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INFRAPOLITICS AT THE END OF AESTH-ETHICS: ON ALBERTO MOREIRAS' RECENT WORK

ABSTRACT

In this paper I will offer a reading of Alberto Moreiras' recently published books, but within the context of his life's work as a whole: which I will consider from the point of view of a questioning of the idea of the time/history difference. After briefly tracing that overarching concern in his early work, I move to a consideration of a move away from Hegelianism in the more recent publications. This non-Hegelianism is not simply an anti-Hegelian stance. Understanding the difference will take us into the true dimension of infrapolitics. This aspect of Moreiras' contribution to contemporary debates will be illustrated by way of his paradoxical and unrecognizable Antigone.

KEYWORDS

infrapolitics,
temporality, Antigone,
Lacan, structuralism,
post-structuralism,
Derrida, Moreiras,
tragedy

Time/History

We should all be celebrating the recent publication of Alberto Moreiras' new work: *Marranismo e inscripción* (2016, along with its translation as *Against Abstraction* in 2020); *Infrapolítica: Instrucciones de uso* (2020); *Sosiego siniestro* (2021); as well as the new and expanded edition of two previous books in 2021 – *Tercer espacio* (previously 1999) and *Línea de sombra* (previously 2006). This abundance of new material offers a chance to clarify and bring into focus the enormous contribution that Moreiras has made in the areas of Latin Americanism, political theory, and our understanding of the contemporary world in general over the course of the last three decades (starting in 1991 with the publication of *Interpretación y diferencia* and including the groundbreaking *The Exhaustion of Difference* of 2001). I will approach that task in this paper by looking at the way Moreiras has fundamentally questioned the politico-philosophical matrix for reducing time to history.¹ This opposition between time

1 Given the centrality of the notion of infrapolitics in what follows, I should note that the work that has been emerging over the last several years on that front has a



and history should not be understood as the dichotomy of the presence of a time that would stand over against a logico-cartographic concept of History incapable of doing justice to the multiplicity and vitality of real or lived time. Rather, the questioning of the matrix is itself a meditation on the exhaustion of time itself (which means a questioning of all the ways in which time a-nulls itself for certain modes of thinking). That is, Moreiras work entails a different engagement with the opposition between a reductive historical framework and the redemption of what is thus reduced. This opposition itself has become one of the forms of contemporary reactionary thought. We can understand this as a radicalization of the deconstruction of metaphysics which does not only shake the paradigms of political theology that underwrite important sectors of conservatism and progressivism, but which will have important consequence for radical Heideggerian readings as well, which in the following pages will be represented by Moreiras' infrapoliticization of the an-archic reading of the ontological difference in Reiner Schürmann.

Perhaps the best illustration of this trajectory is Moreiras' Antigone. A paradoxical figure that he presents to us not as a reading of Sophocles, and not even a reading of the reading of a reading (his reading of Derrida's reading of Hegel's, for instance); what is at issue with this particular Antigone is not the foregrounding of a part that would stand for the whole, but rather the cutting down of a massiveness reduced to less than the nothing that would be the gap in the structure: "a nothingness that is at the same time not-all" – that is, infrapolitics (Moreiras 2020b: 80–81). The way that Moreiras does this will allow us to consider two interconnected aspects of infrapolitics. On one level, the figure of Antigone will function as the operator for two specific cases of demetaphorization: first, a shifting that will push the question of structurality toward a meditation on the ontological difference, and, secondly, an infrapoliticization of what Heidegger calls "the poetic". On a different level, Antigone will open a question that exposes what I understand as the heterogeneity of Moreiras' thought, which I will frame by asking the following question: what happens to the quasi-transcendental function that Antigone has in *Infrapolítica* as we confront the temporality of what in *Sosiego siniestro* is called the decision of existence?

This is the path that I want to explore as a way into the enigma of what Moreiras calls his life's single idea, as in the following description of the place of philosophy in his work:

There is a primary relationship with the history of philosophy, with metaphysics, culminating in G. W. F. Hegel, and Marxism is part of it, since Marxism cannot be fathomed without Hegel. [...] I think I am still there, more than ever. Heidegger repeated something Henri Bergson used to say, namely, that people only

collective dimension that goes beyond Moreiras' recent publications. The work of Gareth Williams, Sergio Villalobos, Maddalena Cerrato, Peter Barker, among others, is part of a dialogue that unfortunately is not tracked in my reading of Moreiras here. An account of that dialogue remains a necessary task.

get to have one single idea in their lives; the problem is that it takes a while to recognize that single idea as such, and we get lost in marginalities. Somehow my single idea, if I may claim to have it yet, is there, connected to that particular relationship with the history of thought that I do not consider a Eurocentric relationship because I do not accept Eurocentrism as my horizon. Eurocentrism explodes once a critical relationship to Hegelianism is assumed, and the latter forces us into a cosmopolitical configuration of intellectual work. (Moreiras 2020a: 30)

I do not claim to know what that single idea is, and the passage is clear enough in terms of its desire not to reveal it completely. But perhaps we can begin to approach that constellation by way of a meditation on time, where Hegel marks the limit of a Eurocentric idea of philosophy and history. The Eurocentrism in question is not symptomatic – one cannot do away with it and leave Hegelianism intact. This line of inquiry becomes more pertinent in a moment when the rehabilitation of Hegel within important sectors in political theory is in full swing. At the same time, if we are to begin to gain a clearer understanding of Moreiras’ work, particularly as it concerns infrapolitics, we cannot frame this critique of metaphysics by itself. More and more it is a question of attending to at least two further problems internal to the deconstruction of the traditional function of philosophy. On the one hand, there is the temptation of reducing deconstruction to a question of exegetical writing, which in a broader sense is also the temptation to seek answers to political questions in aesthetics. On the other, there is the temptation to try at all costs to find the political translation of the Heideggerian ontological difference, which in a broader sense means to politicize even the step back that would mark a liberation from the overreach of politics. In both cases what we find is a push toward the political that, perhaps inadvertently, closes the interrogation of history and temporality precisely where it should have opened it.

Early Moreiras

Though it is not a question of reducing Moreiras’ entire body of work to a single guiding thread, the (in)difference of time and history can be seen as a constant concern. In *Interpretación y diferencia* (1991), Moreiras was trying to draw the writerly and readerly consequences of thinking the co-belonging of identity and being, as opposed to the radical affirmation of their identity or their non-identity (Moreiras 1991: 26–35). It is a move toward the unthought of thought: the absent foundation of thought. To think this co-belonging of identity and difference will mean to translate Heraclitus fragment 247, *ethos anthropoi daimon*, as “the identical, for man, is the differential [lo idéntico es para el hombre lo diferencial]” (Moreiras 1991: 47). At the heart of a this form of being at home in the unhomely (a figure that will return) there is a search for a way of thinking the place of autography (a displacement and unworking of subjectivity marking the singular dates of the history of a life in the face of the eternal return of the same) “in the time of the end of metaphysics”; that

is, a position that is a return to a new beginning for which there is no foundation yet, or, conversely, for which its foundation is already absent (Moreiras 1991: 77–78). But this is inconceivable without going through the ontological difference as difference. Heidegger is implicated in this translation; but so is the Derrida of “la différance”. The issue is the “opening of the possibility of history” as temporization of the difference: “To say that historicity is the temporization of difference is not to define once and for all the condition of possibility for history in general: it is above all to define the condition of possibility for our own history, which alone knows the historical exhaustion of the metaphysics of presence [...] Difference is historical, that is to say, our history needs difference and finds in it its historical freedom” (Moreiras 1991: 66). What is perhaps no longer possible is to think that the problematic thus opened can be addressed by way of the Saussurian discovery of the sign, a situation that Derrida himself anticipated in “La différance” when he cautioned that “the thematic of *différance* may very well, indeed must, one day be superseded” (Derrida 1982: 7).

In *Tercer espacio* (1999) autobiography reappears as one of the three registers that the book seeks to articulate along with the theoretical and disciplinary (work on Latin America and Latin American literature). In this book, Moreiras was also keeping track of a “trans-autographic” dimension that he calls the political (Moreiras 2021b: 25). It is here that the (in)difference between time and history first takes on the form of an engagement with subalternism (or, the radical questioning of the various philosophical paradigms designed for the suppression of time in the name of an ordered History). In both *Tercer espacio* and the subsequent book, *The Exhaustion of Difference* (2001), Moreiras remains firmly planted in the space of negotiation demarcated between critique and political work. In the 2001 book, he proposes a double articulation of subalternity which today we could perhaps call hegemonic and post-hegemonic. Be that as it may, we find in the double articulation a political “subalternist affirmation” that seeks to address how to avoid simply dwelling on “the theorization of the negativity of subaltern temporality”, in the words of John Kraniauskas (cited in Moreiras 2001: 287). Not that Moreiras was ever simply working within a hegemonic horizon. But he was still, if we can put it this way, trying to outline a posthegemonic horizon within a dialogue fundamentally dominated by the need to find a new hegemonic articulation on the Left.

It is with *Línea de sombra* (2006) that a distance from politics as such is first staked in full force. The non-subject emerges as a way of assuming an unworking of legacy that even Heidegger was not able to undertake, and which Moreiras proposes as a way of abandoning the sacrificial structure of history (Moreiras 2021a: 36). This involves taking a step back from the closure of temporality in late capitalism (Moreiras 2021a: 100, n. 46), or the opening of a counter Imperial and messianic time (Moreiras 2021a: 175). The historical experience at the end of this book is that of the era in which there is a total theft of the time of the subject, an emptying out of subjectivity (Moreiras 2021a: 255–256). This is one way of foregrounding the fact that what the twentieth century gave us,

in the words of Lacoue-Labarthe, was the realm between the two deaths (Lacoue-Labarthe 1991: 28). (This Antigonian position is at the heart of what I wish to illuminate of Moreiras' work in what follows.)

If *Línea de sombra* was a step away from the disciplinary borderlines of Latin Americanism and a move toward an engagement with the theoretical and philosophical texts of the political turn of the late 1990s and early 2000s (Badiou, Butler, Negri, Rancière, Žižek, etc.), the reason for this distance only becomes explicitly thematized in *Against Abstraction* (2016). In this book we find a direct confrontation with the issue of how and why the various subalternisms of the 1990s retreated from the radicality originally opened by the project (Moreiras 2020a: 77). Perhaps more important, we also encounter the proposal for a second deconstructive turn, which would be a move away from well-known postmodern commonplaces regarding endless interpretation and toward broaching the question of the ontological difference as the path that would lead toward a more radical experience of historicity and temporality.

This is a return to a thematic that is clearly at the heart of Moreiras' thought since *Interpretación y diferencia*, but now the goal is to establish a distance from politics as the realm of general equivalence, or the realm of all-encompassing Creontic administration:

If writing and thinking can do something other than serve the fallen fate of universal history, if we can save or rescue ourselves from narratives of destiny that have in fact already lost their destination, it is to healing we turn, not as the reestablishment of health, but as the possibility of retrieval of the open region where freedom can still make an advent. (Moreiras 2020a: 181)

The confrontation with the disorientation of all destinies, as we will see, is also a confrontation with the time of infrapolitics and the decision of existence, thematics that will occupy the remainder of these pages. For the moment, let us note that this return to the possibility of being at home in the unhomey (being able to explode the narrative of destinies that have lost all destination) is not simply a return to the beginning or the origin. Moreiras' burrows into the aporias of a freedom that cannot be marked as a form of militancy (be it progressive or conservative). In a turnaround of the usual criticism leveled against deconstruction (that it is never political enough), here the issue of time-history appears as a way of indicating that a dominant (academic) version of the project of the deconstruction of metaphysics was unable to properly emphasize the step away, the distance, from politics as such – even in its most negative moments it remained caught in the task of political calculation). Infrapolitics comes in as an operator to mark this distance from politics without in the process simply becoming a-political, or anti-political, and even less archi-political. But this distance from politics, then, cannot be a retreat into some version of *écriture*.

Instead of this implying that we now have to look for the opening of historicity in a place other than that indicated by way of difference (as in the quotation from *Interpretación y diferencia*), I would argue that this moves us in the direction of thinking the problematic of difference as part of the Heideggerian

ontological difference – so that what is shifted is the issue of the event in “structure” that shook the discourse of the human sciences in the twentieth century such as Derrida outlined it in “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” (Derrida 1978: 278–293). This is not to say that Moreiras is the first to think this shift. We can discern it most fundamentally in the way that Derrida’s polemic with Lacan (whose discourse is at the very heart of that structural event) touches on the insufficiency of the triad Imaginary/Symbolic/Real to think dissemination – a problematic that Alan Bass sought to sum up in the following terms in his translator’s notes to “La différance”: “For Derrida, Lacan’s ‘topology of castration’, which assigns the ‘hole’ or lack to a place – ‘a hole with determinable borders’ – repeats the metaphysical gesture (albeit a negative one) of making absence, the lack, the hole, a transcendental principle that can be pinned down as such, and can thereby govern a theoretical discourse” (Derrida 1982: 6, n. 5). In “The Purveyor of Truth” Derrida writes of the Lacanian algorithms: “[...] a hole will be stopped: and to do so one does not have to fill it, but only to see it and delimit its contour” (Derrida 1987: 436; cf. Derrida 1981: 82–89, 107–113, n. 44 and Derrida 1998: 39–69). We should note that this is the function that Antigone herself will have in Lacan’s seminar VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959–1960). As late as 1969, Lacan had adduced the same site, the place where the structure is holed, as the ruin of absolute knowledge, only to call it “structure” (Lacan 2006: 291; see also Lacan 2005: 675–676).

From a different angle, we find an indictment of this use of the “hole” in the structure as a metaphysical misreading of Gödel’s incompleteness theorem by a young Alain Badiou who, already taking formal logic as a condition of truth, shows how the incompleteness of the structure proves nothing less than that its reign is absolute – or, to put it in more palatable terms, something always escapes, but it is foreclosed absolutely within the structure. For the young Althusserian that Badiou was at that time, the suturing that was supposed to be at stake in this (still too metaphysical) structuralism only happens in the political sphere (Badiou 2012: 165). The questioning of structure is an issue that concerns an order of historicity that is of a different kind than that of the destruction of ontotheology. The emergence of a meditation on infrapolitics marks a shift in the questioning of that destruction: away from the (post)structuralist horizon – a horizon that continues to mark many of the most influential conversations on the left, but increasingly with diminishing returns.

Consider, for instance, Moreiras’ fundamental point regarding the dialogue in *Contingency, Hegemony and Universality* (Butler, Laclau and Žižek 2000). In chapter four of *Línea de sombra* Moreiras objects that for these thinkers of the founding exclusion, Žižek and Laclau in particular, the task seems to be, above all, to fully exclude the enigmatic remainder that should take their politics to their very limit – which, in the case of Laclau, would be the post-hegemonic dimension of hegemony (Moreiras 2021a: 159). Ultimately, what this means is not that there is a mistake somewhere in the way that structural incompleteness is implemented, but that structural incompleteness might just

be a technique for domesticating and forgetting about the extimate essence presencing at the heart of politics. That is, a hole that is stopped simply by delineating its contour. Thus, when Moreiras, in the “exergue” of *Infrapolítica*, writes of Derrida’s consideration of the destructuration internal to all structures by way of situating the figure of Antigone, and he points out that he is well aware of the risk that is involved in claiming that site (with Derrida) for Antigone and (without Derrida) for infrapolitics, it is to this context that we must refer (Moreiras 2020b: 18).

The Extimate Essence Presencing at the Heart of Politics

Given that Antigone is going to be a central figure, perhaps the best way to approach the questions at hand is by clearing a possible misunderstanding involving Lacan. Moreiras’ has declared himself a “closet Lacanian” of sorts (Moreiras 2020a: 73) – and he has done so while making very important proposals regarding a possible Latin Americanism that is no longer of the ego, or that dares to step beyond the pleasure principle. The Lacanian *objet a* has been fundamental for him throughout his work, particularly as the lost and mourned object of *Tercer espacio*. But in his tracing of the exhaustion of militant thought (conservative and progressive alike) Lacan is not a figure that fares particularly well. Psychoanalysis remains dangerously close to a nostalgia for the order of masters, even if these are master signifiers. Moreiras rebukes the Lacan of the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, where the reading of Antigone is a centerpiece, as longing for a master capable of containing the coming evil upheaval (this as part of his reading of Donoso, where psychoanalysis appears on the margins). In the context of *Infrapolítica*, the central issue is the idea of the reactionary. Reactionary today is the thought that seeks to conserve the linear temporality of the moribund ancient regime, but also the thought that (in the semblance of progressivism) opposes to it an emergent temporality of freedom. Moreiras calls this conflict, between a residual and exhausted temporality and an emergent temporal plenitude, the idologeme of linear historical time; and “understanding the political today means to destroy that ideologeme of linear historical time” (Moreiras 2020b: 52).

As an example, Moreiras offers a short history of the fate of subalternist thought. On a first approach, subalternism sought to critique panlogistic notions of historical time, which reduced the historicity of the I and of the world to an ordered concept of world-history. Faced with the limit of the unthinkable that opens at the limit where history no longer yields to a narrativization into logic, subalternism retreats to a hegemonic notion of politics (in the post-Gramscian sense of the term). But this retreat is nothing other than “the deconstruction of the radicality of the subalternist idea as such” (Moreiras 2020b: 63). This form of progressivism becomes a different kind of conservatism. If modernity can be understood as the opposition between two distinct choices, that between, on the one hand, the secularization of the sovereign Good, and, on the other, the containment of despotic evil, this is because of the shared foundation on which politics is thought on all sides: namely, the identity of being and thought

(Moreiras 2020b: 63). However, and here we find the infrapolitical gap, “if thinking is not the same thing as being, if subject and world do not coincide”, then the two options do not totalize “the political horizon” (Moreiras 2020b: 63).

The two ideas are inseparable from each other: (1) the destruction of the ideologeme of linear historical progress (along with the false opposition between a repressed and a fully present time) “is” (2) the non-coincidence of being and thought such that the political horizon is opened to its own difference. On this front, Moreiras seeks non-Hegelian tools in Heraclitus’s Fragment 247, *ethos anthropoi daimon* (a recurring preoccupation throughout his work as we are beginning to see). He marks the complexity of the word *diamon* as a way of moving beyond the stifling understanding of fate and character within contemporary structures for thinking. After the damage incurred by the sacrificial structure of history, that is, of all the sacrifices that need to be justified to fuel the ideologeme of progress, it is a question of healing. And this healing is sought in Heidegger’s notion of “letting be”. If Hegel understands philosophy as *the science*, it is because, for him, “Time [...] appears as the destiny and necessity of Spirit that is not yet complete within itself [...]”, in other words, “[...] Spirit necessarily appears in Time [...] so long as it has not *grasped* its pure Notion, i.e., has not annulled Time” (Hegel 1977: 487). For Hegel, “a *being as such*, the actual in its genuine and whole reality, is the idea, or the *concept*. The concept, however, is the power of time, i.e., *the pure concept annuls time*. In other words, the problem of *being* is properly conceived only when *time is made to disappear*. [...] The Hegelian philosophy expresses this disappearance of time by conceiving philosophy as [...] absolute knowledge” (Heidegger 1994: 12). Heidegger’s proposal can be summed up as the thesis that philosophy is not a science, and this by invoking the “and” in *Being and Time* as terminating the annulment of time. It involves not just the reversal in the relationship between time and concept (such that time now is the power of the concept, and not the other way around), but a different understanding of essence as well, one in which essence is not in the remit of representational thinking. This is the step back that has to do with the Heideggerian “thing”, and we will return to it.

Healing, after and beyond the age of the annulment of time in absolute knowledge, opens the way for Moreiras’ non-Hegelianism, but not in the guise of the usual critiques of Hegel, which rely on the accusation of a panlogicism that is usually rejected in the name of the law of difference and singularity – a dimension (that of law) which is inimical to the infrapolitical project in question here. The way out of the Hegelian concept of History, its heroes and world-historical ordering of the time of life, is not through the opposition of a disordering or enjoyment of the present under the guise of the satisfaction of the sage at the end of time. (The most radical, perhaps even “deconstructed” version of this sage might just be the anarchic reading Reiner Schürmann makes of Heidegger’s thought.) Instead, we find two interconnected procedures: the denarrativization of narrative, on one hand, and, on the other, the deconstruction of testimony as the master key to the political: “denarrativizing narrative, in opposition to mythographic or mythomaniac narrative, and the

deconstruction of testimonio as a correction to the pretension of identitarian truth that has plagued political discourse over the last thirty years and continues to plague it” (Moreiras 2020a: 176).

What is the expected result of these procedures? Moreiras puts it thus:

Haunted thought could do worse than welcoming those visitations, particularly if they were addressed, not to [...] the hero of providence, the hero of justice, God’s man, but rather to someone, anyone, for whom there is only a life to be lived in the happiest possible way, and no destiny to speak of; as if we were mortal, and only mortal, instead of contemplating, as Hegel wanted, the foam of the infinite. (Moreiras 2020a: 182)

This happiness in the face of a complete lack of destiny, this happiness without satisfaction in the realization of the Idea, a happiness that is the mark of our finite existence – this is the project of infrapolitical letting be. Healing is not the reestablishment of health (a Nietzschean preoccupation still caught in the onto-theological destiny that is being shaken here). It is rather the sustained meditation on what we can receive, the grace that was kept from us, at the end of the subsumption of time into the order of history and the historiography of the unfolding Idea. If time, one or multiple, linear or circular, has always been susceptible of being misunderstood as the time of the project of philosophy, politics, progress, revolution, emancipation, and so forth, what takes place now is the retrieval of a temporality that has nothing to do with time as it has hitherto been conceived. The fundamental point is not to understand this “hitherto” as the announcement of a coming event, as a form of the “to come”. There is not preparation for this other “time”. Infrapolitics is not and cannot be an announcement in preparation for anything.

If there is a single place in *Infrapolítica* where the book does justice to its subtitle (a user’s manual) it is in the elaboration of this rejection of prophetic shepherding of the dispensation of Being to which we all need to submit. This amounts to critique of Heidegger that happens in Moreiras’ solicitation of Schürmann’s clarification of Heidegger’s late work. Moreiras presents four objections to Schürmann. There is a shifting of the political emphasis (which seemed to be Schürmann’s most important contribution) towards an infrapoliticization of everything that was almost unveiled. Moreiras’ objections serve as a way of presenting infrapolitics and as a way of clarifying the central point of contention, which is the principle of anarchy itself. This clarification will also help us understand the character of Moreiras’ Antigone and the way in which this is inseparable from a consideration of infrapolitics’ relation to temporality.

- 1) Infrapolitics interrupts the dictation of being, the dispensation of a hegemonic ordering. This includes the paradoxical epochality of anarchy (Moreiras 2020b: 203).
- 2) Infrapolitics does not distinguish between time and history, and this because for it there is no hero of world-history who would anticipate, or announce in preparation, a new epoch (Moreiras 2020b: 203).

- 3) The era without-beyond. There is no need for infrapolitics to declare the end of epochs, opening itself up in the process to an unknowable end of history. Infrapolitics “prefers to affirm a simple habitation of the here and now [...] In other words: the time of infrapolitics is always in each case the time of the ‘legislative-transgressive fracture’, a time in every case posthegemonic which refuses old legislations without transgressing them in a move toward new alternative legislations” (Moreiras 2020b: 204). (Thus, an impossible place for a Lacanian Antigone.)
- 4) The final objection follows from the first and is therefore a redoubling of the interruption of the dictation of being. For it concerns the command for thought to acquiesce to the event of appropriation. The issue is to put in doubt the emphasis on the interpreters of such an event, as if it were the domain only of the thinkers and poets to come (Moreiras 2020b: 205). Moreiras shifts from an objection about temporality toward a warning regarding the priestly keeping of a post-epochal non-“epoch”.

These four objections are then summed up as a rejection of a certain mode of obligation: “Against Schürmann”, writes Moreiras,

first disagreement, the obligation of thought is not an obligation of a historical-political nature. The obligation for infrapolitical thought, second disagreement, is not of a heroic order, and it cannot be, since it is not founded on the difference between time and history which necessarily places history in the place of a dispensation of knowledge opposed to the mere existentiality of the time of life. The infrapolitical obligation, third disagreement, does not depend on a final catastrophe of the principle that would kill all other principles, technology, or the will to will as counter intentional providers of originary [authentic] time, just as [...] it prefers not to fall into the abyss of the unthinkable of the without-beyond. Finally, the infrapolitical obligation, fourth disagreement, does not entail clearing the way for a universal acquiescence with the becoming-thing of the thing or the world-ification of the world. (Moreiras 2020b: 205)

The rejection of the principle of anarchy concerns a rejection of the persistent modernity of a still subjective reaction against the epochal dismantling of metaphysics: “In this manner, anarchy runs the risk of becoming another form of principial mastery, or, better, anarchy, as principle, is the last form of mastery” (Moreiras 2020b: 210). Moreiras looks, instead, for the rejection of all norms as given obligations to conclude: “There is no principle of anarchy which would not turn anarchic persecution into a norm and anarchic obsession into universalizable duty. Norm and duty do not belong to the infrapolitical universe” (Moreiras 2020b: 212).

What is the temporality of infrapolitics then? How does it relate to this radical rejection of “a universal acquiescence”? In the last sentence of the book, Moreiras tells us that Infrapolitics inhabits the temporal gap between the promise and its fulfillment, without belief or disbelief (Moreiras 2020b: 226). Neither promise nor fulfillment – the gap; in what sense, exactly? This is where Antigone, a paradoxical, almost unrecognizable Antigone, becomes essential.

Moreiras' "Antigone"

I want to zero in and bring into focus the nature of Moreiras' cut into two different texts, namely, Derrida's and Heidegger's concerning the tragic heroine. This cut is less a question of a cut-and-paste operation that would yield a collage of some sort and more the heart of an operation of thought. In the two cases in question there is a shift that is essential. In the case of Derrida's fascination with Antigone, which is also Hegel's, the move is away from the (post)structuralist question of the absent cause of the structure, that is, away from merely structural considerations, and toward the place of the ontological difference in political thought/praxis. This entails cutting through Antigone's sisterliness and toward her desire – which is to reconfigure the function of a heroine capable of meshing together the personal and the collective in the field of post-Revolutionary politics where sisterliness is a trope for community. In the case of Heidegger's Antigone, Moreiras moves what some could see as Heidegger's poetical covering over of political considerations (in the wake of the National Socialist catastrophe). This step away from the poetical does not lead back toward politics, but further back toward the question of being as the heart of the meditation on existence for infrapolitics. That is, toward the site where there is no overlap between life and politics, where the homeward trek back to unity (another Romantic trope embodied by Antigone traditionally) is interrupted and discarded because the place where she can be paradoxically at home, the *polis*, is no longer available to us.

In Derrida's Antigone as read by Moreiras, we encounter a form of enjoyment (*goce*) that is without relation with the field of names. There is no concept for it. It is also not sublatale (Moreiras 2020b: 17). It stands in stark contrast to the usual figure we are used to imagining within the Hegelian field. The constitution of the community into a people is Hegel's solution to the master slave dialectic (Moreiras 2020b: 17). Antigone appears in Derrida's text on Hegel as a step back from that political resolution. Where does her desire lead? Derrida reading Hegel locates that desire as what is not assimilable by the dialectic. Antigone's is an impossible place within the system, unclassifiable. Given that Hegel admits the impossible desire in question is there, is the dialectic capable of situating the abyss marked by this desire as a quasi-transcendental that allows it to be used as a (groundless) foundation for a dream of appeasement?

In the (post)structuralist context it almost goes without saying: it is always an element excluded from the system that guarantees the space of possibility for the system in the first place. That is, the event in structure that shook the all the European discourses that relied in the safekeeping of a center was the unveiling of the absence of this very center. This is not a liberation from anything – it is a clarification of the inner workings of the very matrix that made Eurocentrism work in the first place. Which is why Lacan could call this simply "structure". In Derrida's words: "The transcendental has always been, strictly, a transcategorical, something that could not be received, shaped, finished in any of the categories internal to the system. The vomit of the system. And what if

the sister, the brother/sister relation here represented the transcendental position, ex-position?" (Derrida 2021: 183). The last sentence of this passage is not cited in *Infrapolítica*. Moreiras cuts out the sister/brother relation, the place of the ex-position to the transcategorical or transcendental (we will come back to this, but for now let us simply note that he adjudicates it to Antigone's desire). The relation is not just any relation. What does "cutting it out" leave outside? Before returning to *Infrapolítica*, it might be helpful to remember what Antigone/Polynices represented for philosophy and the discourse of the human sciences in general.

George Steiner sums up the role of Antigone in modern thought and politics in the following terms:

There is only one human relationship in which the ego can negate its solitude without departing from its authentic self. There is only one mode of encounter in which the self meets the self in another, in which ego and non-ego, the Kantian, the Fichtean, the Hegelian polarities, are made one. It is a relation between man and woman, as it surely must be if primary rifts in being are to be knit. But it is a relation between man and woman which resolves the paradox of estrangement inherent in all sexuality (a paradox which incest would only enforce). It is the relation of brother and sister, of sister and brother. In the love, in the perfect understanding of brother and sister, there is eros and *agape*. But both are *aufgehoben*, 'sublated', in *philia*, to the transcendent absoluteness of relation itself. It is here, and here only, that the soul steps into and through the mirror to find a perfectly concordant but autonomous counterpart. The torment of Narcissus is stilled: the image is substance, it is the integral self in the twin presence of another. Thus, sisterliness is ontologically privileged beyond any other human stance. In it, the homecomings of Idealism and Romanticism are given vital form. This form receives supreme, everlasting expression in Sophocles' *Antigone*. (Steiner 1996: 17–18)

We can call this the dream of Hegelianism, or the dream of Revolutionary politics and the universal brotherhood/sisterhood – it is a rebus which hides the secret of relation. If we turn to Lacan's Antigone in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, we will find that he does nothing to this matrix except clarify it.

Lacan ex-poses the sister/brother relation as the site for something that was there all along but which only in the 1960s and 1970s became visible. We get to a place in *Antigone* where there is a paradoxical law, a law that is "unwritten" (Lacan 1992: 278). It concerns the dead brother subjected to the edicts of Creon – human law, the law of he "in whose rigid mind everything is political or [...] a question of interest" (Lacan 1992: 268). The other unwritten law is the gods' law, and Antigone obeys it because of the ontic singularity of the brother: "Involved here is an invocation of something that is [...] of the order of the law, but which is not developed in any signifying chain or anything else. Involved is a horizon determined by a structural relation; it only exists on the basis of the language of words, but it reveals their unsurpassable consequence" (Lacan 1992: 278). The outside of any signifying chain pushes against the structural relation. Grasping the ineffaceable character of the ontic singularity of the

dead and unburied brother, Antigone invokes a right. The language in which she does this is the emergence of a signifier that “freezes it as a thing that is fixed beyond the flux of all possible transformations” (Lacan 1992: 279; translation modified). This signifier brings to a halt the restlessness of the negative. Antigone will be “screwed” to it (which in Lacan’s elaborations means that this is the place of the “aporia” – see Lacan 1992: 275). But the price to be paid for this fixity is the sundering of the subject on a more fundamental level – the secret that was not clear within the Hegelian dream, within the revolutionary dream. For Lacan, this means that whatever “clouds of the imaginary” one might see around this fixing of the ontic “is” of the brother, “Antigone’s position represents the radical limit that affirms the unique value of his being without reference to any content, to whatever good or evil Polynices may have done, or to whatever he may be subjected to” (Lacan 1992: 279). This pure form without content is language:

The unique value involved is essentially that of language. Outside of language it is inconceivable, and the being of him who has lived cannot be detached from all he bears with him in the nature of good and evil, of destiny. [...] That purity, the separation of being from the characteristics of the historical drama he has lived through, is precisely the limit of the *ex nihilo* to which Antigone is attached. It is nothing less than the break that the very presence of language inaugurates in the life of man. (Lacan 1992: 279)

The fixity and purity that is achieved empties Polynices of his historical drama. Being and history lie on two different sides of the abyss Lacan is trying to cross by way of the transgression. The gap in the structure where this signifier emerges is plugged by Antigone herself; and it is as this plug that she is “in the field of the Other” – while simultaneously marking the limit beyond which there is the monstrous as such, the Real Thing. This is the reason Lacan is careful to note that she herself is not monstrous (Lacan 1992: 263). The unwritten beyond any signifying chain is the transcategorical, transcendental center of this structure, *ex-posed* as absent or lost.

We would need to locate this moment in the development of Lacan’s thinking on where and how to place *jouissance* within the structural apparatus that he constantly revised – and there would be different, less monumental, paradigms for thinking *jouissance* in later seminars – not least as he questioned his own structuralism, particularly in the 1970s. Which is to say that Lacan cannot be reduced to this way of presenting his understanding of the absent center of the structure and Antigone’s way of covering over it. For my purposes, what is important is to see if this example can give us a way of understanding the difference between the postmodern doxa of the founding exclusion as a structural limit, and the ontological understanding of the presencing (the *ex-imate* presence as absence) of being as an opening toward the infrapolitical.

Before turning to Moreiras’ text, allow me one last detour as a way of presenting a contrast already in play, though tacitly, in Lacan’s *Ethics*. Heidegger’s jug/thing is a model of sorts for Lacan in seminar VII. It is not a question of a

complete explanation of the Heideggerian thing; for my purposes, it is sufficient to point out how Heidegger approaches the thing as something that concerns nearness and distance in a way that is diametrically opposed to Lacan's horror/Thing. To understand the difference between a thing and an object, Heidegger makes a distinction between the way in which our representation of objects always leaves far-off, or outstanding, even the nearest. And this distance can only be overcome by way of a step back from representational grasping:

When and how do the things come as things? They do not come through the machinations of humans. But they also do not come without the vigilance of the mortals. The first step to such vigilance is the step back from merely representational, i.e., explanatory thinking into commemorative thinking. (Heidegger 2012: 19)

Without this step back into what he calls "commemorative thinking", things remain out of reach. We live with this impossibility constantly – it is our "natural," or normalized though un-natural, sense of the quotidian – and it is in that normalization that Heidegger finds horror:

What is horrifying announces and conceals itself in the way that the nearness nearby remains outstanding. What does this mean? It means: *the thing does not thing: the thing does not presence as thing*. World does not world. Thing/World do not take place. (Heidegger 2012: 22)

Is the desire of Antigone, cut off from the sister/brother relation a version of this step back that would be also a step into the nearness in question here?

Back to *Infrapolítica*. Moreiras alerts us to the fact that what we are dealing with in Derrida's approach to Antigone is one of the crucial sites of contemporary thought: the necessary de-structuration of every structure as necessary condition of the structure itself. And that, as such, it is not a question of Derrida doing something exterior to Hegel's text, but an act of verifying something that is in Hegel's text, but that only in deconstruction is brought out into the light of day. Here Moreiras asserts: "I dare to propose, knowing very well the risk I am exposed to, that infrapolitics is exactly there, in the destructuring non-place that is condition of every structure, in that unnamable enjoyment (*goce*)" (Moreiras 2020b: 18). The operation at work is not so simple. To locate this moment of destructuration in Hegel's text itself means a torsion regarding Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There, Antigone, standing in for womanhood in general, represents the "irony" of the community because she changes the universal end into a private one, shifting, to use Hegel's own metaphors, the property of the state into possession and ornament of the family (Hegel 1977: 288). This part of the community that has no part in it is not the unconscious, because Hegel would have her confess her guilt, give up her secret, and thus commit the different offence of usurping a dignity that the system does not grant her: the dignity of being a member of the community properly speaking. If Antigone is vomited by the system, she is an internal exclusion and not the

site of the system relation to the nearness of what it keeps most distant. That is, from the point of view of what Hegel means-to-say: “The community [...] can only maintain itself by suppressing this spirit of individualism” – yet “because it is an essential moment, [the community] all the same creates it and, moreover, creates it by its repressive attitude towards it as a hostile principle” (Hegel 1977: 288). The system attempts to bring to the light of day its founding night. It both erases Antigone, in the end, and erases her desire. She is sister. As Butler puts it summing up Lacan’s own reading this philosophical text: “Hegel [...] reads the death drive out of desire” (Butler 2000: 47). Derrida: “What the speculative dialectic means-to-say, is that the crypt can still be incorporated into the system. The transcendental or the repressed, the unthought or the excluded must be assimilated by the corpus [...] idealized in the very negativity of their work. The halt forms merely a stasis in the introjection of spirit. Antigone is a moment to get through, a terrible and divine moment, for the brother and the sister” (Derrida 2021: 187). For this very same reason, what the system regurgitates, its “rest,” when it halts, even if momentarily, is Antigone. She is surpassed but not preserved in the *Phenomenology*.² Put in these terms, deconstruction is the ex-position of the relation without relation which allows dialectics to always forget about any post-dialectics. Is this the risk that Moreiras takes (a risk that would in fact be the reader’s risk of misunderstanding everything that is at stake in *Infrapolítica* as well as in infrapolitics in general)? When he cuts off Derrida’s sentence regarding Polynices; when he leaves out the brother/sister relation and thus the issue of sisterliness as a whole; when he isolates Antigone’s desire – what are the implication of the cut thus operated by Moreiras?

Antigone’s desire in isolation, cut off from everything else, leaves us exposed to a desire that is not in a structural relation to what is outside any signifying chain. But if this is the case why take the risk of obscuring this insight? Infrapolitics seems to be at stake in it. Why the equivocation, why the play with the more palatable and insufficient (though also well-known and widely accepted) notion of the incompleteness of the structure – nothing other than the security of structure itself?

The exergue to *Infrapolítica. Instrucciones de uso* closes with a quotation from *Glas*, which Moreiras frames as a rare instance of Derrida using the first person; he refers to it as a voice that appears to interrupt something. It floats over or comes from an outside (*voz en off*) and it states a shared fascination with Antigone.

Like Hegel, we have been fascinated by Antigone, by this incredible relation, this powerful liaison without desire, this immense impossible desire that could not live, able only to overturn, paralyze or exceed a system and a history, interrupt the life of the concept, take its breath away or, what comes down to the same thing, support it from the outside or the underneath of a crypt. (Derrida 2021: 187)

2 Judith Butler puts it thus: “[...] Antigone figures the threshold between kinship and the state, a transition in the *Phenomenology* that is not precisely an *Aufhebung*, for Antigone is surpassed but not preserved when ethical order emerges” (Butler 2000: 5).

Judith Butler, on her lectures on Antigone, points out the ambivalence of this passage. Derrida's reading "seems to concur with Hegel on the desireless status of [Antigone's] relation to her brother", but, pointing to the same text that Moreiras quotes, she adds: "[Derrida] may be writing ironically, since he both negates the desire but then also calls it an impossible desire, affirming it as a desire of sorts" (Butler 2000: 89, n. 84). Yet, things do not need to be so complicated. The desire in question is the desire for the desire-less liaison between brother and sister – the dream of sisterliness and brotherliness, the dream of the end of history, the dream of the Idealist homecoming, the dream of the achieved universal Revolution. (But this is exactly the dream that tries to do away with infrapolitics as such – or the nightmare from which infrapolitics wakes up: History conceived as full restitution and plenitude.) This is what Moreiras gathers from this text:

Antigone's desire [which is to say, the desire that Moreiras has cut off from the relation to the brother – and thus cut off from the desire for a desire-less liaison] destroys the phantasm and demetaphorizes the system, thus bringing absolute knowledge to its ruin. The phantasm is the endless metaphor of the *Aufhebung* as name of Being, which Antigone unmasks. (Moreiras 2020b: 18)

Moreiras then adds that this is what *Glas* offers us as a way into a second deconstructive turn. But this is nowhere to be found in *Glas* (a statement I cannot defend or demonstrate in these pages other than to point out that it was Lacoue-Labarthe who first inscribed Derrida's reading of Hegel wholly within the epochal interrogation of the ethico-aesthetic, the aesth-ethics, of tragedy).³ Now, this move away from aesthetics/politics, thus from aesth-ethics, is precisely what infrapolitics makes possible today. So, it is not *Glas* that "offers Antigone as [...] the figure for a second deconstructive turn, antiphantasmatic and infrapolitical. [...] Antigone, which is not writing, [...] takes a step back..." (Moreiras 2020b: 18); it is Moreiras' work. However, the step back in question, which is a Heideggerian step back, also needs to be qualified. We turn to it now.

If the mayor temptation up until now has been the dream of the revolution as it entails the sisterly and the brotherly, when we turn to Heidegger the biggest challenge will be the German Idealist dream of homecoming, which is also encrypted into the Antigone drama. Avoiding it will require keeping track of a double loss that we must remark upon, lest we confuse it with Hölderlin's poet-homecomer. In the introduction to her translation of Hölderlin's *Der Archipelagus*, Helena Cortés Gabaudan reminds us that the search for the Greek origin concludes with the poet's realization that Greece is lost forever

3 Lacoue-Labarthe: "[...] tragedy, after Kant (and consequently after Sade), is the decisive test of philosophy, or of thought: it is in the interpretation of tragedy that the possibility of philosophy is staked [...] the hope of its overcoming, of a step beyond, of access to another thinking; this is true of Hegel and Schelling, true of Hölderlin, true of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Lacan does not escape that rule, and neither will the Derrida of *Glas* escape" (Lacoue-Labarthe 1991: 25).

and its ideal forever impossible: “The encounter with Greece will turn out to be, in the end, a non-encounter (*desencuentro*)” (Cortés Gabaudan 2011: 14). Yet, if Hölderlin’s poetry, as Cortés Gabaudan notes, serves as illustration of Heidegger’s notion that above all it is in the work of art that the being of beings is alighted upon in its unveiling, then the loss of Greece, and the exposition of its non-being in the poem, becomes, for that same reason, the place where Greece is given to us “in a more truthful mode” (Cortés Gabaudan 2011: 15). We gain in the poem what was lost in the political and historical horizon. This compensatory gesture, giving over to the poem what needs to be worked out in politics and history, is exactly what is avoided in Moreiras’ shift from “the poetic” to infrapolitics.

Moreiras scans through two different Antigones in Heidegger, the one that interests us is the second one. Heidegger’s second reading of Antigone shifts from the historical pressures of National Socialism at the core of the first, where the issue was the relation *dike/techne*, and moves toward a more direct confrontation with ontological difference, where Antigone is the figure that learns to be at home in the unhome of Being. In so doing, she shows the way toward a thinking that can maintain the gap between politics and *polis*. *Polis* is the ground, and it concerns the highest and most authentic meditation. There is no politics without *polis*, but the essence of *polis* is not political. The uncanny (*unheimlich*) is the difference between politics and *polis*. Just as cause cannot be derived from consequence, the essence of the *polis* cannot be derived from politics. Politics may have always already begun, “but *polis* finds [...] its origin in a region that cannot be reduced to politics” (Moreiras 2020b: 67). The gap, which might not be anything other than the gap-cause between politics and *polis*, is absent and present in its absence – but this is not simply a structural gap. And infrapolitics has everything to do with this: “The infrapolitical distance, absolute limit of the place where politics is narrativized, has to do with, or shows itself in, the difference between *polis* and politics” (Moreiras 2020b: 68). This distance concerns something that is necessary for life to be livable. Moreiras turns to Antigone as a figure that illuminates this site: that something that is not politics and is necessary for existence to be possible. But she also illuminates how, in the second turn of deconstruction, it is ontological difference that takes over the thematic of the absent cause. That is, in place of the linguistic or structuralist idea of an always incomplete structure, what the second turn of deconstruction, infrapolitics, alights on is the absent presencing of that which is there as a supplement to all the little holes that haunt structures. Which means that, in addition to having to think the inherent point of collapse for all hegemonic dispensations of Being, we also must make way for a meditation that does not forget the co-belonging of Being and all the incomplete or barred wholes that scan our history: history is the double articulation of all the finite and ultimately incomplete structures and their co-belonging with the gap that grounds them all singularly. How can we translate this into more concrete terms? It is not the same hole that undermines the structure of capitalism and the structure of early modern monarchies, the part that is to have

no part is different within Marxist discourse and the Lacanian unconscious. At issue there is something that concerns a political force greater than any of the ready-made political discourse already at our disposal.

Heidegger's Antigone illuminates the ontological difference, but he does this while he shifts the distinction between politics and *polis* toward what he calls the poetic, which is Antigone's desire. This is a trope, one that Moreiras will submit to de-metaphorization thus:

Antigone is able [...] to consummate the passage through the unfamiliar and death and to gather the sinister in its essence. Antigone, therefore, as Heidegger puts it, "takes it upon herself to become homely within being". "Being homely in the unhomely", [...] is the very essence of Antigone. Heidegger calls it "the poetic". "The unhomely being homely of human beings upon the earth is 'poetic'". [...] I prefer to call infrapolitical what Heidegger calls poetic. The tearing displacement from a quotidian being with and among things toward a radical sheltering in the obscurity of the originary home, unreachable as such, but amenable to nearness, can perhaps be described poetically, but what is thus described is the infrapolitical task itself. (Moreiras 2020b: 74–75)

The infrapolitical task concerns this nearness – which is the step back toward the thinging of the thing in Heidegger's terms – and not the place of Antigone as such. Antigone does not mark for Moreiras a model to be followed.⁴ Rather, he identifies a certain antagonification of us all within contemporary Creontic-politics. This is an important distinction, even if in its subtleness can be easily lost sight of:

The infrapolitical task does not search for a home, only for a reduction in the task of getting-closer-to, of a nearness that stands over against the distance forgotten in the forgetting of the ontological difference: that nearness is thoroughly infrapolitical distance. Not a minor task: it has to do with being attuned to the fact that everywhere today politics is nothing but a venturing out without exit, an endeavor without a place. Politics, in the margins of its dignity as a concept, is sinister today. Politics is what Creon does [...] lost in the nothingness of the administrative demand. [...] Infrapolitics is what is worthy of question when there are no more questions to be asked of politics: politics is technology today, a technological endeavor [...] under the principle of general equivalence. There is no *polis* anymore – it remains a phantom of the tradition. Its spectrality subsists in the form of infrapolitics as the obscure memory of its origin; as a reminder that we were historically destined at some point in the past. No longer. Today we are all in an Antigonic position, even if we refuse to know it. (Moreiras 2020b: 75)

If Antigone abides in the uncanny, this is so only because for her there was a *polis*. In a similar fashion to Oedipus, who did not have an Oedipus Complex,

4 Such a model is in evidence in certain psychoanalytic readings of Antigone, in which she voluntarily sacrifices herself and accepts death, "throws herself towards the Thing", becoming the signifier of desire, i.e., phallus; this is Slavoj Žižek's own self-diagnosed phallogo-centrism as he sees it at work in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008: xvii–xviii).

Antigone can only be, for us, an existential complex to live through. And Moreiras' proposal would have to be understood as a proposal to try to avoid being screwed to the aporia it presents within our globalized situation: to fix and empty out the being of the brother into an object that will stand in as the satisfaction of the desire for a desireless liaison.

Perhaps because of the magnitude of this undertaking, any figure that is adduced as a way of illustration will be disappointing. Conversely, the impossible demand for illustration might only be properly approached by way of the paradoxical and (also for this reason unconvincing) massiveness of figures like Antigone. Bruno Bosteels has put pressure on this point in his critique of Žižek's multiple examples of the miraculous transgression (Bosteels 2010: 186). Moreiras' Antigone, what he gathers from Derrida's and Heidegger's, as well as what he leaves out, does not fall into that category once we take care to note that here Antigone might be better understood as the erasure of Antigone from the Romantic and Hegelo-Revolutionary dream. Moreiras' Antigone is the not even Antigone, it is nothing but a desire beyond writing in the difference of the non-subject. Yet, Moreiras' book, which is concerned with tracking some instances in the archive where the ontological difference has already been at work in the elucidation of what conditions politics, and not with a foundational statement which would falsely claim to invent something out of thin air, puts all of this in abeyance, and not least when he writes in an endnote that the issue of the relationship between Antigone's desire and the death drive will be set aside for a different occasion (Moreiras 2020b: 235, n. 3). This difficulty and this limit might also be the limit of Moreiras' thought, perhaps even the place where he might turn back. Is that what obtains in the meditation on "authentic temporality" in *Sosiego siniestro*? As I begin to conclude, I offer the following closing pages as a set of questions that are more questions to myself as a reader than for Moreiras himself. And this is offered as a way of marking that what is at issue here is not critique, but a place for continued engagement and thinking.

To Conclude, Not to Conclude

In *Sosiego siniestro*, the various meditations on the decision of existence, a phrase Moreiras borrows from Jean-Luc-Nancy, mark a way into a thought of the para-temporal. The decision is not something that happens in time, it has no duration: "it takes place without duration, and thus outside of time [toma lugar sin duración, y así fuera del tiempo]" (Moreiras 2020c: 79). It is the instant: "authentic temporality [...] opens in that extratemporal instant" (Moreiras 2020c: 79). The annulment of time opens the time of the subject; something is emptied out, fixed so that the subject can be pinned to it and to the repetition that it entails. The instant "does not change the subject but constitutes it. There is no transformation of the subject but [...] uncovering [*desocultamiento*] of a potentiality of subjective repetition whose character is formal because it does not have any content at all. It is simply a decision of existence,

‘to become what one is’, which is the project without end and that requires repetition in each case. It is repetition of the simple, of the very *factum* of an existence, mine, which is not exhausted nor achieved in an interiority of any sort. In this sense, it is pure openness [...]” (Moreiras 2020c: 79). The context of these considerations is an (impossible) dialogue with psychoanalysis and political theorist Jorge Alemán, a fact that might explain the return of the “closet Lacanian” in Moreiras as he writes *Sosiego* during the pandemic. The title of these meditations during lockdown is itself a condensation of what was at stake with Antigone as Moreiras read Heidegger (being at home in the unhomely, *sosiego siniestro*). He ventures: “that the decision of existence, unending and repeated, always outside of time because it opens time (it is the instant of a present that is not the undifferentiated and inapprehensible now between past and future), is potentially there for each of us in the strange experience of the [Covid-19] lockdown” (Moreiras 2020c: 80). The emancipation that this proposal entails is not political, on the contrary, it is “above all an emancipation from politics” – understood as that which forces us to be badly exposed (Moreiras 2020c: 80). And yet we are back at the ambiguity between the founding lack of the structure and the step back toward the nearness of the “thing”. Is this form/content opposition here not a restatement, a return to the emptying out of Polynices that “screws” Antigone to the aporetic “signifier” of her desire? No wonder then that the book closes with a “post-scriptum” which almost seems to close this opening.

In closing *Sosiego* with a text on Nietzsche being read by Heidegger being read by Derrida, which concerns the imperative to become what one is and the temporality that it opens, Moreiras yields to Heidegger reading Nietzsche’s own reactive autobiography. Nietzsche’s becoming needs to be imprinted on the whole of life as vengeance. Moreiras seems to back himself into a corner. “In the same way”, he admits, “the decision of existence [...] comes across the folding of its possibility into impossibility. Thus, there is no decision of existence, only its illusion: at the moment of [...] the greatest authenticity, we see in the mirror the fallen monster of ourselves which we have been trying to avoid” (Moreiras 2020c: 132). All of this seems to move in the direction of closing one of the central themes of the book: the formal, wholly empty, extratemporal, instant that opens the authentic time of the decision of existence. As he is doing this, Moreiras first tells himself, “But this is not enough” (Moreiras 2020c: 131); then, he asks, one gets the sense that not just rhetorically, “Is this all?” (Moreiras 2020c: 132). To conclude:

Perhaps, beyond the namable and the teachable, beyond the word, beyond philosophy, there is a gesture, at the limit, which dissolves the aporia. And this gesture, when it is given, if it were possible, is the gesture that we can never learn from the other, the gesture of the implicit secret of every existence and in all existences. Beyond writing and toward the late time of the return that dictates the other imperative, this time Derridean: become what you are and then learn to live. (Moreiras 2020c: 132)

Why this Derridean addendum exactly where the aporia is resolved in the name of a gesture that cannot be the other's? And beyond that, why the mirroring of Nietzsche's autography so that to become what one is seems to be eternally returning to Nietzsche's Dionysian vengeance and its metaphysical imprinting of becoming on life as a whole? Even if it is the case for Nietzsche, by what mechanism is that guilt transferred to Moreiras? Can we answer those questions simply saying that the issue is structural? What is it that these words mark as the limit where what we should listen to is offered only as silence?

The constitutive exclusion upon which a structure repeats its effects has been misconstrued metaphysically as an absence that somehow leaves a trace on the structure itself. This dogmatic assertion, which has become so widely accepted and repeated that it is almost impossible to think through it today, pretends to solve by structure the very problem of the structure. To claim this unthought as the opening of an authentic time is monstrous, precisely in the sense that Moreiras offers at the close of *Sosiego*. The monstrosity consists in the alienation of "time" that it sets in motion precisely where we thought we were opening onto authentic temporality. This is marked by the surprising admittance of a form/content opposition at the very heart of the decision of existence. The opening is formal because it has no content. But if it is formal, it has no time (which Moreiras admits readily: "place without duration [...] outside of time") (REFERENCE?). We remain at the threshold, where the most burning question is how to think the non-time of Antigone's desire. Antigone subtracted from the Romantic, and the Hegelian and the Revolutionary dream, a desire that Moreiras more than anyone else has helped us bring into focus – how to read the non-time in which the distinction between time and history would dissolve even as its dissolution would not be the grand entrance into the History of a new epoch.

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Haime Rodrigues Matos

Infrapolitika na kraju est-etike: o najnovijem delu Alberta Moreirasa

Apstrakt

U ovom radu ću ponuditi čitanje nedavno objavljenih knjiga Alberta Moreirasa, ali u kontekstu njegovog životnog dela u celini. Razmatraču njegovo delo sa stanovišta preispitivanja ideje razlike između vremena i istorije. Nakon kratkog osvrtu na tu sveobuhvatnu tematiku njegovog ranog dela, preći ću na razmatranje udaljavanja od hegelijanstva u njegovim novijim publikacijama. Ovaj nehegelijanski stav nije samo antihegelijanski stav. Razumevanje ove razlike odvešće nas u pravu dimenziju infrapolitike. Ovaj aspekt Moreirasovog doprinosa savremenim raspravama biće ilustrovan njegovom paradoksalnom i neprepoznatljivom Antigonom.

Ključne reči: infrapolitika, temporalnost, Antigona, Lakan, strukturalizam, post-strukturalizam, Derida, Moreiras, tragedija