

## **Infrapolitics: the Project and its Politics. Allegory and Denarrativization. A Note on Posthegemony**

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ALBERTO MOREIRAS  
*TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY*

The first part of what follows was written for the Columbia University Political Concepts Conference, organized by Stathis Gourgouris, and held in March 2015. During the discussion that followed my presentation, a number of interlocutors made the point that they were mystified by the perhaps abstract tone of what was proposed—that they would have liked to see it contextualized within political struggle proper; that, while they recognized that what I call infrapolitics does not propose itself as a form of politics, but rather as a peculiar withdrawal or retreat from the political field, the retreat is still itself politically significant, and such significance needed to come through more forcefully in my talk. Such reactions, while entirely legitimate, already spring, it seems, to a certain extent, from a misunderstanding concerning the specific work infrapolitics sets out to do. But merely appealing to the fact that misunderstandings may or do happen, that infrapolitics runs the risk of being misunderstood structurally and consistently, that infrapolitics is precisely the choice to dwell in a particular, murky zone of ambiguous indistinction, is hardly satisfactory—not satisfactory for the listeners or readers, and equally unsatisfactory for me.

I thought of addressing the misunderstanding as such—not to solve it, but to make it thematic, hence necessarily more complex. This led me to another paper I prepared a couple of weeks later, this time for a seminar series on Allegory and Political Representation organized by Jacques Lezra for the American Comparative Literature Association meeting in Seattle in April 2015, which is now the second part of this essay. I think it does address the political struggle within which infrapolitics finds itself, even though, arguably, still in a general, necessarily not specific enough way. But this is unavoidable, which is precisely the point I would like to make. There is no amount of precision that might dissolve the constitutive ambiguity of the infrapolitical prospect, of the infrapolitical exercise, and that might undo its refusal of the political in favor of merely a new form of politicality. In other words, the affirmation that infrapolitics is not a politics, which I make in the first part of the essay, must be left to stand, even if in order to critique it. It is my hope that the second part

of this essay might either clarify or further obscure the issue—which is then presented, frankly, as an issue for discussion. But the grounds of the discussion would not be properly in place if I did not include at least a practical intimation of what is meant by posthegemony and posthegemonic democracy in the first part. This is the purpose of the third part of this essay, which was originally read at a panel of the 2014 meeting of the Modern Language Association organized by Ignacio Sánchez Prado. The reader may experience a certain disjunction between the first and second and third parts. It has seemed to me that a contrived erasure of it—certainly possible through writing, since writing is always already erasing—would not do. Instead, I opt—and it is, obviously enough, a rhetorical ploy, even an infrapolitical ploy—for letting the disjunction remain. I have also chosen to retain the traces of the three different oral presentations taking the introductory character of this issue of *Transmodernity* into account.

### **I. Infrapolitics—the Project.**

The thought of infrapolitics started to circulate about ten years ago in discussions within the field of Latin American Studies. Of course, it was already a known term, from James C. Scott's theorization, but we were looking for something else, which does not preempt intersections.<sup>1</sup> There was a long period of latency—infrapolitics would be mentioned here and there as a placemaker, as a hint, but we were not ready to launch into a sustained discussion of its potential. In 2014, we decided to form a group on the issue. We have it now, it is a fairly complex group that, in its larger avatar, comprises about forty scholars of all ages and from several countries (Spain, Chile, Mexico, Canada, Italy, the United States), while its core is composed of 10 to 15 unherdable cats. Most discussions are conducted, when not at workshops, through a private social network, and our public interface, the WordPress blog named Infrapolitical Deconstruction Collective, has been fairly active since September of last year. There are several books, dissertations, and monographic issues in preparation either touching on the subject or centrally confronting it. There are some recently published essays on it, conference panels have been presented, there has been some buzz or noise, tidings of something developing. So, I think there will be talk about it in coming years outside our group. It is a great pleasure for me to present the term, or its idea, outside the blog, outside our own group, perhaps only for the second time as far as I know (the first happened last year, when Jorge Álvarez Yáguez made a presentation on it

at a conference in Madrid).<sup>2</sup> Of course, I have to say right away in order to prevent misunderstandings, I am already slightly misplaced—this is a Conference on political concepts, and infrapolitics is not a political concept. Or perhaps we could say that it is and it is not political, or that it is political to the extent it seeks to glimpse and reflect upon a certain outside of politics. And it is perhaps not even a concept.<sup>3</sup>

So what is infrapolitics? Or better put, less ambiguously, what does one talk about when one says “infrapolitics”? But even so: is “talking about” something or other what one attempts through infrapolitics? Or is it rather a matter of “speaking from” a place or a site we would rather not thematize in order not to turn it into an “object” of research, which would imply the sort of structuration of things, the sort of “image of the world” we are trying to pull ourselves out of in the first place? If language can hardly speak representationally about language without turning language into a representation, then infrapolitical language refuses, if it can, to turn infrapolitics into yet another mechanism for representation, another brand of thought in the marketplace of ideas, another “political option” in the university, for instance, another flavor of academic discourse.<sup>4</sup> We are not interested in thematizing infrapolitics, in turning it into another form of computation of the world. So what is our interest?

In his 1983 “Letter to a Japanese Friend,” Jacques Derrida responds to a demand to offer “a schematic and preliminary reflection on the word ‘deconstruction’” (1), and he says: “What deconstruction is not? Everything of course! What is deconstruction? Nothing of course!” (5). We could perhaps *say* the same thing of infrapolitics, a nothing that is also at the same time not everything, but that might be hardly placating. In any case, like deconstruction, infrapolitics may turn out to be “not a good word” (5), simply something that one can only use more or less casually, not systematically, seeking specific effects, “in highly determined situations” (5). That being so, there is more in the Derridean text about the bad word deconstruction that we can use, casually and unsystematically, for infrapolitics—without attempting in any way, and at any rate not yet, not for a time, to indicate that deconstruction and infrapolitics may *be* the same thing or come to the same thing.

Derrida complains about the sheer difficulty of fighting off the truism that “deconstruction” was negative, mostly negative, negative for the most part. True, there were

some ostensible reasons for that, as people simply could not figure out what it was that deconstruction aimed to offer. For instance, Derrida says, deconstruction could not propose itself as an “analysis,” since “the dismantling of a structure is not a regression toward a simple element, toward an indissoluble origin” (3). And deconstruction could not propose itself as a “critique,” since “the instance of *krinein* or of *krisis* (decision, choice, judgment, discernment) is itself, as is all the apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential ‘themes’ or ‘objects’ of deconstruction” (3). And, Derrida says, the same thing can be said about “method,” which has the pleasant/unpleasant corollary that deconstruction, therefore, is not a methodology for reading and interpretation and can therefore not be “reappropriated and domesticated by academic institutions” (3). Finally, but not really, Derrida says that deconstruction is also not “an act or an operation” (3), because there is something more passive about it than the passivity that is customarily opposed to activity, and also because deconstruction does not return “to an individual or collective subject” (3). The most that can be said, therefore, for deconstruction, is that it happens, there is deconstruction, “*ca se déconstruit*,” and the “*se*” bears the whole enigma (4).

There is a case to be made that infrapolitics, as we think of it or as we let it think us, is neither an analytic tool nor a form of critique, neither a method nor an act or an operation, that infrapolitics happens, always and everywhere, and its happening beckons to us and seems to call for a transformation of the gaze, for some kind of passage to some strange and unthematizable otherwise of politics which is also, it must be, an otherwise than politics. In the brief “Letter,” there is a hint of this strangeness that infrapolitics and deconstruction would share, which comes when Derrida, quite unexpectedly, I think, for most readers, says, abruptly and without elaboration, that deconstruction is, therefore, and this seems to be a definition or the beginning of a definition, “a discourse or rather a writing that can make up for the incapacity of the word to be equal to a ‘thought’” (4). Infrapolitics is also a region, or a site, as we called it before, where some incapacity of the word to be equal to thought, to a “thought,” an unfillable gap or a fissure between language and thought, also happens, but infrapolitics cannot even claim the status of a “discourse or rather a writing” (infrapolitical reflection is, of course, both, but not infrapolitics as such, if there is or could be an “as such” of infrapolitics.) So what is its interest? Can infrapolitics make up for an incapacity, a lack, a gap between language and thought?

I will give you something you can destroy, with the caveat that my act of giving it to you may already be a destruction—some contradictions will inevitably occur between what I have just said and what I will say, and I will try to deal with them in subsequent paragraphs. Those contradictions are in fact hardly avoidable, though, from the basic fact that infrapolitics cannot speak about itself without betraying itself. So I will jump into it right away, in the abstract, skipping all the other preliminaries, as one does when one jumps into a cold pool, a decision and exposure to judgment, since the occasion demands it, and infrapolitics is nothing but its occasion. Infrapolitics is, minimally, a field of reflection open to the exploration of conditions of existence at the time of the accomplishment of the onto-theological structuration of modernity. At such a time, now, we understand that experience, everyone's experience, is crossed by politics, that politics marks and determines and frames it in irreducible and fundamental forms, but we also understand, or think we understand, or would like to understand, that politics cannot exhaust, and does not exhaust experience. Experience exceeds or sub-cedes politics, and it can therefore be thematized and studied infrapolitically.

At the time of the self-accomplishment of the onto-theological structuration of the known world, politics cannot merely be understood as a taken for granted, natural event, or procedure. Politics is itself subject to historical conditions of manifestation, quite apart from obvious intrahistorical divisions such as left/right, or liberals/conservatives, or populists/technocrats. Politics, in its present range of manifestation, still responds to a particular historical epoch and to a particular structure of civilization. In other words, the nature of politics is not itself political, but rather historical through and through. There is no intemporal politics; rather, politics happens once every time, even if it is a matter of a program being implemented, but the manner of its happening is not independent from a basic social ideology that frames the range of its occurrence. At the time of the self-accomplishment of onto-theology, politics is onto-theological through and through, even when it finds itself playing a so-called counterhegemonic or resistant role, and the fact that such determination may have been forgotten is no obstacle—it simply furthers its ideological nature.

But infrapolitics does not seek to determine the nature of politics, not even in its contemporary dispensations. Infrapolitics is not a critique of politics. Its interest, and we can

call it hermeneutic, phenomenological, or deconstructive, is to be found in the attempt to delimit the political determination in favor of its excess—or its sub-cess; at any rate, its difference. Infrapolitics dwells in the difference from politics. Infrapolitics, as a field of reflection or a site for reflection, reflects on the sub-cess of politics, that is, not politics as sub-cessed, rather the active infraexcess of the political, whatever underflows politics as we know it. As a sub-cess, that is, as an excess that precedes, as a site for reflection not circumscribable or determinable by any political determination, which must remain blind to it, infrapolitics may reach a critical dimension—infrapolitics thinks of politics insofar as it thinks the otherwise-than-politics—, but its primary exercise is not politico-critical, but rather interpretive, or hermeneutic. Infrapolitics lives and opens up in the withdrawal or the *retrait* of the political field, which means it does carry along an intense politicity, but it is the impolitical politicity that suspends and questions every apparent politicization, every instance of political emergence, every heliopolitical moment, and places them provisionally under the sign of a destruction.

We have reserved a name for the impolitical politicality of infrapolitics: we call it posthegemony, or even democratic posthegemony. Infrapolitics meets in posthegemonic democracy, or in its praxis, which is posthegemonic democratization, the supplementary interruption of its own sub-cessive praxis. I will try to be all too clear on this: infrapolitics is not a politics, but posthegemonic democratization is a political praxis, and it would be hard to have one without the other. There can perhaps be infrapolitics without posthegemony, but there is no praxis of posthegemony without infrapolitical reflection. Both infrapolitics and posthegemony attempt to think the gap between epochal politics, as it can be available to us, and its difference from itself—that in the human experience, or in existence that, while marked or even covered over by politics, is itself not political, is not itself political, while it subtends politics. We may have forgotten about it, which makes bringing it back up more and not less urgent.<sup>5</sup>

How did this come about? If the project of the Infrapolitical Deconstruction Collective has a common genealogy, and it must have it, although it is lived differently by every one of its members, we must find it in our provenance—the common link is the university, and the specific field of Latin American Studies in it. Of course the older members of the Collective have more scars than the younger ones, but this is all a matter of

disciplinary history and can be traced back to texts and specific discussions, and even events. After the late 1990s, in our perception, the general cultural studies paradigm, which had already been used by us as an escape from the constrictions of disciplinary life as we knew it, hit a wall and became unproductive. At the same time, the so-called political turn in cultural studies, which was no more than an intensification of claims of political salvation through academic work, although it included in principle a critique of identity politics in the name of universalism, became mechanical and dogmatic, and it still is. A critique of the history of the left, quite neglected by the representatives of the so-called political turn, who seemed to be much more invested in a mere repetition of the history of the left in modernity, provoked a general or even terminal dissatisfaction with available or dominant theoretical paradigms both in the larger field of the Humanities and in the smaller field of the Latinamericanist humanities, including, by the way, subalternism, which, in retrospect, had been the last illusion or delusion of the field.

All of this had effects, and for a very long time effects that were mostly disorienting. But finally, as Sergio Villalobos recently put it in a set of “Seminar Notes,” “there was a need to move forward towards the constitution of a horizon of problems that could articulate a posthegemonic understanding of the political understood as a-principial thought [in Reiner Schürmann’s sense] and infrapolitics, understood as a reflection on existence beyond political demand” (“Notas” 2).<sup>6</sup> In the meantime, the university was evolving into its neoliberal avatar, and ceased to be particularly interesting as a usable institution, except in the most trivial sense (a relatively secure job, not to be dismissed). I would add that all of these negative or critical predispositions developed in the wake of a certain congenital *marranismo*, which we came to understand as the productive side of the Hispanic intellectual and existential tradition, or at least the side of it we were interested in continuing to preserve. This last thing is perhaps what makes our project not exportable to everyone, and not even likable by everyone—it is simply what we do, from a certain understanding of things, and in the wake of many historical failures, which are by no means only ours. Others are welcome to continue to do what they do, and there is nothing further from our interests than any proactive spirit of persuasion. We simply take the right to do what we think is feasible, given time—which is not a right, we know, the professional field will generously provide for us. But so be it.

For the fact is that the project of infrapolitics is only derivatively an academic practice—most of us work at the university and we do our work in the context or the ruins of the university apparatus. But we understand all too well that the university is today subjected to conditions of production and reproduction, themselves derived from the onto-theological self-accomplishment of modernity, that are incompatible with the future of the infrapolitical project. Infrapolitics is postinstitutional to the very extent it seeks its necessary radicalization. We could see it as a modality of savage thought, or of what Catherine Malabou calls “the irruption of the fantastic in philosophy,” which of course overwhelms us as much as it calls us, and destroys us as much as it informs us.<sup>7</sup> But the fantastic in philosophy is about the time of life against the time of work. We are not looking for inscription, for celebration, we are not looking for a community or a filiation, we are countercommunitarian and hostile to any capture formation. And our wager is for a long and incalculable time of reflection against every kind of excellentist or salvific productionism.

It must have become clear already that our project places itself in a tradition of thought marked by the work of Martin Heidegger, which it seeks to interpret or reinterpret by learning from a number of thinkers in his wake: from Reiner Schürmann to Cathérine Malabou, from Simone Weil and Luce Irigaray and María Zambrano to Felipe Martínez Marzoa, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Nancy, Massimo Cacciari, Mario Tronti, Miguel Abensour, Óscar del Barco, Agustín García Calvo, Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, or Davide Tarizzo, including, of course, many others. There is nothing too original here, except that we aim to keep alive a certain simplicity in Heidegger’s thought that he himself covered up at times—a problem that has repeated itself in its reception. If infrapolitical reflection is a sustained attempt at working out the sub-ceding passage from politics into a region of existence politics occludes, this is not to be taken as a flight from politics, but rather as an attempt to determine, even to thematize, the conditions under which an alternative conception of the political could perhaps become manifest. In “Overcoming Metaphysics,” a text written between 1936 and 1946, Heidegger indicates the possibility of a historical opening into explicit infrapolitics when he says:

The struggle between those in power and those who want to come to power: On every side there is struggle for power. Everywhere power itself is what is determinative. Through this struggle for power, the being of power is posited in the being of its unconditional

dominance by both sides. At the same time, however, one thing is still covered up here: the fact that this struggle is in the service of power and is willed by it. Power has overpowered these struggles in advance. The will to will alone empowers these struggles. Power, however, overpowers various kinds of humanity in such a way that it expropriates from man the possibility of ever escaping from the oblivion of Being on such paths. This struggle is of necessity planetary and as such undecidable in its being because it has nothing to decide, since it remains excluded from all differentiation, from the difference (of Being from beings), and thus from truth. Through its own force is it driven out into what is without destiny: into the abandonment of Being. (100)

One may not like the tropology of Being, the ontological difference, or other aspects of the Heideggerian jargon, but there remains the fact that an alternative politicality is announced that would not be blindly based on the will to will, of which in another section of the essay we are told that it can only bring about “a collapse of the world” and “a desolation of the earth:” “Man wills himself as the volunteer of the will to will, for which all truth becomes that error which it needs in order to be able to guarantee for itself the illusion that the will to will can will nothing other than empty nothingness, in the face of which it asserts itself without being able to know its own completed nullity” (86). We call all of this, in political things, hegemony, and the search for hegemony, and the hegemonic conceptualization of politics, of which one of its greatest interpreters, Ernesto Laclau, has said that it necessarily exhausts politics *tout court*. We disagree: hegemony cannot exhaust politics, as there is posthegemonic politicality.

At the same time, even if Infrapolitical Deconstruction aims to continue to let itself be inflected by the Heideggerian schematics concerning the history of being, the completion of metaphysics, the end of epochal history, the completion of principal thought, it is not our intention to be in favor of any valorization (or, indeed, de-valorization) of particular historico-cultural horizons or specific human profiles. The former list of genealogical conditions of our project should make it clear. The notion of value, or any form of cultural value, was denounced by some of us as incompatible with a subalternist approach even at its most superficial. Our *marranismo* has a few teeth, but not to chew on the exaltation or denigration of any form of human life. The ongoing publication of Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks* makes it clearer than it ever has been that our project must also affirm a radical

anti-Heideggerianism as well. If we take the Heideggerian scheme on the history of being as a variation on the Hegelian one, hence a non-renounceable part of the history of thought, the explicit, intentional undertones revealed by the *Black Notebooks* affirming an “ontic” or “existentiell” plunge into both anti-Semitism and an overvaluation of “German” destiny in the preparation of a transformation of thought, must be rejected not just in themselves but also as a master tropology for any kind of alternative cultural-historical valorization.

This adaptation of what was originally a pro-Nazi tropology—one can qualify this in various ways, but the overwhelming fact unfortunately remains—has been a rather endemic problem in the so-called Heideggerian left, as can be seen for instance in Massimo Cacciari’s 1976 *Krisis*.<sup>8</sup> Infrapolitical reflection must affirm the radical suspension of any cultural-historical valorization as just another form of principal thought, which, as principal thought, is and would be always already committed to hegemonic power and hegemonic accomplishment. The Heideggerian thematics of the end of epochal history can only be referred by us to the end of the hegemonic/sacrificial structuration of history and historical life. Infrapolitical reflection abandons power as principal force—as the will to will understood as the final principle of metaphysical history—for the sake of an an-archy whose foundations can be traced back to Heidegger as well, mediated by Emmanuel Levinas, Reiner Schürmann, María Zambrano, and others.

There are two false exits from the Heideggerian schematic structuration of the completion of onto-theology, both of them favored by Heidegger and by, in Heidegger’s wake, the Heideggerian right: one of them is the rupture of the principle of general equivalence, as the dominant structuration of all hegemonic thought in our time, in favor of an alternative hierarchization, that is, a new hegemony, a new establishment of order and rank. But there is another false exit, and I will merely hint at it. I will do it with another quotation from Heidegger, this time from *Contributions to Philosophy. Of the Event*. There, in the first section, in the Prospect, under the heading Historicity and Being, Heidegger gives us a notion of double sovereignty that, we contend, is the very possibility of a continued hegemonization of the time of life. This is what Heidegger says:

Sovereignty over the masses who have become free (i.e., groundless and self-serving) must be erected and sustained with the shackles of “organization.” In this way can what is thereby “organized” grow back in its original ground, so that what is of the masses is not simply

controlled but transformed? . . . Still another sovereignty is needed here, one that is concealed and restrained and that for a long time will be sparse and quiet. Here the future ones must be prepared, those who create in being itself new locations out of which a constancy in the strife of earth and world will eventuate again . . . Both forms of sovereignty, though fundamentally different, must be willed and simultaneously affirmed by those who know. (49-50)

The second false exit is the pretense that thinking or poetizing could change the nature of hegemony, that is, of sovereignty, that is, of a politics of the will to will finally become conscious of itself. In *Contributions*, Heidegger is clearly addressing his remarks to Nazi Germany, but there is a sense in which every structural compromise, such as the one Heidegger is proposing here, of the thinker with the party, the principle of organization, the leading arm of hegemonic power, will always result in the demand for a double structuration of sovereignty. Many leftist thinkers have shared this demand, which ultimately has to do with the connection of thought and governance, over the last two centuries. We think, however, that there is no non-somnambulistic hero of thought that can or should claim infrapolitical sovereignty. There is no infrapolitical sovereignty, and infrapolitical reflection claims no edge, no advantage over anything else. It is simply a wager for an otherwise of thought. We continue to reflect on this otherwise, which we have sometimes called “transfigured infrapolitics,” but it is not yet the proper time to discuss it.

## **II. Infrapolitics—the Politics. (Allegory and Denarratization.)**

In 2004, the Argentinian journal *La Intemperie* published an interview with former revolutionary militant Héctor Jouvé, who had been a member of the Revolutionary Army of the People at the time the guerrilla killed (executed or murdered, take your pick) two of its own members after having determined that they had broken down, or simply broken, as revolutionaries. Shortly after the publication of the interview, Óscar del Barco, a senior figure in the Argentinian intelligentsia, a philosopher, a poet, and a painter, himself a former member of the Argentinian Communist Party and a sympathizer and collaborator of the guerrilla movement, sent the journal an open letter entitled “No matarás” (“Thou Shalt Not Kill”). This gave rise to a fierce and profound controversy in Argentina.<sup>9</sup>

Let us assume from the outset that the description of the murder of Rotblat and Groswald in the famous interview could be taken to be, at least in Del Barco’s rendering, an

allegory or an extended metaphor of the political, itself understood in a certain way. And let me assume that the allegorization is not innocent, but itself a political intervention meant to indict that said “certain” understanding of politics (which in other texts Del Barco has referred to as the politics authorized and framed by the “System,” which is his way of referring to the system of modernity or the system of onto-theological metaphysics)—in other words, my initial contention is that Óscar del Barco, through his open letter, at the same time allegorizes and denarrativizes, or, if you want, narrativizes and de-allegorizes, revolutionary politics as understood by a considerable sector of the Argentinian, and by extension, world left intelligentsia after World War II if not also before.

Beyond the open letter, the notorious polemic that followed itself allegorizes the fundamental breakdown, hence a terminal denarrativization, of revolutionary politics in modern society, that is, in the society we know, perhaps the only society we know, or believe we know. From Del Barco’s letter, and from the responses and counter-responses it gave rise to, well beyond what has been published, we can infer the becoming-true, the entry into full historical consciousness, of a rumor that has long plagued the left: the disturbing, indeed deranging possibility that the effective triumph of political revolution, far from constituting a new historical time, could only mark what Felipe Martínez Marzoa, in his book *La filosofía de El capital de Marx*, called “the abstract liquidation” of modern society, its (unproductive, were it not so productive for some) fundamental intensification and consummation. This thought can perhaps only appear comprehensible if we take the following words at heart. For Martínez Marzoa,

In Marx, in effect, the difference between the point of view of modern society (“natural consciousness” in Hegelian terms) and the point of view of the revolution resides in the fact that, according to the former, the calculability of being (the physico-mathematical mode of knowledge [that articulates modern society according to the principle of general equivalence, or law of value]) expresses, purely and simply, the “nature of things,” and the equality of rights is a requirement of “human nature” (or “pure Reason”), that is: in both cases we have a “truth in itself” that has no dependency on the phenomenon called “modern society,” whereas, from the point of view of revolution, things are different: the revolution must be wholly radical in its self-exigency that those postulates [that is, the calculability of being as general equivalence, and the equality of rights] must be fulfilled, precisely because it does not

consider them as realities simply “in themselves,” comfortably installed in a given “nature,” rather as the criteria for a task to be accomplished. (190)

If revolution is the means through which the postulates of universal general equivalence and equality of rights come to be fulfilled, then revolution is internal to the system of modernity, and it can only accomplish modernity. In fact, revolution is to be understood as the very essence of modern society, and not as a departure from it. From that realization, it becomes clear, according to one’s preference, either that there would have to be a fundamental change in the very notion of revolution or that revolution is as exhausted as any of the other primary concepts in the architectonics of political modernity. Why, indeed, would we have to assume that “revolution” could survive the entropic catastrophe that has befallen its other systemic terms, from “representation” to “the people,” from “the subject” to “the nation,” from “legitimacy” to “hegemony”? Unless, of course, the project of a finished modernity is still good enough to capture democratic hearts and minds. Otherwise, it is time either to abandon the term “revolution” to the dustbin of the history of modernity or to start imagining what revolution could perhaps be once unmoored from its current and at this point rather endemic systemic haven.<sup>10</sup> The latter is not an easy task—certainly not at the level of imagining it, let alone at the level of making it present. Politically, the challenge is to reach the possibility, in thought first, of an equality, that is, of an end to hierarchies of power, not based on the general equivalence of beings, not based on the leveling down of all substance to its exchange value: a reinvention of the thing, which is always a political invention.

I wanted to frame this discussion as a reflection on allegory—which, for my purposes, we can redefine as an extended metaphor—and denarrativization not because I believe that every metaphor denarrativizes; rather, because I believe that denarrativizing metaphors, as metaphors that point to their own end, to their own destruction, are singularly powerful and could convey something of the sense of an ending. But we must not take ending in the mechanical sense of termination—the ending I am referring to might be with us for a very long time, as indeed the responses to Óscar del Barco’s letter make clear. My contention is that Del Barco’s position (“not an argument,” he says somewhere, but not in that letter) splits modern political history in two, or begins to split it. That he offers, in other words, in specific reference to Argentinian, and Latin American, political history, the

beginning of a fundamental refusal of modern politics, and of modern revolutionary politics, which is first expressed as an arrest of political subjectivation. And that from such a beginning we can begin to unravel the hairball of militant ontotheological politics with a view to its radical destruction, and for the sake of a new figuration. I can only evoke this trans-figured politicity, which includes what I have been calling infrapolitics (and also posthegemony).

Del Barco's letter has to do with the so-called "armed struggle" that developed in the 1960's in many countries partially as a consequence of theoretical developments within Marxism (itself consequent for the most part with a long history of subjectivity, with a deep ideological production of triumphant subjectivity—it is not Marx we are considering here necessarily, but the history of Marxism). Del Barco merely opposes them, in retrospect, through claiming that "there is no 'ideal' that could justify the killing of a human being, be it General Aramburu, or a militant or a police officer" (115). The armed struggle is not justified, Del Barco claims, and his opposition to it is a consequence of his opposition to the taking of human life. The letter says little else, really. It does say that its author can understand that the injunction "thou shalt not kill" will not be fulfilled, since, even as a principle, he says, it is an impossible one: "I know that the principle that thou shalt not kill, like that of loving one's neighbor, is an impossible one. I know that history is in great part the history of pain and death. But I also know that upholding this impossible principle is the only possible thing to do. Without it, human society could not exist. To hold the impossible as possible is to uphold what is absolute in every human being, from the first to the last" (116). It is not necessary to belabor it, because it is clear enough, and in fact the simplicity of what is said, the lack of elaboration and argumentation, proves to have been the most anxiety-producing factor of this letter, and what earned Del Barco the most insults.

What counts is the very restraint, the very simplicity of the position that affirms, resolutely, the validity of the statement, impossible as it may be, "thou shalt not kill." And not only because it establishes, or perhaps re-establishes, for the Argentinian left, a prohibition its members are then forced to deal with, but primarily because the prohibition (it is a negative injunction, it concerns, therefore, a prohibition, and the prohibition is the taking of human life, for whatever purpose, in whatever circumstance) has a fundamental consequence: from it, the revolutionary narrative of the left, the actually existing narrative of

the Argentinian left, for instance, stumbles and falls and cannot be sustained in the daylight. There is something absolute about the human being, Del Barco says, and this absoluteness forbids killing and being killed. If it were said by someone else, a priest, a newspaper columnist, it would be a matter of opinion merely, itself a matter of political combat. But it is said by Óscar del Barco, himself associated with the Argentinian left, himself an old Communist militant (“Perhaps you forget that I was a Stalinist?,” Del Barco will ask some of his critics [Del Barco, “Comments,” 162]), and then a supporter of armed struggle. The combat had moved inside, it was no longer a matter of nuances or mere position-taking within a general agreement, and this was and is seen as intolerable by many.

The prohibition, the negative injunction, functions as a deallegorical tool, as a powerful instrument of denarrativization. There is an allegory—every story, every narrative of political effort, of political militancy as militancy, is an allegory, militancy is always allegorical of the promised triumph, of the end of times—and it is the story of the killing, under Masetti’s orders, of the two “quebrado” (“broken”) militants of the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo. The retrospective injunction, we should not kill, we should not have killed, destroys the allegorical aura by reducing the narrative to its sordid literalness, by ruining the validity of the figural plane, by indicting the ground of sacrificial militancy on which revolutionary practice has been based: there will be no triumph on killing, and that is that, and it kills the narrative and its figure. The loss of allegorical value is extreme political violence. I do not think we should harbor any illusions that Del Barco’s gesture has nothing to do with violence: it is an extreme violence, the violence of a fundamental denarrativization, which is to say, the violence of a fundamental desubjectivation. The heroic subject of sacrificial revolutionary militancy is debunked—through its simple negation.

I insist on Del Barco’s own violence because it seems to me important to retain the thought that Del Barco’s action is not an abandonment of politics—far from it. It is not a renunciation of politics in favor of some ethics, whether Levinasian or Kantian or properly DelBarquian.<sup>11</sup> The injunction is political because it has political intent. It is aimed at the heart of revolutionary-left practices for most of the twentieth century, and it is aimed at it, with devastating effects, in my opinion, not as one would oppose ethics to politics, but rather as an internal fold of politics, as an alternative politics, as a wholly other politics. This is confirmed by Del Barco when, in his response to articles by Jorge Jinkis, Juan Ritvo, and

Eduardo Grüner, he tells them: “the letter is not strung ‘on high’ but laid out on the ‘ground,’ in ‘politics,’ contradicting what you say about my supposed ‘abandonment’ of politics, which in reality is an abandonment of what you understand by politics” (“Comments,” 155). In the same counter-response Del Barco refers to what he is trying to do as “in-politics, or . . . non-political politics” (158), in order to mark what is announced as a break, a differend that cannot and should not be reconciled. Later on he says:

You refuse to understand that in fact I am rejecting your idea of politics, which in my judgement (and I must repeat myself) is that politics that respects the limits fixed by the System for thinking ‘politics’ and acting ‘politically.’ . . . I must tell you that not only have I not abandoned politics, but I am up to the neck in politics, in what I consider politics: painting, poetry, music, ecstasy, meekness, philosophical thought, mercy, justice, responsibility, joint action, solidarity. (162)

One of the most prominent antagonists to Del Barco’s position was, of course, León Rozitchner, who, in addition to his punctual polemical intervention, decided to write a full book on it, posthumously published as *Levinas o la filosofía de la consolación*. His general indictment of Del Barco’s position comes down to a disagreement on the prevalence of the prohibition, that he considers patriarchal, and that he would want to substitute with the positing of what he calls a maternal value: “Primero hay que saber vivir” [“First you must know how to live”]. For Rozitchner, the positive “*vivirás*” [“you will live”] trumps del Barco’s injunction, and changes everything, that is, it restitutes, not necessarily the convenience of killing (Rozitchner is also opposed to political crime), but definitely the casuistry of human actions, that should now be evaluated on the basis of their relative support of the fundamental value of living, and living on. Rozitchner, therefore, not del Barco, is the one who bases his political reasoning on an ethics of life in avoidance of the absolute injunction not to take life. Life can be taken for the sake of some other life, Rozitchner ultimately says, on properly ethical, value-laden grounds. S Rozitchner’s “counter-violence” is an ethical counter-violence before it is political, the counter-violence of an oppressed subject, of the slave against the master, ultimately consistent with the division of the world between the powerful and the poor, or the master and the slave in the Hegelian account (“And don’t forget that Hegel’s philosophy is a (the) system (and not only of philosophical thought),” says Del Barco [“Comments,” 172]). Rozitchner calls for counterhegemonic violence over

against Del Barco's posthegemonic, and properly political, violence—which thus emerges as true counter-systemic counter-violence. I believe that one of the consequences of Del Barco's position, not the least hard of them, is a radical abandonment of ethical calculation, that is, of ethics in the conventional, onto-theological sense. "Thou Shalt Not Kill," politically speaking, is the injunction that marks the beginning of a wholly other politics not from an ethical stance, rather from a sort of reckless or savage moralism for which I prefer to use the term "infrapolitics" (which would be a friendly correction to Del Barco's non-political politics or in-politics—contra Rozitchner the real position of the not-all as maternal injunction, as impossible possibility.)<sup>12</sup>

"I am saying that the end does not justify the means. I am saying that every human being is sacred, amongst other things because his meaning cannot be referred on to anything or anyone" ("Comments" 167). Sacredness, as the positive side of the negative injunction, is not a value—it is the very radicality of the absence of valorization in the absence of every principle of legitimacy, in the absence of principial thought as such. Sacredness always and in every case demetaphorizes, deallegorizes, to the extent that sacredness is the uncompromising holding-fast to the literalness of a nonequivalent singularity. From infrapolitical sacredness, it is simply not possible to move on to the always figural, always metaphoric calculations (the weighing of the relative in the face of the cause, in the face of the absolute goal, which is Rozitchner's politics, for instance) that have turned modern politics into a game for hegemonic power without reprieve. Del Barco tells his critics: For you to desacralize is to laicize, that is, in the last instance . . . to submit man to the growing alienation and reification of the System, making him revolve in metaphysics and its depredations . . . What I call the sacredness of man or the attempt at passive totality of so-called self-consciousness as excess-of-self is the opposite of consciousness augmented to omni-potence as superman (in reality the superman is the opposite of the beyond-man: he should be seen as man invested onto-theologico-rationally, that is as Being, God or Reason, and, I would add, Will to Power. ("Comments" 177)

In his fine 2008 essay, "Memory between Politics and Ethics," Patrick Dove unearths the comments Ciro Bustos, a former guerrilla member, made to Jon Lee Anderson about the situation Jouvé himself narrates, and that prompts Del Barco's letter. In Bustos's recollection, the decision to kill comes in the wake of the following: "[Groswald] had flat

feet, was frightened of going down slopes, and he began animalizing. It was truly repellant, and as the days went by, he began physically to look more like an animal. To go down a hill, he went down on his ass, walked on all fours; a pathetic image for a guerrilla . . . He was dirty, unclean, and finally he was punished, given the hardest jobs, that kind of thing” (Anderson, quoted in Dove, 286). Dove presents this as “an allegory of militant reason and its crisis: the psychological collapse . . . indicates . . . the disgusting . . . possibility of a reversal of developmental history” (286). The decision to kill is a consequence of so-called animalizing: the man who animalizes is no longer a man. Technically, the injunction “Thou Shalt Not Kill” still holds. The revolutionaries do not kill a man, they kill less than a man, a degenerate man, a man that does not correspond to the militants’ idea of manhood. It is because manhood can only obtain in its equivalence. For the sacrificial revolutionary left—and there has hardly been any other so far—manhood is nothing but a metaphor of the final goal, which consumes singular sacredness for the sake of the sacredness of a cause turned totality. Which is why Del Barco says:

If you believe that everything is politics, then any discussion becomes useless. For my part, I repeat, I do not believe in this politics, because I consider it a closed space that disempowers essentially autonomous practices, which when subsumed into a unity can be dominated-assimilated by the System. I would rather define politics (or in-politics) as a multitude of erratic or perverse actions without a centre, or a polyphony that no theoretical unity or political practice by parties can suppress. I would prefer to be treated as a theologian or a mystic or a man of religion . . . than as just a politician. (“Comments” 158)

The refusal of the politics of the politician is an affirmation, inaugural, I believe, in the Latin American context, in favor of an infrapolitical alternative, perhaps leading to a wholly other politics whose effective possibility we lose nothing for exploring.

### III. Unearthing Posthegemony

In the Conclusions to her *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailio and the Chilean State, 1906-2001*, Florencia Mallon indulges in a bit of confession. She says: “At first it was especially difficult for me to recognize, and to put aside, one of my most enduring and lovingly held prejudices: that oppressed or subaltern groups are in reality morally superior, that in some ways their lives have not been touched by the power struggles that mark the rest of society” (233). Her remark has the virtue of making the rest of us

question ourselves: is that a belief we share and endure? Do we happen to think that there is a moral or ethical superiority to subalternity, and does our interest in subaltern life perhaps then ensue from such charming self-deception? I call it self-deception following Mallon, who in the course of her research, as she tells us, came to recognize her prejudice as a prejudice, but also because I do not believe that there are any groups untouched by power struggles, somehow beyond society.

The belief that any number of disenfranchised, or disadvantaged, or oppressed groups are morally superior to the rest of us in virtue of their historically produced misery can be called self-deception, which immediately raises a number of issues. Is self-deception, that is, lying to oneself, first of all possible, and under what conditions? What regulates it? Can one lie unintentionally? Or does it come, the self-deception, that particular one, perhaps others as well, as part and parcel of some larger ideology that we embrace in the course of our work, and that would founder the moment we sober up and see a particular thread of the real for what it is, and pull from it? Was the realization that the people of the Mapuche community of Nicolás Ailío were not after all morally superior good or bad? Was it something of a traumatic awakening for Mallon? She does not say, and it does not matter. But we might benefit from the sort of traumatic awakening Mallon hints at, while she may or may not have undergone it.

My interest in the question has to do with the possibility of construction of posthegemonic democracy, and not just in Latin America but anywhere. Of course, the word "democracy" already has something to do with superiority, through that *kratos* that makes the notion of democratic force different from "monarchies" and "oligarchies" and comparable only to "aristocracy." According to Nicole Loraux, in a fascinating essay entitled "Notes on the One, the Two, and the Multiple," which is a commentary on Pierre Clastres's work and an attempt to measure the difference at the level of political ontology between, say, the Guaraní and the Greeks, the difference between *arkhe* and *kratos* has to do with the fact that "*kratos* says less about power than about superiority" (162). "Democracy" is to be understood, in the Greek way, as the clear affirmation of the superiority of the *demos* over everyone else, in the same way that an aristocracy would contend that the upper classes of society are better endowed for rule; but this, in Ancient Greece, not because the *demos* was conceived as somehow immune to the power struggles of the social, uncontaminated by

them. The superiority of the *demos* was, for Greek democrats, always already a political fact; hence, conceivably, it had nothing to do with morality in Mallon's sense. But the general *kratos* of the people was, in Loraux's understanding, in every case tempered by *arkehe*, the rotatory function of command that made democracy what it was—a place of indistinction between the governed and the governors, which was the specifically equalitarian, demotic function of Greek politics.

Pierre Clastres, in his classic 1974 book *Society against the State*, refers to the frequent accusation launched by all manner of European preachers and imperial servants against many groups of Indians, particularly in sixteenth-century Brazil, who were under no illusions concerning the superiority of the indigenous. The Indians were deemed to be "faithless, lawless, kingless" (205). The Europeans looked at them from the perspective of what they were lacking, and what they were lacking was invariably a State. It was the lack of a State that deprived them of faith, law, and king, in other words, of a logic of filiation and submission to despotic authority meant to produce or to sanction inequality. Indian groups, essentially equalitarian in Clastres's ethnology, were characterized by the fundamental prohibition of inequality (199), which was a prohibition of the State, that is, a prohibition regarding the State. Clastres's question then becomes:

Primitive societies are societies without a State because for them the State is impossible. And yet all civilized peoples were first primitives: what made it so that the State ceased to be impossible? Why did some people cease to be primitives? What tremendous event, what revolution, allowed the figure of the Despot, of he who gives orders to those who obey, to emerge? Where does political power come from? Such is the mystery . . . of the origin. (205)

The question of posthegemonic democracy must come to terms with the question of the origin of power. The question of liberation, which, in order to be such, cannot be conceptualized as merely a liberation from empire, but should be liberation from hegemonic power, cannot be answered without recourse to the question of the nature and origin of political power, which postcolonial studies has been singularly remiss to ask, if it has ever asked it, by essentially taking it for granted that the postcolonial task was the construction of a postcolonial State, today understood as a multinational state in countries such as Bolivia or Ecuador. It is in the very last pages of his book that Clastres intimates a hypothetical

response to his own question. For him, the history of the Tupí-Guaraní, who in the few decades before the Conquest were agents of a massive messianic movement that led many of them "to forsake everything and launch out in search of the Land Without Evil, the earthly paradise" (215), provides the possibility of an answer.

The hypothesis is the following: the Tupí-Guaraní, in virtue of demographic growth, were coming close to the creation of a system of chieftainship that devolved political power on the chief, which until then had been kept away from him. It is at that point that the shamans, the *karaí*, began to engage in "a prophetic speech, a virulent speech, highly subversive in its appeal to the Indians to undertake what must be acknowledged as the destruction of society. The prophets' call to abandon the evil land (that is, society as it existed) in order to inherit the Land Without Evil, the society of divine happiness, implied the death of society's structure and system of norms" (215). For Clastres, what obtained then was tragic: "the insurrectional act of the prophets against the chiefs conferred on the former, through a strange reversal of things, infinitely more power than was held by the latter . . . Prophetic speech, the power of that speech: might this be the place where power *tout court* originated, the beginning of the State in the Word?" (218). The State came to the pre-Conquest Tupí-Guaraní through the very attempt to ward off the State.

We are now stuck with the State. Mallon says that much. For her, regarding the Mapuches, "the Chilean state seems to set the rules of the game, in the sense that it establishes the structures, institutions, and political discourses within which people must struggle and exist" (237). It is, for the time being, either too late or too early to return to Tupí-Guaraní original ground. But, learning from the past, in order to establish posthegemonic democracy, or, more modestly, to pursue the path of posthegemonic democratization, the path must then be radically non-prophetic. Whatever equivalence could be traced between the Tupí-Guaraní move towards the destruction of society and contemporary resistance to capitalist coloniality, it is prophetic speech that, then or now, manages to gather the people under the power and the spell of the One, and constructs hegemony. But what if the originary ground were not to be conceptualized as a ground of filiation but as a ground of alliances? What if we could learn from contemporary anthropology that the structure of filiation that regulates all our mostly Western notions about the ground and about the originary is precisely a notion always already rejected by the

so-called nonhistorical peoples that still populate the Amazon basin? What if we could set our political expectations not on a return to a pristine Tawantinsuyo, which was already a State society, based on tribute and forced labor, but on the possibility of a savage democracy, based on the potential virtue of a posthegemonic theoretical practice? What if the demotic principle of non-interference were to be based on the ontology of war—war between equals—that Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has explicated as proper to the Tupí-Guaraní, that is, on an ontology of exchange not identity, on an ontology that always already looks for interference, beyond the One, as the only possibility for the manifestation of Being?<sup>13</sup>

We can explore a transversal line of flight against violence and empire and beyond postcolonial studies that I will indifferently call geophilosophy, following Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, or cosmopolitical thought, following Jacques Derrida.<sup>14</sup> For many parts of Latin America, such line of flight must be thoroughly invested in the anthropology of indigenous life that Tim Ingold used to call "philosophy with people in it." Cosmopolitical thought has a demotic agenda, but it is a minoritarian agenda that wants to look both beyond the ruses of colonization and the rhetoric of liberationist decoloniality for the sake of a return to a ground of thought that should think of itself against every configuration of filiational thought. Cosmopolitical thought might make Deleuze and Guattari's words about Captain Ahab its motto: "I have no personal history with Moby Dick, no revenge to take, any more than I have a myth to play out; but I do have a becoming" (245). Becoming, which as they say is "always of a different order than filiation, it concerns alliances" (238), is something for which "only a minority is capable of serving as the active medium" (291). And becoming is the very possibility of history, or at least of a new history. It would involve both Indians and non-Indians, that is, everyone, and precisely everyone.

Clastres refers to Heraclitus in his explanation of the politico-intellectual becoming of the Tupí-Guaraní *karaí*. He says: "the mind of the savage prophets and that of the ancient Greeks conceive of the same thing, Oneness; but the Guarani Indian says that the One is Evil, whereas Heraclitus says that it is the Good. What conditions must obtain in order to conceive of the One as the Good?" (217). Heraclitus, also a believer, like most Amazon Indians, on war as foundation of the universe, was, for Clastres, a shaman who had already fallen into his own prophecy, who had already invented political power through the very desire to oppose it. Western metaphysics would eventually lead into the theorization of the

State as ethical substance (in Hegelian metaphysics, which only explicated a state of affairs), but the exemplarity of the Tupí-Guaraní consists of the refusal to countenance the goodness of the One. This is posthegemony ground zero.

Clastres tells us that the Tupí-Guaraní did not oppose the One to the Multiple, but rather to duality or complementarity. From the *karai's* statement that "things in their totality are One; and for us who did not desire it to be so, they are evil" (170), he glosses: "to name the oneness in things, to name things according to their oneness, is tantamount to assigning them limits, finitude, incompleteness" (173). The extent to which this sentence is both a philosophical and a political sentence, or rather an antipolitical sentence if politics is precisely originated with the rise of the despotic principle, the extent to which a refusal of the One within a universe of general war is an opening to the mystery of complementarity, would guarantee the need for a practice of alliance on grounds of radical equality as cosmopolitical, and even infrapolitical, geophilosophy.

Let me return to Florencia Mallon. Her book concludes in a series of questions concerning historical understandings of community among the Mapuche from which I would like to retain the question that is not there. She says:

Is the community a kinship network built around the family of the original cacique (definition created by the resettlement and the land-grant titles)? Is the community constructed through struggle and solidarity among all the poor and oppressed (definition of the left and the agrarian reform)? Is it simply a place of residence like any other (definition of the military dictatorship)? Or is it a trade-union or syndicalist organization under legally defined statutes and bylaws (the Indigenous Law of 1993 and the postauthoritarian governments of the 1990s)? (241)

For Mallon all of those versions of the community are active today in Mapuche self-understanding, all of them a result of the impact of their own history on Mapuche life. The key issue is that there are no other versions. We are far here from, for instance, Alvaro García Linera's notion, in *Forma valor y forma comunidad*, that the overcoming of capitalism as labor form, and therefore the substance of all systemic, that is, antisystemic struggle, must appear as the restoration of archaic community and a return to the originary unity of nature.<sup>15</sup> The contemporary emphasis on substantial community, the need to return to originary ground in radical, prophetic decoloniality: well, perhaps it runs the risk that,

through it, the State of the One will come, and return, and keep returning, through its very attempt to ward it off. It is, after all, old history. And what one says of prophetic decoloniality can also be said of so many other pronouncements in the contemporary left that keep telling us any refusal of the One is always at the same time an embrace of insidious, many-faced Capitalism.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Scott, *Two Cheers*, xx, for a quick definition. Scott started using the term in *Domination* (1990). See also Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, for a use that follows and develops Scott's.

<sup>2</sup> See Alvarez Yagüez, "Límites," for a revised version of the contribution to the University of Madrid Workshop on Posthegemony, Literature, Infrapolitics organized by José Luis Villacañas (June 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Another qualifier needs to be the mention of the fact that I am not speaking for the Collective. Nobody speaks for the Collective, as we—that is, as all members, because we are quite uncertain about the status of that "we"—seek to speak in the singular, not representationally. In spite of that, I will make some claims that would seem to come from more than one speaking subject. They will be controversial, debatable, even rejectable every time. As a compensation, I would like to dedicate this essay to the Infrapolitical Deconstruction Collective, in celebration of our conversations over the last twelve months, which have been indeed memorable for me, and for many of us.

<sup>4</sup> I am referring to an important thread in Heidegger's "Dialogue." See for instance 49-52.

<sup>5</sup> Probably needless to say that my interest in posthegemony does not refer to the vulgar rendering of it Jorge Alemán naturalizes: "The 'posthegemonic' moment cannot not be a fantasy imagining an acephalic world exclusively given over to the cultivation of its drives." See "Apuntes" 2.

<sup>6</sup> Although Emmanuel Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* must be first credited, Schürmann's proposal regarding a-principial thought in *Heidegger on Being and Acting* made it thematic for post-Heideggerian philosophy: "It is through a historical deduction of the categories of 'the other beginning' that action deprived of a unifying pro hen will become thinkable" (9). This is explicitly associated by Schürmann to an an-archic political project connected to "a cessation of principles, a deposing of the very principle of epochal principles, and the beginning of an economy of passage, that is, of anarchy" (9).

<sup>7</sup> Malabou thematized the fantastic in her book on Heidegger: "The fantastic, far from designating a simple logic of the phantasm or an intrusion of the phantasm into the real, characterizes precisely the real of the phantasm. Ontological difference, the convertibility between the two (ex)changes [this is Malabou's way of referring to the Heideggerian "beginnings"], the new ontological gift, and the new exchangeability are not pure abstractions. They constitute our real, the way the real registers the impact of its deconstruction and change" (182).

<sup>8</sup> See on this the devastating reading of Cacciari's 1976 book in Mandarin, "Beyond Nihilism," 1-7.

<sup>9</sup> See the two volumes of *No matar* (Belzagui ed., and García ed.) for a compilation of some of the most significant contributions to the polemic.

<sup>10</sup> See however the fascinating essay by Luis García, "No matar," where he associates Del Barco's "revolutionary practice" to Walter Benjamin's notion of divine violence. I intend to engage further with this essay in an expanded version of this section of the essay, as it is too important a reading to limit its discussion to a single footnote. See also Villalobos' forthcoming essay on Del Barco's critique of Marxism as "liberationist discourse."

<sup>11</sup> See Graff Zivin 14-17 on the ethics/politics discussion in the wake of Del Barco's letter, which she places within a phantom intellectual history of their mutual substitution and finally the suspension of any possible substitutional paradigm.

<sup>12</sup> See, on Rozitchner, Sztulwark's essay, "Poema y política," which is an attempt at interpreting Rozitchner's work in a manner quite different from the one I have just summarized.

<sup>13</sup> See Viveiros's short essay, probably the best account of Amazon-basin metaphysics ever produced.

<sup>14</sup> See Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* and Derrida, *The Right to Philosophy*.

<sup>15</sup> See in particular chapters 5 and 6, 229-365.