

INFRAPOLITICS ON MARGINS

INFRAPOLITIKA NA MARGINAMA

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A RESPONSE, OR A COMMENT ON "THE OPEN REGION WHERE FREEDOM CAN STILL MAKE AN ADVENT."

It would be the worst form of gratefulness for these beautiful and generous essays on my book if I were to use them as a pretext to expand on them, to say more things, to summarize them or highlight their emphases. At the same time the invitation to write a response would lose sense if I were to say nothing. That is my predicament, compounded by the fact that I am convalescing from a COVID-19 infection, and my energy levels are still very low. Mostly I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Maddalena Cerrato, who put this dossier together, and to Gareth Williams, Peter Baker and Esaú Segura. Also to Đurđa Trajković, whose idea it was in the first place.

My intent, through whatever I say, is to let these essays be, as reflections on a text that they have every right to use as they see fit. Not that they are not accurate, each on them in their own way. I can only express my admiration. More secretly, also my wonder, as things have gone and will presumably continue to go, that my friends can find a way to express an attunement, beyond any exegesis, to thought procedures that have always had a dubious destiny at best, as they were born at a time of a certain shattering of destiny. But perhaps only in that shattering can a certain fraternity flourish. That it is precious and infrequent, even redemptive, is hereby acknowledged. I would rather keep away, on this topic, from rhetorical embellishments.

Could I suggest that infrapolitical reflection is always in every case tied up with the Lacanian *objet petit a*? If that is so, then of course there is no end to infrapolitical reflection, there is no way to become precise about it, and both the essays in this dossier and my response to them can only ever aspire to the ambiguous and unsatisfactory status of approximations.

There will always be a hole at the center, as it is the case for the god of Al-anus de Insulis. What then would seem important, for those inclined to pursue these adventures, would not be to measure the hole, to fall into the hole,



or to denounce the hole as an unrepresentable and dangerous bad joke. It would rather be to see how the uncanny presence/absence of the hole, its sacredness in a word, reverberates, and how it stains the surrounding territories.

Is infrapolitical reflection, then, a reflection on sacredness? No doubt this would be off-putting for many, particularly for those who still think of the sacred in the form of statues of saints or through the more or less sublime feeling of star-gazing. But what if sacredness were in every case the aura of singular existence, nothing personal about it, neither private nor public, common to all, and yet quickly becoming imperceptible through the algorithms that rule our biopolitical lives to the point of leaving no residue? Anti-algorithmic thoughts, objections, withdrawals, exodus, and exception from biopolitical totalization. They are positionings that go through a retreat from positions, but the retreat ends, in every case, as and in whatever remains impassable, insurmountable. We should have no illusions.

Presumably what is primary for infrapolitics, which the essays in the dossier strive to present, or to name without naming, is not its difference from politics, even if establishing it is its necessary precondition. Infrapolitics wants to be an attempt at finding a new terrain for practical reason, neither political nor ethical nor rhetorical. This might be forbidden under present unwritten rules. Flaunting those rules means finding a stand near the sacredness of impersonal, singular existence, insofar as it is approachable, insofar as we have not already irretrievably lost a sense that it is there, somewhere. *Ankhibasie*. Nothing else is presumed or even attempted. Also, nothing less.

If the central conflict of our time is capitalism against world, well, we need to have an idea of world before any exit from capitalism can be posited. This is the paradox: the minute we claim an experience of world can only be retrieved through a militant affirmation of political struggle, political struggle sacrifices world through the very gesture of claiming to protect it. A naïve or blind reading of infrapolitics has tended to place it as some kind of abandonment of the political terrain, a flight into a netherworld of personal, idiotic existence. Infrapolitics is, however, not a craven or immature resistance to politics, as if politics were somehow the natural space of real men and women. Rather, for infrapolitics, politics is today the site of an empty and ineffectual gesticulation, at a remove, abstract and vacuous. Politics is to be thought, then, as we can see everywhere, as the space of a paradoxical resistance to politics, massive, thoroughly ideological, and ultimately deluded: nothing, or little else but, the field of superstructural expression for the ontology of the commodity form. So no *macho* assertions of politics as the real thing, no facile dismissals of infrapolitics as a weak refuge from the storm: infrapolitics is, rather, politics times two, the very politicization of the ruin of politics, which our times inherit under the sign of an urgent, if necessarily untimely, demand for thinking. This demand for thinking is hyperpolitical and at the same time other than political, but other than political through its hyperpoliticality.

After all, the notion that it is an imperative obligation of thought to turn away from politics into a reflection on impersonal, singular existence cannot

hide its rebellious, perhaps even revolting political import. It configures a hyperpolitical turn away from politics that will only bide its time. Meanwhile, things remain to be done, against the grain of everything the institution wants us to do, even to be. Read the essays in the dossier: you will see how something emerges in them that is not within the purview of what one normally does and is expected to do. There is even a certain obscene, abject quality to their positions and to their presuppositions. Which is, no doubt, why infrapolitics will continue to be read, or unread, as a dangerous supplement to the task of writing, as an impossible thought. It is a form of happiness to confirm that I do not have to feel alone in the task.

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