

Routledge Research in New Postcolonialisms

Series Editor:

Mark Jackson,

Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial Geographies,

School of Geographical Sciences,

University of Bristol, UK

This series provides a forum for innovative, critical research into the changing contexts, emerging potentials, and contemporary challenges ongoing within postcolonial studies. Postcolonial studies across the social sciences and humanities are in a period of transition and innovation. From environmental and ecological politics, to the development of new theoretical and methodological frameworks in posthumanisms, ontology, and relational ethics, to decolonising efforts against expanding imperialisms, enclosures, and global violences against people and place, postcolonial studies are never more relevant and, at the same time, challenged. This series draws into focus emerging transdisciplinary conversations that engage key debates about how new postcolonial landscapes and new empirical and conceptual terrains are changing the legacies, scope, and responsibilities of decolonising critique.

Postcolonialism, Indigeneity and Struggles for Food Sovereignty

Alternative Food Networks in the Subaltern World

Edited by Marisa Wilson

Coloniality, Ontology, and the Question of the Posthuman

Edited by Mark Jackson

Coloniality, Ontology, and the Question of the Posthuman

Edited by Mark Jackson

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017
Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business
© 2018 selection and editorial matter, Mark Jackson; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Mark Jackson to be identified as the author of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-92090-3 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-68672-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

<i>Lists of figures and box</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xv
Introduction: A critical bridging exercise	1
MARK JACKSON	
1 For new ecologies of thought: Towards decolonising critique	19
MARK JACKSON	
2 Anti-colonial ontologies: A dialogue	63
ANGELA LAST	
3 Chronic carriers: Creole pigs, postplantation politics, and disturbing agrarian ontologies in Haiti	81
SOPHIE MOORE	
4 Terra plena: Revisiting contemporary agrarian struggles in Central America through a “full earth” perspective	101
NAOMI MILLNER	
5 Refracting colonialism in Canada: Fish tales, text, and insistent public grief	131
ZOE TODD	
6 Unsettling the urban geographies of settler-colonial cities: Aporetic encounters with the spatiotemporal dynamics of modern logic	147
DELACEY TEDESCO	

7	“Well, City Boy Rangoon, it’s time to stitch up the evening”: Material, meaning, and Man in the (post)colonial city	167
	LISA TILLEY	
8	Ethno-linguistic cartographies as colonial embodiment in postcolonial Sri Lanka	187
	CHITRA JAYATHILAKE	
9	Immanent comparisons and posthuman perception in the filmic sensorium of Apichatpong Weerasethakul	207
	CARLO BONURA	
10	Political ontology and international relations: Politics, self-estrangement, and void universalism in a pluriverse	227
	HANS-MARTIN JAEGER	
	<i>Index</i>	247

Figures and Box

Figures

4.1	Map of research sites in El Salvador; Field sites: Suchitoto and Toroloa.	106
4.2	David Holmgren’s 12 permaculture design principles.	113
6.1	“The land is our culture,” Gateway Banners.	161

Box

4.1	Seven design principles of ‘terra plena’	124
-----	--	-----

iwab, M. 2000. 'Escape From the Image: Deleuze's Image-Ontology', In: G. Flaxman, ed., *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 109–139.

lker, L.J. 2013. *Situated Testimonies*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

lker, A. 2008. 'The Rural Constitution and the Everyday Politics of Elections in North-Thailand', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 84–105.

10 Political ontology and international relations

Politics, self-estrangement, and void universalism in a pluriverse

Hans-Martin Jaeger

Introduction

Once perhaps considered an obscure domain of metaphysicians, ontology has emerged in somewhat different guises as a significant theoretical concern in the social sciences (especially anthropology, sociology, and political geography) in recent years. Remarkably, it has even installed itself at the center of International Relations (IR), a discipline that, not so long ago, one would not have suspected of such philosophical liaisons dangereuses, unsettling as these could be for the alternately positivist-scientific or "hard-headed" practical preoccupations that have dominated (and shackled) it for much of its existence. At least since the emergence of Wendt's constructivist quest for a social ontology of international relations (Wendt, 1987, 1999), ontology has become an accepted subject for theoretical conversation in IR, whether in his own scientific-realist (Wendt, 1999), Wight's (2006) critical-realist, Jackson's (2011: 26–32) pragmatist, or other guises. However, what is instantly striking about these different ways in which ontology has entered the agenda in IR is how they submerge or defer politics (let alone a more demanding notion of the political); practices, processes and events; and the larger questions of whether ontology should be understood as singular and universal or as multiple and pluralist. To the extent that these concerns surface, it is further striking that they continue to be narrowly circumscribed in terms of states and their "international" relations.¹

Without denying the continuing significance of states and interstate relations, an articulation of ontology in these terms is little more than a nostalgic sublimation in a world-political context in which many of the traditional state-centric (and often colonial) categories of IR, from anarchy to interdependence, appear unsuited to coming to terms with phenomena such as transnational economic and ecological crises, migration, and "terrorist" political violence. To be sure, beyond the sometimes narrow confines of ontological debate in IR, numerous attempts have been made to come to terms with these (and other) developments through new theories of cosmopolitan democracy (e.g. Held), empire (Hardt and Negri), or world risk society (Beck), to name only three well known examples. Contrasting with such theories of a global (albeit differentiated or layered) social whole, Rosenberg's recent Trotsky-inspired theory of "uneven and combined development" argues that "the fact of societal multiplicity" (Rosenberg, 2016: 129) is the

distinctive trait of the international (broadly understood). For Rosenberg, then, societal multiplicity is, arguably, the necessary ontological touchstone for IR to leave the “prison-house of political science” and “export” a broader contribution to the social sciences rather than merely importing from them. Along with the discussions of ontology in IR, the theory of uneven and combined development is of particular interest here too, because unevenness, development, and the problem of commensurability shares the attention to multiplicity with wider discussions of ontology in anthropology, human geography, and other social sciences to which it would likely wish to contribute (e.g. Blaser, 2009; de la Cadena, 2010; Milner this volume).

This chapter juxtaposes recent discussions of ontology and (Rosenbergian) multiplicity in IR with what scholars elsewhere have called “the ontological turn” or “political ontology.”²² The ontological turn seeks to take seriously the multiplicity of being (alternatively designated as radical alterity or pluriversality) by overturning the Western philosophical presupposition of one ontology (“reality” or “nature”) and multiple epistemologies (“representations” or “cultures”). Rather than leading to a mere plurality (and relativism) of worldviews, the ontological turn asserts that practical (and simultaneously conceptual) connections between cultural representations (including human and non-human thought and sensation) and nature (or materiality in general) entail an actual, that is, ontological multiplicity of worlds.³ In a more explicitly and more politically decolonial vein, political ontology advocates a transition from the putative universe of modernity (or even multiple modernities) to a pluriverse of different ontologies, understood as performances of worlds and stories, including non-modern ones (see Blaser, 2009, 2014). Drawing on ethnographic studies of indigeneity, actor-network theory (ANT) and other posthumanist social theories and philosophies, the ontological turn and political ontology highlight the simultaneously conceptual, performative, political, and plural character of ontologies often elided in scholarship on ontology in IR. *Vis-à-vis* Rosenberg’s insistence on societal multiplicity and inter-societal connectivity (Rosenberg’s broad and non-Eurocentric understanding of the concept of society notwithstanding) they propose a deeper, not merely societal or cultural, but ontological multiplicity taking the form of “multinaturalism” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 59, 196) rather than multi-societalism or multiculturalism. In other words, as is now extensively argued, sociality is not limited to human beings, for humans are relationally always already processes of more-than-human multiplicities. By entertaining the possibility of varying human-natural-material assemblages, multinaturalism also disengages the recognition of difference and co-existence from the developmental categories and trajectories implied by the “uneven and combined development” of societies.

The present intervention initiates a conversation between political ontology and IR along three lines (with a particular emphasis on the first of these). Following some preliminary remarks, it first clarifies what kind of politics is at stake if IR were to engage with political ontology by showing how Rancière’s politics of disagreement, equality and alterity implicitly informs the latter (without however exhausting it). Second, it suggests that the move from a universe of modernity (or multiple modernities or societies) to a pluriverse of modern and non-modern

ontologies also implies a “deconstructive self-estrangement” of Eurocentric ontologies/modernities, for instance, by attending to their stories or by understanding these through political theology. Third, it in turn provokes political ontology’s (partly Schmittian-derived) notion of the pluriverse by pointing to Sergei Prozorov’s (2014a, 2014b) “void universalism” as a possible postfoundational grounding of an alternative cosmopolitics for a pluriverse. By foregrounding the performance of worlds through non-anthropocentric ontologies (via ANT and ethnography), politics (via Rancière), self-estrangement (via stories and political theology), and an alternative, postfoundational (or “void-universalist”) cosmopolitics, political ontology moves us beyond the (merely) international politics of states and the (mere) multiplicity of societies, and can potentially contribute to provincializing, politicizing and decolonizing IR (if I may continue to speak to and from this parish within the social sciences).

Preliminaries: Politics and ontology and political ontology

While the political implications of ontology have been surreptitiously noted in the anthropological debate around the ontological turn, the most explicit statement on the matter has been offered by Holbraad et al. (2014) who differentiate three possible “correlations” between ontology and politics. We might dub these a “conservative-affirmative” correlation (whereby politics is about discovering and reproducing what is), a “critical-prescriptive” one (whereby politics debunks the ideological pretense of ontology while simultaneously affirming what should be), and a “creative-transformational” one (whereby politics multiplies forms of existence that herald what could be). Aligned with the creative-transformational mode, the ontological turn is concerned with making visible alterity. Rather than proceeding in a normative vein (as would the “critical-prescriptive” mode), it is geared towards giving the Other(wise) “full ontological weight so as to render it viable as a real alternative” (Holbraad et al., 2014). For Viveiros de Castro anthropology accordingly becomes “the science of the ontological self-determination of the world’s peoples” (2015a: 54) or “the ontological self-determination of the other” (2015b: 4, 11), “and . . . thus a political science in the fullest sense” (2015a: 54), which is simultaneously a “politico-cultural struggle” of “multiplicity-building” indispensable for decolonization and political self-determination (2015a: 41, 75). Holbraad et al. (2014) clarify that this perspective would be misunderstood if equated to a (mere) struggle for indigenous rights, to ethnic essentialization (since it means “giving the ontological back to ‘the people’, not the people back to ‘the ontological’”), or to a pedagogical role of anthropologists. The creative-transformational politics of ontological self-determination thus disavows or exceeds a liberal politics of rights, identity, and education. This is very suggestive, but still seems to beg the question of how a politics conducive to ontological self-determination can be conceived in positive, “affirmative” terms; how, indeed, we can conceive of a political ontology.

Mario Blaser has perhaps made the most systematic attempt to define political ontology. Beginning with the ‘ontology’ in ‘political ontology’, Blaser notes that apart from its dictionary definition as a doctrine of what kinds of entities exist, and

they relate to one another, ontology has two further derivations and meanings. political ontology extends ANT's performative understanding of ontology to the notion that "ontologies perform themselves into worlds". Second, it builds on ethnographies which conceive ontologies as "stories" (Blaser, 2009: 877; see 2014: 51, 53–54). Based on this conception of ontologies as enactments of discursive and non-discursive elements, Blaser (2009: 877) then specifies political ontology in terms of: (a) "the politics involved in . . . a particular world or ontology," and (b) the conflicts and power dynamics arising in the interaction of different ontologies or worlds. Substantively combining (a) and (b), political ontology is particularly concerned with a critique and revision of the particular ontology, and simultaneous repression, of politics in Eurocentric ontologies and colonial encounters with Other worlds, and a corresponding affirmation of a demanding conception of "the political" in encounters within and between different worlds (e.g. ontologies of modernity and indigeneity).

Following on ANT and other posthumanist social theories, political ontology argues that Western politics is founded on a fundamental, supposedly universal, distinction between humanity (culture) and nature, and a corresponding distinction between the modern and the non-modern. By setting off the realm of culture against the state of nature, the Western political imaginary (from Hobbes to Kant and others) excluded nature from modern politics and consigned it supposedly to living in the state of nature to non-modern status, thereby naturalizing them. Both of these moves underwrote a hierarchical relationship between culture/humanity and nature, the modern and the non-modern, the human and the "barbarous" which made properly political relations between European colonizers and indigenous peoples, and their respective worlds impossible. Leaving behind the provincial conceptions of Eurocentric ontologies, the project of a global ontology then is concerned with writing a reformed conception of modern human life into politics, and thereby creating the possibility for a properly global relationship between modern and non-modern ontologies (Blaser, 2009: 90; de la Cadena, 2010: 341–347) based on equality and alterity, and one that denies existing inequalities nor essentializing radical differences.

Intimated by Marisol de la Cadena (2010: 346, 350–352), Jacques Rancière's notion of politics as disagreement between worlds is particularly suited to writing and reversing the denial of properly political relations between modern and indigenous ontologies intended by political ontology. Without supplanting yet another Western thinker on a decolonial project, the following section seeks to use the terms of Rancière's conception of politics as interpretative as to further explicate the politics of the ontological turn and political ontology. However, we will see that political ontology also expands the terms of political ontology in certain instances. As illustrated below, mostly by bringing Rancière into conversation with Viveiros de Castro, the politics in question here is a matter of decolonial practices and discourses of indigenous activists and movements, and of the kind of contestation inspiring the ontological turn within indigenous discourses. Or, as Viveiros de Castro (2015a: 12) suggests, politics may precisely be at the intersection of indigenous discourses (of "the native") and modern discourses (of "the anthropologist"): the anthropological affirmation of

ontological alterity is not a cognitive or psychological problem; '[t]he problem is rather epistemological, which is to say, political' pertaining to 'the manner in which relations of order are established between these discourses.'

Politics in a dissensual and egalitarian key

Like other postfoundational thinkers, Rancière distinguishes genuinely political practices and relationships from the (often depoliticized) "official" processes and institutions usually called politics (governmental institutions, elections, international organizations, etc.). He borrows and broadens Foucault's (2007: chs. 12–13) notion of "police" to refer to the latter set of activities, while reserving the term "politics" for those actions which disrupt police. As with Foucault, "police" exceeds the operations of state apparatuses and includes broader social relations. However, for Rancière, the role of police is both more general and more specific than for Foucault. For Rancière police more generally defines the very "configuration of the perceptible" or "the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying," more specifically, it determines and legitimizes the "shares" (places, roles, positions, identities) of different parties in the social order (Rancière, 1999: 28–29; cf. 2010: 36).

Rancière, then, enables us to see the colonial order of European modernity as a police order defined by particular arrangements of the perceptible, including, for instance, the distinction between nature and culture, and associated ones such as those between body and soul, matter and spirit, world and mind. Such orders, in turn, made possible the assignation of different, often hierarchical, social and political positions and identities (e.g. as "civilized," "barbarous," and "savage" peoples). Additionally, he may also allow us to see the asymmetric epistemic relation conventionally presupposed by social scientific discourses as a kind of police order in which the "the anthropologist" or subject is always already placed in a position of epistemic authority vis-à-vis the object or "the native" (cf. Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 3–8).

If Rancière's notion of police helps to frame the anti-politics of the "universe" of European modernity, coloniality, and its legitimizing scientific discourses, his conception of politics proper may provide an outline of the possible politics in a postcolonial pluriverse. Rancière understands politics as involving an agonistic relation termed dissensus or disagreement, as well as the emergence of political subjects, termed subjectivation. He further defines politics in terms of three related elements, namely as a staging of equality that exposes wrong.⁴ Let us briefly consider these three elements in relation to political ontology.

First, diverging from thinkers like Aristotle, Arendt, or Habermas, who ground politics in speech, for Rancière, politics has less to do with speech as such than with what counts as speech. Even before any communication of interests, politics "is primarily conflict over the existence of a common stage and over the existence and status of those present on it" (Rancière, 1999: 26–27; cf. Hallward, 2009). Beyond representing mere demands for representation or inclusion, the emergence of indigenous peoples and "earth-beings" (such as particular mountains or rivers) in public demonstrations, displays, and confrontations has to be

understood as a form of theatricality allowing for a genuinely political relationship between indigenous and modern ontologies (cf. De la Cadena, 2010: 343). Rancière locates the theatrical element of politics within “dissensus,” that is, a dispute not simply over interests, opinions or values, but over the very common sense or “partition of the sensible” of: what is and what is not sayable (or visible); who can (and who cannot) say it; and what counts (and what does not count) as a political statement or political space. Dissensus simultaneously creates division and community by “placing . . . two worlds in a single world” (Rancière, 1999: 27; see also 22–25, 49–56; 2010: 37–38, 69). It thus involves the attempt to reconcile radical alterity without any common foundations with a pluriversal, rather than universal, refounding of cosmopolitical community.

Second, and perhaps most centrally, Rancière argues that politics involves a “presupposition of equality” by those not supposed to “have a part” in the community and yet identifying with it (Rancière, 1999: 61–63). Equality here does not refer to a mathematical proportion (as for the ancients) or a legal-political construct or project of economic levelling (as for the moderns), but rather to an assumption that “the people” can “verify” through action (Rancière, 1995: 45–48, 85; cf. 1999: 33). Who constitutes the *peuple* (demos) is not predefined but rather emerges in the practical validation of the assumption of equality itself (Rancière, 1999: 83, 99–100, 2010: 33).

Beyond Rancière, we may suggest that a presupposition of equality also animates the anthropological discourse of the ontological turn (which, of course, does not imply that academic discourse can play a directly political, let alone democratic, role). Namely, Viveiros de Castro (2015a: 6) proposes to suspend the epistemic asymmetry of conventional anthropological discourse by rhetorically asking “[w]hat happens if . . . we claim an active . . . equality between [the] respective discourses” of “the native” and “the anthropologist,” if we assume that “we are all ‘anthropologists’” (or in Rancière’s terms, if we assume an “equality of intelligences,” Rancière, 1995: 51). What may happen in more concrete terms (and terms that take us beyond Rancière’s anthropocentric politics) is, for instance, that we take seriously the personhood or subjectivity of non-human animals in Amerindian perspectivist cosmology (see Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 200–206). The latter’s always contextual presupposition of equality means investigating not “how monkeys see the world,” but rather “what world is expressed through monkeys, of what world they are the point of view,” and crucially, acknowledging the equal ontological status of that world (Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 64).

Whether activated by “the people” or in academic discourse or even in interspecies relations, the validation of equality in practice occurs in a context of “disagreement,” that is, a speech situation in which the parties “both understand and do not understand the same thing by the same words” (Rancière, 1999: x–xi). Without diminishing the importance of the content of speech, disagreement primarily consists in breaching assumptions about who is entitled to speak a certain language. For instance, who or what may appropriate the name of “the people,” “the nation,” “democracy,” or “authority.” Such an appropriation constitutes a “transgressive,” genuinely political, and self-emancipatory action whose objective is

[n]ot to found a counterpower susceptible of governing a future society, but simply to effect a demonstration of capacity which is also a demonstration of community. . . . not secession, but self-affirmation as a joint-sharer in a common world, with the assumption, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, that one can play the same game as the adversary. (Rancière, 1995: 49)⁵

Similar to – but perhaps once again also exceeding – Rancière’s notion of “disagreement,” Amerindian perspectivist cosmology demands what Viveiros de Castro calls a “method of controlled equivocation.” Equivocation here “is not just a ‘failure to understand’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989), but a failure to understand that understandings are not necessarily the same, and that they are not related to imaginary ways of ‘seeing the world’ but to the real worlds that are being seen” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 64). Thus, where Rancière’s “disagreement” is still partly about “the same thing” being expressed in “the same words” though with a different positionality towards “the thing,” the “method of equivocation” implies that the same words may indeed refer to different things/worlds: “[s]ame representations, different objects; same meaning, different reference” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 256). Viveiros de Castro’s multinaturalism thereby radicalizes Rancière’s notion of disagreement.

The presupposition of equality then receives its validation in disagreement. “Politics occurs,” says Rancière (1999: 16–17; cf. 25), when supposedly natural orders of inequality, such as the colonial order of European modernity or the epistemic hierarchy of conventional anthropology, are “interrupted” by a presupposition of equality. “The essence of equality is . . . to declassify, to undo the supposed naturalness of orders and replace it with controversial figures of division” (Rancière, 1995: 32–33).

Rancière’s generic term for such figures of division, and the third element of politics, is “wrong.” Politics “is a function of the fact that a wrong exists, an injustice that needs to be addressed” (Rancière, 1995: 97). While wrong may concern historical injustices or the distribution of positions (e.g. rights to land or resources), its significance does not derive from immediate “victimization”, or a tort that could be redressed juridically, or by enhanced representation. Rather, wrong indicates an irreconcilability of different parties prior to any specific dispute – an irreconcilability of “radical otherness” exemplified in Aristotle’s figure of the stranger to a city (Rancière, 1995: 97; cf. 1999: 35, 39) or, for that matter, between worlds (see also Millner, this volume).

Drawing on Deleuze, Viveiros de Castro refers to the figure of the Other or “Autrui” as an “a priori structure” (2015a: 9) – “less a concrete, already actualized other, as against a self, than the structure that makes a Self and an Other” (2015b: 11) or the “expression of a possible world” (2015a: 9, 84, 2015b: 11). He concedes that the insistence on ontological alterity may involve tactical essentialization whereby “sometimes it may be pragmatically, i.e. politically, vital to describe ontologies as” incommensurable “sets of presuppositions” (2015b: 10). Contrary to critics of political ontology (Bessire and Bond, 2014: 442–445; Vigh and Sausdal, 2014) this does not mean that political ontology reifies modern and

nonmodern worlds in (typically modern) binary fashion. Rather than relapsing into essentialisms of “authentic” subjects or identities, it arguably conceives the alterity of indigenous ontologies and movements as one, whereby these (much like Aristotle’s stranger in the city) are located in modernity (though not necessarily Euro-modernity) without being of modernity; they express a possible world outside or beyond modernity through their actions. In her account of indigenous cosmopolitics in the Andes, de la Cadena captures this with the concept of “partial connections” borrowed from Marilyn Strathern. Andean indigeneity, and indigeneity elsewhere in Latin and South America, neither dissolved into, nor remained impervious to, the influences of Christianity and modern citizenship. Rather, “[p]artially connected indigenous-mestizos are, like fractals, self-similar even though, depending how you look at them, they also appear to be different” (De la Cadena, 2010: 347–348). Much like dissensus and disagreement then, wrong and the alterity it embodies “unites interlocutors while simultaneously keeping them at a distance from each other,” thus establishing the “contentious commonality” of a simultaneous division and sharing of the world (Rancière, 1995: 104, 1999: 9).

Despite its anchoring in alterity, the exposition of wrong does not represent identity politics. Rather than presupposing identities, it politicizes social status and constitutes parties to a conflict as political subjects. Indeed, Rancière sees politics as a constitutive process of subjectivation: politics creates political subjects rather than vice versa. Instead of enacting pre-existing identities, subjectivation transforms “identities defined in the natural order of . . . functions and places into instances of experience of a dispute” (Rancière, 1999: 36, see also 11, 27, 2010: 95–96). Subjectivation is a particularly useful lens to understand the political in political ontology. Rather than relying on pre-existing cultural-civilizational subjects or identities, the political emergence of indigenous ontologies marks an instance of political subjectivation through “disidentification” (Rancière, 1999: 36). Holbraad et al. (2014) note that the ontologically motivated study of alterity is “less interested in differences between things than within them: the politics of ontology is the question of how persons and things could alter from themselves.” When staging equality to expose wrong then, indigenous movements problematize the “natural” identities assigned to them in the colonial order of modernity. It is their engagement in politics (which may be rare; cf. Rancière, 1999: 139) that effectively constitutes their political subjectivity.

While Rancière’s political theory may provide a vocabulary well suited to the concerns of political ontology, (at least) two critical questions might be raised about it. First, it is unclear if Rancière’s politics can ever be anything other, or anything more than, an event or a series of events signifying a rupture. Indeed, were it to aspire to institutionalization, it would risk establishing another police order, a perhaps inevitable development all too often seen in Latin America and elsewhere when erstwhile political radicals are elected into political office. For activists, the important lesson from this is not to abstain from politics, as though this were a rarefied realm of pure agonism, but rather to be aware of the always-already entangled relationship between politics and police which will sometimes involve tactical concessions and will probably be most successful when involving

tactical alliances, for instance, of indigenous movements and “earth-beings” with “scientific” environmentalists (as illustrated by de la Cadena, 2010). Such alliances may bring together urban and rural struggles, hacktivism and ancestral causes (such as *buen vivir* / “good living”), technopolitics, and indigenous cosmopolitics in “trans-modern” constellations beyond classical Western notions of social organization revolving around the politics of class or social movements. A case in point is the emergence of a variety of transnational networked movements across Latin America in response to the disappearance of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teacher Training School in Mexico in 2014. This arguably involved “the emergence of a new political subject” whose “outbursts owe[d] more to ‘syncs’ than to solid ideological alliances” (González, 2016).

Second, despite the resemblance between Rancière’s “disagreement” and the methodological equivocation of political ontology, one might also ask to what extent the latter effectively involves agonism in a more practical-political sense to realize its creative-transformational potentials. On the one hand, Bessire and Bond (2014: 448, 450) charge ontological anthropology with an abdication of practical agonistic politics directed against the hegemonic power of states, markets, and empire in favor of a “speculative futurism” of ontological multiplicity. On the other hand, Vigh and Sausdal (2014: 63–66) appear to suspect its insistence on radical and seemingly incommensurable alterity of fueling hyper-ant-agonistic, clash-of-civilizations like scenarios in the practical-political sphere.

It seems, however, that political ontology, in fact, steers a middle-course between these two positions. According to Viveiros de Castro (2015b: 9),

[t]he affirmation of alterity . . . and equivocation . . . signifies . . . that ontological questions are political questions insofar they come into existence only in the context of friction and divergence between concepts, practices and experiences within or without culturally individuated collectives. . . . Ontological differences . . . are political because they imply a situation of war – not a war of words, as per the linguistic turn, but an ongoing war of worlds . . . in a context in which the world (‘as we know it’) is imposed in myriad ways on other peoples’ worlds (as they know them), even as this hegemonic world seems to be on the brink of a slow, painful and ugly ending.

This statement, and especially its martial metaphor, while certainly not foregoing agonistic politics, may appear to tilt political ontology toward hyper-agonism. However, this impression needs to be qualified in two ways. First, Viveiros de Castro clarifies that the “war of worlds” is not one pitting different cultures or civilizations or sovereignties against each other, but rather one that is fought with “guerilla tactics” against the (hegemonic) “powers that be (I mean BP, Shell, Monsanto or Nestlé).” Second and related, ontology is a “philosophical war machine” (my emphasis) that is “counter-cultural” not only in the sense of being counter-hegemonic, but also insofar as it does not target civilizational worlds of supposedly essential human differences but rather deploys contending (albeit partially connected) worlds traversing the human and non-human, and the natural and the cultural (Viveiros de Castro, 2015b: 9). Indeed, the main target of this

philosophical war machine may well become the dialectics of ecological and economic crisis of the Anthropocene (*Ibid.*: 7–8).

Self-estrangement

If Rancière can help to clarify the agonistic political relationality involved in political ontology, a second contribution political ontology may offer for IR (and other fields in the social sciences) relates to political reflexivity with regard to Euro-modernity. Apart from mobilizing the political potential of radical alterity – of indigenous and other (modern and nonmodern) ontologies – in theory and practice, political ontology arguably also involves a verification of equality in a rather different sense.

As Viveiros de Castro explains, attending to radical alterity is not a matter of interpreting the thought of Others “but rather one of carrying out an experiment with it, and thus also with our own.” This kind of experimentation establishes a “relation of intelligibility between two cultures” which performs “a double dislocation” whereby anthropological concepts become “vectors that always point in the other direction”. The task then is “not that of explaining the world of the other, but rather of multiplying our world” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015a: 18, 20, 27) which includes “a redescription of ourselves in the light of alterity” (P. Maniglier quoted by Viveiros de Castro, 2015b: 7), and which effectively substitutes a pluriverse for a universe. It is this kind of experimentation, multiplication, or redescription this section will selectively engage in by verifying the status of Euro-modernity as one particular ontology in Blaser’s sense of a series of “stories.” Without the provincialization or “deconstructive self-estrangement” of Western modernity, it may continue to appear as though other ontologies/worlds may have stories, whereas “we” have History (philosophy of history for the more universally inclined and histories for the more pluralistic among “us”). Rather than providing an abstract account of deconstructive self-estrangement,⁶ I will develop the notion in terms of three highly stylized illustrations here, moving from an ethnographic example to a historical illustration to a broader (though by no means exhaustive) philosophical strategy.

First, if we can observe that on the occasion of Evo Morales’ inauguration in 2006 “an indigenous Andean ceremony . . . is added to the protocol” not as a “cultural” symbolization of indigenous politics but rather to “follow[ing] a precise protocol to summon non-human forces to help him govern Bolivia” (Blaser, 2009: 878–879), it would seem that a similar ethnographic lens ought to be trained on Western practices on similar occasions. To give an example, one may think of the “so help me God” formula (sometimes accompanied by the laying of the speaker’s hand on a Bible) used in many Western countries during the swearing-in of a newly and, by all appearances, popularly rather than divinely elected government. This also could be seen as a mere ritual, as a mere “cultural-historical hangover” from times either more pious or more given to the public display of religiosity. While I would not want to dispute this rendering of the practice in every particular instance, I think at least in some instances it ought to be taken more seriously as a premodern (Euro-Christian) intrusion into Western modernity. At least it would

not appear to be completely absurd to maintain that when George W. Bush or Jimmy Carter (to use “tabloid” examples) invoked the formula, they too were following a certain protocol to summon non-human forces to help them govern the U.S.A.⁷ Presidential or (prime-)ministerial inaugurations more generally would appear to be a fruitful terrain for investigating further the intrusion of non-human, natural (as well as mundanely material), or supernatural forces into human affairs which the dominant readings of the dominant narratives of Western modernity so carefully separate from them. To be sure, there is a fair amount of pageantry, ritual, and folklore here, but perhaps these are also attempts not merely to govern things but to govern with things. Indeed, they could also be instances wherein a particular we, expressed in sign systems, is constituted by the things themselves.

A second more historically than ethnographically “deconstructive” observation of Euro-modernity pertains to the quite obvious fact that its ontological distinction between culture and nature – which delegates the government of the former to politics while relegating the latter to the domain of science – has been continuously violated in practice ever since the beginning of the early modern degovernmentalization of the cosmos and corresponding governmentalization of the state, to put this in the idiom of Foucault’s (2007: 236–238) governmentality lectures. Despite Bruno Latour’s astute genealogical tracing of the “great divide” between nature and humanity to the Hobbes-Boyle debate, it would overstate the case to say that “[a]ccording to the modern order of things science and politics . . . do not mix” (De la Cadena, 2010: 342).⁸

As Foucault (2007) has shown, the birth or rebirth of governmentality, insofar as it was assisted by physiocrats and liberals in particular, involved understandings of the social, civil society, public opinion, the market, the economy, and the population as quasi-natural domains with law-like regularities that could be ascertained by human, natural and social sciences, and tapped to govern politically in the name of the state or by its proxies in civil society. This form of governing in accordance with “nature” and its (scientific) “laws” broke with (though it did not entirely displace) earlier governmentality which had indeed excluded “nature” in this scientific sense, or sought to subdue it with reference to moral and/or divine law (ironically dubbed “natural law”), positive laws of the state, or administrative regulations of the police. Perhaps the connection of phenomena such as the population or the economy to nature and their constitution as objects and media of government in these terms has been lost over time.⁹ Their scientificity has become indexed to the social itself rather than anything “natural.” However, by pointing to their governmental lineage as quasi-natural phenomena, we may recapture ways in which “nature” intrudes on politics in Euro-modernity as much as in other indigenous worlds. From a truly Euro-modern perspective this intrusion would have to be considered as impertinent and “irrational” in Euro-modernity as it often is in the case of non-modern indigenous worlds.

A third, more philosophically established strategy of the deconstructive self-estrangement of Western modernity, though not usually understood as such, is political theology or, since Agamben’s (2011) *The Kingdom and the Glory*, political and economic theology. If the Foucauldian thesis of the governmentalization of the state challenges the ostensible Euro-modern separation of nature from

politics, political and economic theology conversely challenge the Foucauldian assertion of the degovernmentalization of the cosmos with its separation of the super-natural from politics.¹⁰ In its Schmittian articulation, political theology makes the assertion that all important modern political (and with Agamben, at least some economic) concepts are secularized religious concepts (Schmitt, 2005: 36). Schmitt found an easy (but by no means exclusive) evidentiary basis for this claim in the sovereign state of Hobbes' Leviathan, which despite its contractual derivation retains all the attributes of the sovereign God of Christianity and is owed the same obedience expressed in ten corresponding commandments (in Chapter 30). More recently, Agamben (2011) ingeniously traced modern notions of government and economy to trinitarianism and divine praxis. In terms of the self-estrangement of Euro-modernity in the service of political ontology, these examples show two things. First, much like Latour does but in a very different way they demonstrate that "we have never been modern" or at least, that we have never been quite as modern as we think because the non-human, here in the form of the supernatural and sacred rather than the natural, perpetually lurks behind our supposedly carefully sequestered human political and economic affairs. Second, and here one would have to go into much more detail than I can do here, political theology clearly exposes Western ontology (say, of the state and the economy) as "stories," or perhaps more precisely, as deeply embedded in particular stories of creative powers, divine omnipotence, a celestial division of labor, bureaucratic organization, and many others based on the Western story (history, parable, poetry, prophecy, philosophy, law, prayer, hymn, eschatology, etc.) book par excellence: the Bible.

"Void universalism" and cosmopolitics

As previously noted, many attempts to bring ontology into IR have been plagued precisely by the absence of those issues which political ontology seeks to highlight, namely politics and practices that exceed the state and the international. This constitutionally prevents IR from articulating a true world or cosmopolitan politics whose affirmation would not unwittingly confirm what it seeks to transcend. This paradox can be observed from Kant to Held and Habermas, all of whom rely on the assumption of bounded communities, usually states, the very aspirational transcendence of which reaffirms these as the ontological starting-point (see Bartelson, 2009: ch. 2). Conversely, however, critiques or negations of world or cosmopolitan politics inevitably seem to relapse into a form of statism as well, as can be observed from Schmitt (2003) to Walker (2010). If we are envisioning the transition to a pluriverse, this cosmopolitan self-incapacitation in IR is perhaps all for the better, and we might be best advised to simply abandon any notion of world politics beyond ontological multiplicity.

However, this is not the conclusion drawn by Sergei Prozorov who perhaps offers the most interesting, and from the perspective of political ontology, most compelling, attempt to introduce ontology to IR in his recent dilogy of *Ontology and World Politics* and *Theory of the Political Subject* (Prozorov, 2014a, b). Prima facie, Prozorov appears to be making matters worse from a pluriversal perspective

by attempting to do so in the name of a new universalism. As will become clear, however, his universalism is one that is entirely compatible with (and perhaps even ontologically necessary for) a genuine ontological pluralism that neither replicates the "unhappy" Schmittian pluriverse of friends and enemies (or geopolitical Großräume) (cf. Schmitt, 2003: 351–354), nor does it "happily" endorse a postmodern pluralism of proliferating identity politics. Drawing on Heidegger and Badiou in particular, Prozorov makes the case for a "void universalism" which can be seen as a condition of possibility for conceiving a pluriverse.

A good place to start might be the observation that Euro-modern accounts tend to define the non-modern in terms of a lack (say, of rationality, civilization, history, statehood, territorial closure, a separation of the immanent and the transcendent, etc.) (cf. Blaser, 2009: 885). Prozorov's attempt to defend the possibility of a non-particularistic and non-hegemonic universalism is based on the assumption that this is "only possible as an affirmation that is not founded on any positive principle, but takes this void itself as its point of departure – a void universalism" (Prozorov, 2014a: xvii): "there is a world in which an infinity of infinite worlds appears, and this World . . . is nothing but the void" (Prozorov, 2014a: 22).¹¹ Rather than being everything or something, the World as such is effectively a nothing. Void universalism is based on "the inexistence of the universe" (Prozorov, 2014a: 12). In what one could once again see as a certain philosophical verification of equality, Prozorov points out (with reference to post-Heideggerian and post-Lacanian political theories; cf. Prozorov, 2014a: 45) that rather than characterizing the category of the non-modern, a void or lack or nothing is the condition of appearance of any positive world – non-modern, Euro-modern, alter-modern, or whatever. To illustrate the point with a classical Euro-modern account of "world creation" (an illustration which Prozorov borrows from Roberto Esposito) Hobbes' founding and legitimization of sovereign power is entirely reliant on the assumption of an "originary nothingness of community" which is then converted into the "secondary, artificial nothingness" of the state of nature (conceived as a state of war) (Prozorov, 2014a: 143). Modern sovereignty can only appear on the basis of this dual nothingness.

While "hegemonic forms of universalism suppress difference" and anti-universalist "forms of identity politics valorize difference," Prozorov's void universalism "both radicalizes difference by insisting on the singularity of each being [including non-human being/s] and deactivates its exclusionary potential by insisting on the irreducibly common exposure of these singularities that remains in excess of any particularistic figure of community" (Prozorov, 2014a: xxx). The World as void makes possible "the proliferation of being as inconsistent multiplicity" by bringing forth "the ontological material for the construction of worlds that ensures that whatever appears is real without prescribing how it should appear." "[W]hatever appears in the world [or as a world] is necessarily" real, while "the mode of its appearance is absolutely contingent" (Prozorov, 2014a: 30).

Lest we mistake void universalism and the genuinely pluriversal "world politics" that follows from it for a merely abstract and indeterminate form of "nihilist anti-politics" though, Prozorov insists that the void of the World can be "the starting point for the derivation of universal political principles" or "axioms" of

politics (Prozorov, 2014a: 44). We can read this statement and Prozorov's conception of politics as "a practice of affirmation of universal principles" or axioms (Prozorov, 2014a: 50) as a generalization of sorts of Rancière's conception of politics as the staged) verification of equality in response to wrong. Much like Rancière, Prozorov does not give his universal principles/axioms any intra-worldly status as ontological principles. Indeed, his principles are axiomatic precisely "in the sense of presupposing no grounds for themselves" (Prozorov, 2014a: 51).

From an ontological perspective . . . they are grounded precisely in the void of the World, which is the condition of possibility for every positive world, and hence are valid for any world whatsoever. Thus, what the ontic perspective of the intra-worldly observer dismisses as frivolous groundlessness is from an ontological perspective recognized as precisely the abyssal ground of universalist politics.

(Prozorov, 2014a: 52)

Echoing Rancière's presupposition of equality (which is also one of Prozorov's axioms of "void-universalist" politics), Prozorov illustrates this point by arguing that "[r]acial, ethnic, sexual or any other form of discrimination is not 'bad' because it offends a particular race, ethnicity or sexual orientation ['ontically'], but because it negates the principle of equality that a political practice axiomatically holds to be valid for the entire world ['ontologically']" (Prozorov, 2014a: 53).¹² Going beyond Rancière however, Prozorov (2014a: ch. 3) posits two further axioms of politics besides equality, namely freedom and community. Despite the unholy resonance of Prozorov's axioms with the holy trinity of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* of the French Revolution, it bears repeating that nothing intra-worldly, ontic, historical, or even anthropocentric is implied by these axiomatic presuppositions. There is no freedom, equality, and community as such. Rather these axioms can only ever be verified – against considerable obstacles – contingently (and perhaps only selectively and temporarily) in pluriversal practice.

In allowing for a plurality of worlds inhabited by human and non-human beings and capable of political relations of mutual agonistic respect, Prozorov's void-universalist "world politics" arguably converges with the kind of cosmopolitics envisioned by Isabelle Stengers and adopted by political ontology, namely "a politics where 'cosmos refers to the unknown constituted by these multiple, divergent worlds and to the articulation of which they would eventually be capable'" (Stengers, 2005: 995 quoted by De la Cadena, 2010: 346). Much like Prozorov's composite "world politics" which pairs the ontological void with his triadic axiomatic conception of politics, Stengers (2005: 994) insists on the simultaneous "distinction and inseparable nature of [her] political and cosmopolitical proposals." Unlike conventional cosmopolitan (say, Kantian) proposals, Prozorov's "world politics" and Stengers' "cosmopolitics" reject the universalist assumption that a common world already exists by conceiving the World/the cosmos as a void/unknown and viewing any existing world/cosmos as a contingent (and assembled) and therefore multiply realizable political accomplishment. Explicitly (in Prozorov's case) or implicitly (in Stengers') both world politics and cosmopolitics also

borrow (albeit only partially and in different ways) from Rancière's conception of politics which, as I have suggested above, helps illuminate political ontology.

Prozorov's borrowing is most explicit in his "subtractive" conception of world politics and specifically (world-)political subjectivation in terms of disidentification or "the deactivation of one's worldly identity" which "disrupts the [police] order of distributed and differentiated places in its affirmation of freedom (from places), equality (of places) and community (without regard to place)" (Prozorov, 2014b: 15, 17). Akin to Rancière, Prozorov's world-political subjectivation also occurs through the exposition of "the wrong" of exclusion" in the name of (though not necessarily enacted by) "the part of the community that has no part in the 'natural order of the world'" while "identifying" itself with the [world/cosmopolitical] community as such" (Prozorov, 2014b: 31). World politics (and by analogy, cosmopolitics) is therefore simultaneously negative in its "intra-worldly political practice guided by the idea of the wrong" and affirmative in its "void-ontological" presupposition of community, equality, and freedom. In consequence, world politics "is not determined by any particular culture or tradition but is rather made possible by a subtraction from it" (Prozorov, 2014b: 38). This also recalls the political-ontological interest (noted above) in ontological self-determination as a question of how things or persons can alter from themselves. In unison with the politics of political ontology, world politics "affirms that whatever is denied existence in the world nonetheless possesses being and ventures to grant this being maximal existence in the world in question" (Prozorov, 2014b: 2). This (cosmo)political register of world politics though should not be thought of as an act of charity but rather as a principled, always already presupposed, ontological egalitarianism.

Stengers sees the cosmos itself as "an operator of . . . equalization."¹³ By this she means that it infuses political voices with an affirmative concern for the fact that "the political arena is peopled with shadows of that which does not have a political voice" (Stengers, 2005: 995–996). The equality imbued by the cosmos "precludes . . . any differentiation a priori between that which counts and that which does not" (Stengers, 2005: 1003). For Stengers, it is the unknown world, "[t]he cosmos distinguished from any particular cosmos" (Stengers, 2005: 995) (or Prozorov's "void of the World"), which seems to instantiate politics in Rancière's sense; namely, insofar as politics concerns itself with the practical verification of the equality of those without a part in the community, or with counting those not counted as equals by the prevailing police order. She also associates this kind of cosmopolitics with an implicit notion of "wrong" or radical alterity: "politics . . . construct[s] its legitimate reasons 'in the presence of' that which remains deaf to this legitimacy;" it demands that one think "'in the presence of the victims'" of decisions, or "'in the presence of' those who would otherwise be likely to be disqualified as having idiotically nothing to propose, hindering the emergent 'common account'" (Stengers, 2005: 996, 997, 1002).

Accordingly, political subjectivity, which Stengers associates with the Deleuzian conceptual character of the "idiot," the one excluded from the community, emerges when one "resists the consensual way in which the situation is presented" and bears witness to wrong by making the victims "'present', not

arguing in their names but conveying what it may feel like to be threatened by an issue that one has nothing to contribute to" (Stengers, 2005: 994, 1003). However, as Prozorov (2014b: 33) explains, in agreement with Rancière, rather than bemoaning a particular victimization this kind of exposition of wrong "breaks away from the immediate context of the incident, universalizing the plight of the particular victim as a problem of . . . or, more precisely, the problem with the entire world."

Politicizing, provincializing, and pluralizing IR

Recent theorizations and debates of ontology in IR would be well advised to look to political ontology to rethink and sharpen their often limited – indeed, often colonial and depoliticized – understandings of world politics as international relations. The decolonial and post-anthropocentric sensibilities of political ontology and postfoundational politics as proposed by Rancière and Prozorov can be good starting-points in this regard. This would help open IR up to plural worlds of world politics in much richer ways than Wendtian "cultures of anarchy" (Wendt, 1999: ch. 6) or even Rosenbergian uneven and combined development of multiple societies, both of which presuppose the ontological universe of Euro-modernity. I have also suggested, however, that one aspect of such a pluriversal opening would be to interrogate the very notion of an ontology (of agencies and structures, material and ideational elements, etc.) as a particular, rather provincial, endeavor in need of a "deconstructive self-estrangement." Without explicit appeal to a decolonial approach, or a pluriverse, such interrogations have already begun in the guise of new-materialist and posthumanist approaches in international political sociology (see e.g. the contributions to the special issue of *Millennium* introduced by Smicek et al., 2013). They could also be pursued through political/economic-theological investigations of the conceptual apparatus of IR including its Euro-modern/Eurocentric concepts of sovereignty, security, democratic peace, development, human rights, ethics, and community. Deconstructive self-estrangements could in turn open space for a non-hegemonic and non-particularistic as well as postfoundational, postanthropocentric and postsecular cosmopolitics of a pluriverse of modern, non-modern, alter-modern, and partially connected worlds.

Notes

- 1 A proper substantiation of these claims would require another paper. By way of anecdotal evidence, let me merely point out that despite the appearance of (international or world) politics in the title of Wendt's (1999) and Jackson's (2011) books neither one of them features "politics" in its Index. Wight (2006) appears to either reduce politics to (an) ontology (of agents and structures, in the title of his book) or speak of "political implications" of ontology (Wight 2006: 6). His Index entry for "politics" tellingly defers the latter to "[see] international relations [where it appears 'vs. domestic politics']"; ontology ['centrality to politics']; [and] states ['domestic politics']" (Wight, 2006: 336). Jackson (2011: 28) treats "philosophical [as opposed to scientific] ontology" as a quasi-methodological practice ("our 'hook-up' to the world") without politics. Wight (2006: 7) ontologically subordinates "processes, practices and events"

to agents and structures (insofar as the former "only occur in structured contexts and through the practices of agents"). Wendt (1999: 6, 22–23, 370, 372) says his book "is about the *ontology* of the states system," "the *ontology* of international structure," or "the *ontology* of international life" (my emphases).

- 2 Thanks to Cristina Rojas for first bringing political ontology to my attention.
- 3 This synoptic characterization follows Viveiros de Castro whose work on "Amerindian perspectivism" has provided one of the main inspirations for the ontological turn. For his seminal contributions see Viveiros de Castro (2015a).
- 4 Rancière (1995: 96–97) himself gives a similar definition referring to "appearance," "imparity," and "grievance."
- 5 Central to this idea of self-emancipation is the aforementioned "equality of intelligences" (Rancière, 1995: 51).
- 6 One version of a more abstract account of the latter can be found in Horkheimer and Adorno's classic *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*.
- 7 In an ethnomethodological reversal, the significance of the practice may also be gauged from justifications of and reactions to instances of its deliberate breach or omission, for instance, by former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder and several ministers of his cabinet. In this context, one might also mention the omission of the common phrase "God bless [America/you]" (used in many addresses by U.S. presidents) in British Prime Minister Tony Blair's address to the nation on the occasion of Britain's joining of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Blair had intended to conclude his address with the phrase, but dropped it on the urging of his advisers. See Jenkins (2007: 38).
- 8 Of course, Latour's point is ultimately also to demonstrate the falsity of the great divide between nature and humanity, and nature and politics in practice – we have never been modern. Incidentally, "political science," at least as practiced by its positivist mainstream, is a paragon of the modern alchemy of science and politics.
- 9 In Foucault's account, this becomes explicit in the case of neoliberal governmentality which no longer assumes the "naturalness" of the homo oeconomicus and the market but rather sees these as being in need of cultivation through the institutional facilitation of games of competition (see Foucault, 2008).
- 10 Viveiros de Castro (2015a: 233) points out that the "ontological dualism of nature/culture . . . is the direct descendant of the theological opposition between nature and super-nature" which relies on a secularization of "spirit" into "culture" and may add a "cultural" theology to Schmittian political and Agambenian economic theology. However, from the perspective presented here the domains of culture, politics, and economy in fact retain their theological traces rather than consummating secularization in an absolute sense.
- 11 The relationship between the World and world/s is conceived in analogy to the corresponding Heideggerian distinction between the ontological and the ontic.
- 12 Prozorov (2014a: 66) submits that "[i]f, as Rancière argues, equality cannot be the foundation of any social order, then it must transcend every particular world and in this sense find its sole possible ground in the void that we term World."
- 13 I.e. *mise en égalité*, which she distinguishes from equivalence because this would imply "a common measure."

References

- Agamben, G. 2011. *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*. Trans. L. Chiesa With M. Mandarini. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bartelson, J. 2009. *Visions of World Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bessire, L. and Bond, D. 2014. 'Ontological Anthropology and the Deferral of Critique', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 440–456.

- Blaser, M. 2009. 'Political Ontology: Cultural Studies Without "Cultures?"', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 23, no. 5–6, pp. 873–896.
- Blaser, M. 2014. 'Ontology and Indigeneity: On the Political Ontology of Heterogeneous Assemblages', *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 49–58.
- De la Cadena, M. 2010. 'Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond "Politics"', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 334–370.
- Foucault, M. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- González, B.G. 2016. 'Latin America, From Cosmopolitics to Technopolitics', *opendemocacy.net*, 30 March. www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/bernardo-gutiérrez-gonzález/latin-america-from-cosmopolitics-to-technopolitics [Accessed 03.12.2016].
- Hallward, P. 2009. 'Staging Equality: Rancière's Theatocracy and the Limits of Anarchic Equality', In: G. Rockhill and P. Watts, eds., *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 140–157.
- Holbraad, M., Pedersen, M.A. and Viveiros de Castro, E. 2014. 'The Politics of Ontology: Anthropological Positions', *Theorizing the Contemporary, Cultural Anthropology*, 13 January 2014. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/462-the-politics-of-ontology-anthropological-positions> [Accessed 29.08.2016].
- Jackson, P.T. 2011. *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Jenkins, P. 2007. *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prozorov, S. 2014a. *Ontology and World Politics: Void Universalism I*. New York: Routledge.
- Prozorov, S. 2014b. *Theory of the Political Subject: Void Universalism II*. New York: Routledge.
- Rancière, J. 1995. *On the Shores of Politics*. London: Verso.
- Rancière, J. 1999. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rancière, J. 2010. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. London: Continuum.
- Rosenberg, J. 2016. 'International Relations in the Prison of Political Science', *International Relations*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 127–153.
- Schmitt, C. 2003 [1950]. *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*. Trans. G.L. Ulmen. New York: Telos Press.
- Schmitt, C. 2005 [1922]. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Trans. G. Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smicek, N., Fotou, M. and Arghand, E. 2013. 'Introduction: Materialism and World Politics', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 41, no. 3, p. 397.
- Stengers, I. 2005. 'The Cosmopolitical Proposal', In: B. Latour and P. Weibel, eds., *Making Things Public*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 994–1003.
- Vigh, H.E. and Sausdal, D.B. 2014. 'From Essence Back to Existence: Anthropology Beyond the Ontological Turn', *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 49–73.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. 2015a. *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds*. Chicago: HAU Books.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. 2015b. 'Who Is Afraid of the Ontological Wolf? Some Comments on an Ongoing Anthropological Debate', *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 2–17.
- Walker, R.B.J. 2010. *After the Globe, Before the World*. New York: Routledge.
- Wendt, A. 1987. 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 335–370.
- Wendt, A. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wight, C. 2006. *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.