of state and civil society, which is a profoundly

geographical-territorial – as well as historical – process. In a succinct sketch of Hobbes and Hegel, Mann underlines how in a bourgeois world, money is a powerful force not only in forming civil society but also in enabling a peculiar unity-in-difference of state and civil society. Mann argues that Gramsci's notion of the integral state, which assumes that the distinction between political and civil society is merely "methodological," not "organic," incorporates a number of Hegelian insights but fails to shed light on the role of money in articulating state and civil society. Yet, according to Mann, nothing in Gramsci's work stands in the way of developing just such an analysis of money as an "instrument of hegemony par excellence." Given the state of the capitalist world today, there has never been a better opportunity to develop Gramsci in just this direction.

Part II of the collection focuses on Gramsci's writings on nature and what can be read as his nascent understanding of environmental thought and politics. The chapters in this section vary greatly: some undertake philological readings of Gramsci's musings on nature, others try to deploy Gramsci's writings in order to analyze the current conjuncture, and a third set of contributions approach the question of nature through Gramsci's theorization of "race," gender, and sexuality.

Chapter 6 is an edited version of a paper by Benedetto Fontana published in *Philosophical Forum* in 1996. Fontana's nuanced philological approach to the concept of nature in the *Prison Notebooks* has become a key reference point for recent work that has considered Gramsci's relevance for environmental thought. Summarizing five key moments within Gramsci's overall conception of nature, Fontana places particular emphasis on humanity's domination of nature. By turning to Hegel's master-slave relationship and Gramsci's interpretation of Hegel, Fontana concludes optimistically with the hope that "environmentalism and ecological consciousness [might] emerge from the domination and exploitation of nature."

The chapters by Joel Wainwright and Alex Loftus both pick up on certain aspects of Fontana's study. Wainwright (Chapter 8) provides a reading of Gramsci's deployment of "conceptions of the world." Arguing that Gramsci's use of conceptions of the world represents "one of the most creative and radical elements" of his thought, Wainwright develops his own interpretation in relation to Gramsci's theorization of nature. He concludes by considering the manner in which Gramsci extends the Marxist tradition with his theorization of "conceptions of the world" while, perhaps paradoxically, remaining merely indebted to Marx for an understanding of nature and human nature.

Loftus (Chapter 9) positions the concept of nature more in relation to the distinctiveness of Gramsci's overall philosophy of praxis. Not only is

a nuanced theorization of nature at the heart of Gramsci's absolute immanence, absolute historicism, and absolute humanism of history, but the philosophy of praxis provides the basis for a versatile reading of ideologies of nature. The different interpretations of Gramsci's originality when it comes to questions of nature rest, in part, on how we position Gramsci in relation to the history of dialectical thought (see Haug 2005) and, indeed, how we interpret dialectics. For Wainwright, Gramsci appears to distance himself from a dialectics of nature, whereas for Loftus, a dialectical relationship is central to Gramsci's positioning of nature within the overall philosophy of praxis.

Abdurazak Karriem (Chapter 7) puts Gramsci to work in making sense of the political possibilities within the Landless Peasant Movement in Brazil (MST). He looks not only at the spatial and political strategies employed by the movement but also at the ecological strategies that activists have adopted within their agroecological praxis. The MST, Karriem argues, has played a leading role in opposing neoliberalism within Brazil and, in so doing, has forced a re-evaluation of the role of the party in the construction of hegemony. Overall, Karriem suggests ways in which Gramsci might inform the praxis of the MST and also, crucially, the ways in which the MST might force us to think about the philosophy of praxis in relation to nature in the current conjuncture.

Nicola Short and Michael Ekers, in Chapters 10 and 11 respectively, take a slightly different tack, approaching the question of nature through examining Gramsci's attempt to denaturalize social identities. Both Short and Ekers push Gramsci further to probe the intricacies of the current conjuncture: this probing is conducted through detailed readings of the notes on the Sexual Question and the Southern Question. At the heart of both sets of notes is a denaturalizing approach that opens up the possibility for theorizing difference. Short is optimistic about finding resources for the theorization of difference within the *Notebooks* themselves. Ekers is somewhat less sanguine, arguing instead that we need to read Gramsci against himself. Short positions Gramsci's understanding of the production of identity in relation to changing production relations, not as essentialized, fixed, fast, or frozen subject positions, but as fluid, shifting senses of oneself as part of an articulated totality. She suggests that we theorize gendered and racial identities in relation to Gramscian concepts of articulation, uneven development, and the ethico-political.

Ekers recognizes the possibility of reading Gramsci's notes on sexuality in a way that denaturalizes gendered identities, but he goes on to argue that explicit and implicit heteronormative assumptions in Gramsci's work serve to essentialize identities in different ways. Understanding the relationship between sexuality and work requires exactly the kind of absolute historicism that Gramsci demands of us in

his overall philosophy of praxis. It also poses a challenge to ideological assumptions around normative sexualities. Thus, to bring Gramsci to bear on questions of difference in a way that might animate debates in the contemporary moment requires reading with and against Gramsci.

From different perspectives, the first two chapters in Part III, on “Politics,” focus on how Gramsci can illuminate the conditions of possibility for the emergence of an alternative subaltern hegemony from within specific configurations of political, economic, and social forces. In “Cracking Hegemony: Gramsci and the Dialectics of Rebellion” (Chapter 12), Jim Glassman calls into question politically voluntarist readings of Gramsci, as well as arguments that the possibilities for resistance to capitalist rule are to be found in spaces that represent some sort of “outside” to capitalism. Instead, he argues, Gramsci encourages us to focus on the possibilities opened up by the contradictions inherent in the sociospatially uneven development of capitalism. Like Short and Ekers, Glassman gives central attention to Gramsci’s writings on Americanism and Fordism. His chapter also forms part of a debate over dialectics that threads through this volume.

In the chapter that follows, Gidwani and Paudel draw on Gramscian insights to highlight the prehistory of the Maoist rebellion in Nepal that resulted in the capture of state power in 2006. At the same time, like several other contributors to this book, they suggest how these insights require modification and extension. “Gramsci at the Margins” (Chapter 13) conveys vividly and concretely how, over a 40-year period, Thabang village became what the authors call the nerve center of the Maoist insurgency that proliferated across the country from the mid-1990s. The Gramscian moment of this chapter turns around the situated practices, processes, and power relations through which the fragmentary common sense (*senso comune* in Gramsci’s terms) of Thabang villagers became transformed into a more critically coherent theoretical consciousness – processes in which the actions and understandings of peasant women played a formative role. Moving beyond Gramsci, Gidwani and Paudel point to how political organization and consolidation operated crucially through extended family and kinship networks, along with the work of memory.

Crossing from Nepal to India, Judith Whitehead (Chapter 14) confronts the huge political challenges of the world’s largest democracy in which neoliberal reforms have taken hold with a vengeance since the early 1990s. Rapidly expanding reproduction of capital in India today, Whitehead argues, is taking place through a combination of accumulation through growth and accumulation by dispossession that is sharply accentuating class polarization. Whitehead’s chapter engages critically with those like Partha Chatterjee (2004, 2008), who maintain that

earlier neo-Gramscian analysis of India's postcolonial passive revolution needs to be rethought in terms of a sharp – and distinctively non-Gramscian – distinction between civil and political society. Along with Gavin Smith (2011), Whitehead points to the limits of this formulation, and the utility of an alternative conception of selective hegemony – a conception which, she argues, sheds light on the imperatives for what Gramsci would have termed a “united front” strategy, while also warning of what in her title she calls “intimations of massacres foretold.”

In “Gramsci, Geography, and the Languages of Populism” (Chapter 15) Gillian Hart is concerned with the proliferation of populist politics in many regions of the world today, most immediately postapartheid South Africa, in relation to deepening capitalist crisis. Starting with a critique of Ernesto Laclau's influential *On Populist Reason* (2005), Hart argues that it constitutes a retrogression from his essay “Towards a Theory of Populism” (in Laclau 1977) in which he extended the concept of articulation to insist on a nonreductionist understanding of class and capital as foundational to grasping populist politics. Engaging with fierce debates over race and class in South Africa, Stuart Hall (1980) took Laclau's conception of articulation in a more Gramscian direction. Yet neither Laclau nor Hall attends to Gramsci's spatio-historical theory of language and translation, linked in turn with his relational conception of the person, and with the philosophy of praxis – the practices and processes of “renovating and making ‘critical’ an already existing activity” (Q11, §12; SPN 331) that are central to any effort to grapple with populism.

Questions of language and translation form the central focus of the concluding chapter, in which Kipfer and Hart explore what it might mean to “translate” Gramsci in relation to the challenges of the present conjuncture. They take as their starting point Peter Thomas's (2009a) critique of the “speculative left” – those like Alain Badiou who propose a metaphysical conception of “the political” as prior to and uncontaminated by profane politics. Kipfer and Hart concur with Thomas that Gramsci's conception of politics as translating practice fundamentally challenges the a priori declarations of the speculative left. Indeed the key themes of this book – the spatial historicist, differential, and denaturalizing character of Gramsci's historical materialism – are intimately linked with Gramsci's understanding of politics as translation. Yet Kipfer and Hart also point to the limits of Thomas's insistence on the contemporary salience of a united front strategy. Grappling with the challenges of the present conjuncture, they argue, requires further translation of Gramsci – and they suggest how Frantz Fanon, Himani Bannerji, and Henri Lefebvre provide us with valuable resources for working both with as well as beyond Gramsci.

New Paths, New Relationships, New Concepts

We want to close this introduction by considering what an engagement with Gramsci might mean for geographical debates. In his Afterword to the monumental work *Limits to Capital*, David Harvey (1982: 446) reflects on what he has left out and what “new paths to take, new concepts to construct, new relationships to explore.” He turns immediately to the lived life of the laborer, writing:

We should never forget, however, that though labour power is a commodity the labourer is not. And though capitalists may view them as “hands” possessed of stomachs “like some lowly creature on the sea-shore,” as Dickens once put it, the labourers themselves are human beings possessed of all manner of sentiments, hopes and fears, struggling to fashion a life for themselves that contains at least minimal satisfactions. (1982: 447)

Harvey touches on such concerns in a work he was producing concurrently, looking at the emergence of Second Empire Paris (Harvey 2003); yet nowhere does he really take these new paths or construct the new concepts needed. In contrast, Gramsci’s entire corpus was “defined by a singular and consistent concern: the attempt to elaborate a political theory which would be adequate to give expression to – and, just as importantly, to shape and guide – the popular and subaltern classes’ attempts to awaken from the nightmares of their history and assume social and political leadership” (Thomas 2009b: 159). Gramsci worked abstract concerns through in the lived realities of subaltern groups and their efforts to make sense of the rapidly transforming worlds around them. At the heart of his work are the hopes and fears, sentiments and connections, to those in authority referred to by Harvey, as well as the conditions of possibility for new relationships. Any historical-geographical materialism adequate to the present moment and capable of advancing to a politics that might be genuinely transformative must speak to such concerns. Gramsci, we argue, is a crucial ally in the development of such a program.

Notes

- 1 See also Kipfer and Hart, Chapter 16 in this volume.
- 2 No list of such engagements could ever claim to be complete. Among those whose ethnographic work has been inspired by Gramsci are: Katharyne Mitchell 2004; Ruth Gilmore 2007; Aaron Bobrow-Strain 2007; Jennifer

Casolo 2009; Sharad Chari 2004; and Mark Hunter 2010. Anthropological engagements from a spatial perspective can be found in Donald Moore 1996 and 2005, and Gaston Gordillo 2004. For fleeting engagements by cultural geographers, see Cosgrove and Jackson 1987; Jackson 1989; Cresswell 1996; Mitchell 2000; Hubbard et al. 2002. For engagements inspired by Regulation Theory, see Goodwin et al. 1993; Jessop 1997; Jessop et al. 1999; Kipfer & Keil 2002. For geopolitical engagements, see Agnew 2005. For recent political ecological engagements, see Cohen 2004; Ekers et al. 2009; Perkins 2011. For further engagements, see Soja 1989; Harvey 2003, 2010; Sparke 2005; Peet 2007; Purcell 2008.

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