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Affinity and antagonism: Structuralism, comparison and transformation in pluralist political ontology

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Abstract

This article develops a comparative and recursive approach to political ontology by drawing on the ontological turn in anthropology. It claims that if ontological commitments define reality, then the use of ontology by recent pluralist political theorists must undercut pluralism. By charting contemporary anthropology's rereading of structuralism as part of a plural understanding of ontology, it will be shown that any political ontology places limits on the political, and thus cannot exhaust political experience. This position will be established through an analysis of the role of Claude Lévi-Strauss in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and a comparison with the political ontology represented by perspectivism and potential affinity. Anthropology's lesson for political theory is that ontology cannot simply be revised and treated in the singular, but that political ontologies must be analysed comparatively to reveal the shortcomings of, and recursively alter, one's own political frame of reference.

As part of a turn to ontology in political theory, recent pluralist and radical democratic theory has turned to ontological reasoning to justify its claims, by challenging the image

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of ontology as singular, universal and static (Mihai et al. 2017).[1] Through critiques of foundations (Marchart 2007) and appeals to the themes of lack and abundance (Tønder and Thomassen 2005), these thinkers argue that a commitment to pluralism is not just possible but *necessary*, due to the unstable, continually changing and ultimately contestable nature of reality (Hay 2011, 474).[2] A paradox exists in this position, however. If, by definition, ontological commitments define reality, then to what extent can ontological reasoning underpin a commitment to plurality, contingency and transformation? Where does ontology – no matter how much it is committed to difference – begin to short-circuit pluralism? This article will investigate this question by providing an account of how one such form of this ontologically grounded pluralism forecloses the character of the political, found in the principle of antagonism put forward by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. This will be accompanied by the development of comparative and recursive methodological principles adopted from contemporary anthropology which present ontological claims as plural, rather than singular. The benefit of these principles will be demonstrated through a recursive comparison between antagonism and an alternative political ontology, represented by the concepts of perspectivism and potential affinity presented in the work of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. The consequence of this comparison will be the claim that neither political ontology can account for the others position, and that pluralist political thought must, therefore, treat ontology in the plural if it is to resist its foreclosure of other forms of politics.

The structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss will act as a link between these points for two reasons. First, Lévi-Strauss is an implicit yet largely unacknowledged influence in Laclau and Mouffe's account of antagonism. Acquiescence to the post-structuralist reading of Lévi-Strauss as responsible for turning contingent and local binary oppositions into transcendental and fixed structures, however, leads to a failure to acknowledge the resources his work provides for thinking the ontological in the plural.[3] The second reason for orienting our consideration of political ontology around his work will be the construction of an alternative route from his to work to a pluralist account of ontology. As part of the recent 'ontological turn' in anthropology (Holbraad and Pederson 2017), the work of Phillipe Descola (2009, 2013), Martin Holbraad (2013), Patrice Maniglier (2010, 2016) and Viveiros de Castro (2014) challenges the intensely transcendental image of Lévi-Strauss to provide an alternate account of structuralism that emphasizes the resources his work provides for thinking ontological pluralism.[4] This turn focuses on how ethnographic contexts are structured by distinct ontological presuppositions that underpin political and social relations, and that these categories are not necessarily reducible to the conceptual coordinates of the anthropologist. From this perspective, the question that haunts political philosophies that inherit the post-structuralist critique of structuralism is whether the ontology of difference and unstable identity can account for political ontologies that are irreducible to its categories.

Anthropology's ontological turn does not only provide a manner of identifying this problem with political ontology but also the methodological materials for moving beyond it. Key here is the replacement of an image of structuralism as transcendental *schematism* with an image of structure as *transformation*. The various ontological principles studied by anthropology are not possessed of strict, timeless identity but only attain their meaning through a series of transformations. In this reading of Lévi-Strauss,

transformation underpins a fundamentally *pluralist* approach to the ontological and metaphysical coordinates of anthropological investigation that necessitates a commitment to two methodological principles. First, systems of thought are not meaningful outside of a series of transformations. Consequently, meaning can only be attributed to them through a comparative method. Second, these comparisons induce a *recursive* effect, insofar as the system of differences implied by transformation forces the anthropologist to continually revise their conceptual categories. What will be argued here is that these tools can be productively applied to political ontology in a manner that benefits the pluralist project. Comparison underpins a commitment to multiple ontological images of politics, which can induce a recursive reconsideration of the coordinates held by any one particular theory. Such a methodology would aid in responding to the aforementioned paradox of ontological pluralism by refusing to treat pronouncements on the character of being as singular.

It must be acknowledged that the ontological turns of political theory and anthropology use the term ontology differently. Political ontology, represented here by the work of Laclau and Mouffe, seeks to generate political claims from the consideration of the 'being' of social and political entities, events and relations (Hay 2011). Ontology is explicitly mobilized as a tool for understanding the nature of politics. Contrastingly, the ontological turn in anthropology does not seek to produce general ontological principles from anthropological investigation. Instead, it uses ethnographic material from alternate ontological viewpoints to recursively critique the anthropologists own ontological assumptions (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 24). For these thinkers, there is no single answer to the ontological question of how social and political relations are formed. Within the scope of this argument, ontology will be defined by drawing on both the political and anthropological turns: a reflection upon the nature of politics according to an understanding of being, and a recursive criticism of how these presuppositions shape the limits of the political.

Thus, our task will not be to correct the mismatch between ontology and pluralism by simply developing 'better' ontological principles more conducive to supporting pluralist politics. Nor will it be, as critics have highlighted, to simply show how political ontology abstracts from concrete problems and politics and forecloses possibilities for understanding the political field (Dean 2005; Kioupkiolis 2011; Norris 2006; Norval 2005, 87). Instead, it will be to build on the claim that Laclau and Mouffe's use of particular ontological perspectives obscures the possibility of other conceptions of politics (Arditi 2014; Rekret 2014). This claim will not be made by referring to the 'real conditions' of politics that are abstracted from McNay (2014), defending them from this criticism (Stavrakakis 2014), or by asserting the uncertainty and openness of their ontological claims (Newman 2001, 163–66). In contrast, it will be argued that the comparative and recursive approach to the ontology of antagonism adopted from contemporary anthropology can productively rethink the role of ontology in pluralist political theory, allowing the formation of a pluralist account of *political ontology itself*. This claim responds to the concerns of the above authors, insofar as it will be conceded that ontological principles obscure other forms of politics, but moves beyond this work to argue that the ontological pluralism to be adopted from anthropology provides materials for the recursive reconsideration of what the political *is*. This will be demonstrated by a brief,

recursive comparison between antagonism and Viveiros de Castro's account of perspectivism and the kinship structure of potential affinity, in order to show how neither antagonism nor affinity can account for the claims of the other. Political ontology, therefore, must be treated in the plural. From this position, political ontology in the singular, insofar as it makes claims about the character of reality, cannot fully account for the plurality of ways of understanding political life.

This claim will proceed as follows. First, Laclau and Mouffe's political ontology of antagonism will be traced back to the work of Lévi-Strauss by emphasizing his role as a link between structuralist linguistics and the post-structuralist understanding of discourse. This will then provide the opportunity to form an alternate path forward from Lévi-Strauss through the reading of his work given by Descola, Holbraad, Maniglier and Viveiros de Castro. This account will focus on the two methodological principles of ontological pluralism: comparison and recursivity. The third section and the conclusion will give a brief demonstration of these principles. A juxtaposition and comparison will be set up between antagonism and Viveiros de Castro's presentation of what he terms 'Amerindian perspectivism' and the related form of kinship he terms potential affinity, in order to show how his account of this contrasting political ontology emphasizes the potential for alliance rather than antagonism in group formation. This account will be situated within a broader perspective on the place of the ontological turn in anthropology with respect to critiques of the representation of ethnographic data in modern anthropology. The conclusions we will arrive at through this analysis will be twofold. First, that the work of the ontological turn can be used to recursively reconsider the way in which Laclau and Mouffe place limits on the political through their use of antagonism. Second, that both ontological turns are caught in the problem of limiting their analyses of political and social life through the representation of ethnographic and political data in transcendental ontological schemes. The recursive pay-off of what follows will be that any ontological representation, whether political or anthropological, must consider the ethical pitfalls of its analytical position in order to sustain a pluralist ontological project.

Tracing antagonism as ontological principle back to Lévi-Strauss

Lévi-Strauss's foundational influence upon Laclau and Mouffe rests on their repeated assertion of the centrality of the ontology of antagonism within their understanding of the political. For the Laclau and Mouffe of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, thinking the political ontologically is central to understanding hegemony: 'if a relation of hegemonic representation is to be possible, its ontological status has to be defined' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, x). Hegemony's articulation of a single narrative identity can only be understood through the ontological processes by which it is produced. Since this joint publication, the recourse to the language of ontology has been consistently supported by both Laclau and Mouffe. Laclau's last work is explicitly presented as the continuation of a project aimed at 'the construction of a political ontology' (Laclau 2014, 1) which is described elsewhere as 'absolutely constitutive' of political identity (Laclau 1996, 61). Similarly, Mouffe emphasizes the need for an 'ontological approach' (Mouffe 2013, 79), reinforcing her earlier claim that the political 'is inherent to every human society' and

'determines our very ontological condition' (Mouffe 1993, 2). What is at stake for both is that neglecting this ontological realm holds back both the analytical capacities of political theory and the practical possibilities of any pluralist project.

This ontology is defined by the principle of antagonism. Antagonism is constitutive of politics because any identity is formed by its negation of an outside that does not conform to its specific subject position. This is developed through the structuralist linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and the post-structuralist elaboration on his insights in the work of Jacques Derrida. While Laclau and Mouffe engage in discussion with other debates and philosophical sources, such as questions of spatiality and the difference between the social and the political (Marchart 2014), these themes are subordinate to the discursive understanding of antagonism (Povinelli 2012). Ultimately, antagonism is only possible due to the lack of any essential relationship between signs and what they signify. Identity is formed through an arbitrary articulation of a particular set of signs, one which must include an antagonistic exclusion of other possible articulations of that system. This is precisely why Laclau and Mouffe's conception of the ontological dimension of antagonism is also a theory of hegemony. Antagonism is primary because there is no essential organization of a system of signs, and therefore no identity that is not articulated politically, or hegemonically.

It is this commitment to the linguistic basis of antagonism that allows this ontological principle to be traced back to Lévi-Strauss's structuralism. While the influence of structuralism, on Laclau in particular, has been noted (Gasché 2004), this path will be retrodden in order to lead to an alternate approach to ontology that can be derived from the structuralist perspective. Two moments are of particular importance. The first occurs in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* where the above-mentioned reliance upon Saussure and Derrida comes to light. Laclau and Mouffe draw on these thinkers to claim that it is 'not from an underlying intelligible principle' that political identities are produced, 'but from the regularity of a system of structural positions' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 106). It is by way of the hegemonic articulation of signs that identity is possible, consigning the antagonism between the inside and the outside of identity to contingency rather than necessity. Laclau and Mouffe declare this the 'decisive point of their argument', noting that its ramification is the impossibility of doing away with both non-fixity and fixity (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 111). This move involves citing Derrida at length, drawing on his reading of Lévi-Strauss, where he makes the now well-known argument that signs only receive their meaning through their difference to other signs, and thus that there can be no reduction of any linguistic system to a single, central meaning anchored in a self-referential centre (Derrida 2001, 354). For Laclau and Mouffe, this draws structural linguistics to its conclusion, where the limits of any system are contingently articulated but must in some way be partially fixed: 'in order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be a meaning' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 112). The necessity of this partial closure is made with reference to Saussure, who for Laclau and Mouffe demonstrated that 'the meaning of a term was purely relational and determined only by its opposition to all the others', demonstrating the necessity of closure for identity (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, 113). Identity is antagonistic, and political, because its constitutive operation halts the competing attempts to articulate the signs that form the accepted terms of politics.

By citing Derrida's reading of Lévi-Strauss before transitioning to the work of Saussure, Laclau and Mouffe's position rests on the fact that it is through Lévi-Strauss's reading of Saussure that Derrida's position with regard to the sign is possible. Derrida reads structuralism in two directions. First, he claims that 'in the work of Lévi-Strauss it must be recognised that the respect for structurality, for the internal originality of the structure, compels a neutralization of time and history', and second, that this respect for structure incorporates 'chance and discontinuity' in the transition between particular structural systems (Derrida 2001, 369). According to Derrida, despite his apparent upholding of both fixity and discontinuity, it is the former which takes precedence, belying Lévi-Strauss's nostalgic search for origins. It is through this consideration and critique of structural anthropology's apparent aim to reach that which is outside of history that Derrida seeks to point to the impossibility of such closure, and thus the permanent deferral of the possibility of a self-sufficient system of signs. By taking on Saussurian linguistics by way of Derrida's critique of Lévi-Strauss's adoption of the structuralist method, Laclau and Mouffe implicitly incorporate Lévi-Strauss's work in their own through the pivotal role he plays for Derrida's rethinking of the sign.

The second key moment for linking the theory of antagonism back to Lévi-Strauss lies in Laclau's reliance on the notion of empty and floating signifiers to conceptualize how political articulation draws disparate signs together within a unified identity. Empty signifiers refer to no particular signified but play a role in fixing the system of differences between signs, thus constituting a linguistic system. For Laclau, empty signifiers are integral to the antagonistic character of discourse for three reasons. First, the need to exclude certain relationships between signs means that the unity of a system cannot be asserted in terms of a regular signifier, as this can only be elaborated within the set of relations between signs. The empty signifier plays the role of 'a signifier of the pure cancellation of all difference' by which a partial fixation is achieved (Laclau 1996, 38). It has no determined content or place within a particular system of signs but it fixes this system by forming a chain of equivalences between all of its elements. Second, the empty signifier repeats this equivalential operation for the negated outside (Laclau 1996, 38–9). By excluding other possible articulations of a system, empty signifiers constitute inside and outside by connecting apparently disparate signs. Third, this requires that empty signifiers do refer not to particular signifieds but to the very fact that the 'origin' of signification itself is only possible through this constitutive exclusion (Laclau 1996, 39).

As such, empty signifiers are political precisely because they stand in for the impossibility of articulating the fullness of any discursive system. They constitute the revisable antagonistic limits between the inside and outside of particular political identities by fixing relations between signs. It is this moment that Laclau calls a 'chain of equivalence', by which disparate identities are held together by a particular signifier that, when emptied of its content, unites these elements in referral to a provisional and contingent unification (Laclau 1996, 42). It is precisely antagonism, the ontological predicate under investigation here, that is enabled by the empty signifier. It is important to recognize that Laclau conceives of 'floating' and 'empty' signifiers as two parts of the same movement. Where empty signifiers involve the emptying of content, a floating signifier implies the fullness that unifies a particular system while also being empty enough to unify disparate

signs within a chain of equivalence. The unity of any system of differences is only possible through a sign which, in its capacity as floating, articulates it and reveals the impossibility of this unity, in its capacity as empty, at the same time.

Lévi-Strauss plays a pivotal role here, for it is in his reading of Saussure's linguistics alongside the anthropology of Marcel Mauss that he develops the concept of the floating signifier. Lévi-Strauss argues that Mauss's work reveals the role of the empty and floating character of certain signifiers within symbolic exchange. In his analysis of ethnographic material regarding the gift and how it obliges one to give, receive and reciprocate, Mauss invokes the Maori term *hau* to act as an explanation for this obligation: 'What imposes obligation in the present received and exchanged, is the fact that the thing received is not inactive . . . it is the *hau* that wishes to return to its birthplace, to the sanctuary of the forest and the clan, and to the owner' (Mauss 2002, 15). This imposition of obligation must be explained through reference to something non-intentional because Mauss sees the gift as 'total social fact', a phenomenon which concerns 'the totality of society and its institutions' rather than individual acts (Mauss 2002, 100). Where Mauss takes the role of *hau* as the source of an explanation of the total social fact that moved gift exchange, Lévi-Strauss took *hau* not as specific to gift exchange but to symbolic exchange in general, as 'no more than the subjective reflection of the need to supply an unperceived totality' (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 57). Where *hau* took the form of a non-intentional explanation of individual acts of gift exchange, the empty signifier unifies varies signs by subsisting beyond the difference between them. As noted, this signifier halts the differences that constitute language:

> man has from the start had at his disposition a signifier-totality which he is at a loss to know how to allocate to a signified . . . There is always a non-equivalence or 'inadequation' between the two, a non-fit and overspill which divine understanding alone can soak up; this generates a signifier-surfeit relative to the signifieds to which it can be fitted. (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 62)

This lack of equivalence between the totality of a signifying system and a signifier that would unite this totality requires a term, like *hau*, which does not necessarily refer to a 'real' signified but rather the impossibility of signifying the totality of the system itself. It is in this gap that the floating signifier is found, whose 'role is to enable symbolic thinking to operate despite the contradiction inherent in it' (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 63). This floating signifier is central to antagonism precisely because it halts the system of differences, and therefore produces a contingent totalization through one particular, hegemonic articulation.

It is worth repeating that Laclau asserts a clear difference between floating and empty signifiers that is only implied by Lévi-Strauss. Nevertheless, the unifying function of the empty signifier and the fullness represented by the 'surfeit' of floating signification are both to be found in Lévi-Strauss's reading of Mauss. In addition to the post-structuralist conception of the sign that is essential to Laclau and Mouffe's positing of antagonism as internal to all signification, the political value of the floating signifier as that which creates a chain of equivalence is derived from Lévi-Strauss's understanding of symbolic exchange. Despite these core elements of the theory of antagonism having roots in

structuralist anthropology, this anthropological origin is not clearly articulated in Laclau and Mouffe's political ontology. This occlusion of reference to Lévi-Strauss could be put down to a reticence to go back on the post-structuralist influence central to the theory of antagonism that Laclau and Mouffe put forward. But it is here that Judith Butler's remark regarding the uncritical appropriation of sources in the exchange between herself, Slavoj Žižek and Laclau becomes particularly relevant (Butler et al. 2000, 159). To what extent does this acquiescence to, and erasure of, an established reading of Lévi-Strauss occlude other avenues that his work can provide for political ontology? By tracing an alternate line forward from Lévi-Strauss, via the readings of his work suggested in the ontological turn in anthropology, antagonism can be situated in a more generous, pluralistic understanding of political ontology. In turn, this will allow us to recursively identify the way in which antagonism acts as a restriction upon the limits of the political.

An alternate path from Lévi-Strauss to political ontology

The ontological turn in anthropology challenges this naturalist and transcendental reading of Lévi-Strauss that is oft accepted in post-structuralist circles on the grounds that the central themes of structuralism are comparison and transformation.[5] A biographical remark demonstrates this dual tendency. In an interview Lévi-Strauss noted that the organization of the village of the Bororo, who he studied during his fieldwork, embodied what would later become the structuralist method: 'meeting the Bororo who were the great theoreticians of structuralism – that was a godsend for me!' (Wilcken 2010, 69). On the one hand, this move is inherently comparative insofar as it ranks the systems of thought specific to those groups Lévi-Strauss studied besides his influences from the Western tradition. This is what Descola has referred to as Lévi-Strauss's 'symmetricization' of Western and non-Western modes of thought (Descola 2017).[6] On the other, it is transformative in that symmetricization puts the suspension of the ethnographer's own conceptual categories at the heart of anthropological experience. Comparison and transformation are thus inextricable within anthropological practice.

   This anecdotal remark has theoretical significance for our discussion of Lévi-Strauss in the context of political ontology, because it demands a shift towards the reconsideration of the ontological ramifications of structuralism beyond its critique by post-structuralism. There are two elements to this rethinking of Lévi-Strauss. First, Lévi-Strauss's referral to the value of the specificity of the ethnographic context of the Bororo emphasizes the oft ignored element of comparison in structural methodology. Maniglier notes that Saussure's discovery of the differential character of the signifier, insofar as it only derives its meaning from its difference with other signifiers, implies that comparison is the only method by which the identity of signs can be discerned (Maniglier 2016, 425). Thus, for Lévi-Strauss, anthropologist and not linguist, the broader identity and meaning of any symbolic system and its associated practices, rituals and behaviours can only be discerned through comparative methodology. This takes structuralism beyond a method that needs to be applied to the cases to which it provides a meaningful result (Hénaff 1998, 17; Lévi-Strauss 1968, 82). More crucially, it consists in the discovery of the necessity of comparison due to the differential ontological character of signs (Maniglier 2010). Comparison is not so much adopted but demanded

by the structure of anthropological analysis itself; that systems of meaning only *become* meaningful through comparison.

The lesson taken from this by Descola, however, is not that this ontology of difference should be taken to be primary. Instead, it requires that we recognize that the common sense ontological division between nature and culture is 'an "artificial creation"' and distinct from 'what ethnography teaches us about the multiple continuities between humans and non-humans that are established in the cosmologies of many non-modern societies' (Descola 2009, 109). This leads to the cornerstone of his project, which involves tethering structuralism's tendency towards categorization and classification to the comparison of a plurality of ontologies irreducible to those that prop up the conceptual apparatus of the Western anthropologist. This leads him to formulate a table of basic ontological schemas which articulate the possible relationships between human and non-human entities in different manners. As a result of the different classifications at work within these ontologies, for Descola, 'sociality is not an explanation but, rather, what needs to be explained' because the distribution of relations between entities leads to totally different conceptions of the limits of the social (Descola 2013, 248). We might take as an example Lévi-Strauss's remarks in *The Savage Mind*, where he argues for the equality of the schemas in which 'matter and form, neither with any independent existence, are realised as structures, that is as entities which are both empirical and intelligible' (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 130). Descola takes this logic and extends it, in order to claim that by charting the difference in relations between entities that these varying ontologies posit, one can begin to give a more fruitful account of how each ontology structures the world of those who think through it.

Descola is somewhat of an outlier in this ontological turn in anthropology, insofar as he places his focus on the classificatory and taxonomic aspect of comparison.[7] For Holbraad, Maniglier and Viveiros de Castro, there is a second lesson that the Bororo example highlights. Lévi-Strauss also asserts that the act of comparison is inextricable from transformation. The Bororo embodied a conceptual system organized along different principles to the Western philosophical tradition, pointing the way to the investigation of other logical systems through structuralist analysis, rather than reducing them to the categories of the ethnographer. In Maniglier's reading of Lévi-Strauss, this transformation is necessary because '[a] structure is not an ensemble of rules that can be isolated from their applications', but rather a field of possibility that emerges only through their applications (Maniglier 2016, 427). This means that, on the one hand, the meaning of a particular structure can only be arrived at through juxtaposition and comparison. On the other, it means that the anthropologist's account must be just one actualization of the possibilities represented by a particular structure. It cannot, therefore, be an identical or accurate representation but rather a transformation of this field. Comparison is transformation because it must produce new concepts from this gap of understanding that structuralism tries to think (Holbraad 2013, 248). An ethnography of an alternate ontology cannot help but be a 'recursive exercise of conceptual invention' that challenges the ability of the conceptual coordinates of the anthropologist to represent the worlds of others (Holbraad 2013, 258).

We will refer to the methodological stakes of the claim that transformation is unavoidable in comparison under the label of recursivity, as suggested by Holbraad. For

Maniglier and Viveiros de Castro, Lévi-Strauss's *Mythologiques* is central to developing this recursive image of structuralism (Maniglier 2016, 424–30; Viveiros de Castro 2014, 197–220). In these works, Lévi-Strauss begins from a single Bororo myth and charts a vast number of transformations that it undergoes in order to analyse and link a large number of mythical narratives from the Americas. For Maniglier and Viveiros de Castro, respectively, this analysis of myth puts forward a 'system of systems of transformations' (Maniglier 2016, 426) and 'a structuralism without structure' (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 203). True to the comparative structuralist methodology, myths are not isolatable representations so much as a series of relations between terms that can only be made intelligible through practice and comparison (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 127). This is made clear by passage taken from the last volume of this series of works, cited by Viveiros de Castro:

> Properly speaking, there is never any original: every myth is by its very nature a translation . . . it does not exist in a language and in a culture or subculture, but at their point of articulation with other languages or cultures. Therefore, a myth never belongs to its language, but rather represents a perspective on a different language. (Lévi-Strauss 1981, 644–45)

For Viveiros de Castro, this is the significance of Lévi-Strauss's *Mythologiques*, that myth is 'primarily translation' (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 205). Hence, Lévi-Strauss's attempt to chart mythical thought projects another 'image of thought' that is in stark contrast to the rigidity often attributed to structuralist classification (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 77). A recursive methodology, therefore, does not seek to replace one ontology with another but to attempt to think from the perspective of other ontologies in order to 'gain a perspective on our own contrasts', and thus engender the recursive transformation of our conceptual coordinates (Viveiros de Castro 1998, 1).

This account might strike the reader as overwhelmingly generous to Lévi-Strauss, given the presence of these themes in the post-structuralist accounts of language that Laclau and Mouffe use to form their understanding of antagonism. Nevertheless, what it highlights is an alternate understanding of the role of ontology which will demonstrate how political ontology places limits on what is considered as political. It is important to note that the definition of ontology used here diverges from a simple discourse on the character of the metaphysics of being (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 54). Instead, it is seen as 'a prepredicative experience, in that it modulates the general awareness that I may have of the existence of the "other"' (Descola 2013, 115). Here, any experience is mediated by an ontological scheme that shapes the possible relations between entities in any particular world. The insight taken from this is that any social or political relation 'will take altogether different forms depending on the ontological, cosmological, and sociological contexts in which they arise' (Descola 2013, 281). Anthropology, therefore, is unique insofar as it's goal is to think from the perspective of these conceptual systems organized by fundamentally different motivations and presuppositions (Descola 2005; Viveiros de Castro 2011). Consequently, any ontology places limits on what can be considered as political. This is a challenge to pluralist political ontology insofar as it appears to be incompatible with this pluralist understanding of ontology itself.

This points to an alternate path from Lévi-Strauss towards political ontology to that found in the work of Laclau and Mouffe. This route can be paved by applying the two methodological principles introduced above to political concepts. The first is a comparative approach to ontology, where classification testifies to plurality rather than simply fixing the structural conditions of politics. Such a principle posits that we can reconcile the clash between individual ontologies and pluralism by viewing ontological principles through a pluralist lens. Crucially, by engaging in comparison, we do not only lend a more generous eye to other ontologies but reveal hitherto unseen aspects of ontological schemes both near and far (Descola 2012, 72–3). In turn, the second principle is that this comparison must be recursive. When studying alternate political ontologies, the political theorist cannot simply reduce them to a single, already-existing conceptual scheme. Instead, the recursive method emphasizes the notion of transformation found in the late Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myth, which provides an image of thought where conceptual coordinates can and must be transformed in an engagement with other images of thought. For the political theorist, comparison highlights the necessity of charting the plurality of political ontologies in order do justice to the way in which each enables different conceptions of the political, that in turn recursively demands the transformation of one's own conceptual coordinates upon this engagement with alter-images of thought.

The political ontology of potential affinity

A comparison of antagonism with the political ontology represented by what Viveiros de Castro refers to as Amerindian perspectivism and its associated kinship system of potential affinity will demonstrate this recursive principle. Before this system of kinship can be understood, however, the basic ontological coordinates of perspectivism must be established, precisely because it is perspectivism that broadens the category of 'other' persons that can become affines (Lepri 2013, 304–5). This broadening of the category of the person occurs through an inversion of the characteristics which Descola and Viveiros de Castro attribute to naturalism. Within naturalism, cultural and symbolic activity is limited to human subjects, whereas other entities are related on a purely materialistic basis. Its basic assumption is of the existence of 'a universal nature that is coded, or adapted to, by a multitude of heterogeneous cultures' (Descola 2012, 29). Conversely for what Descola calls animism and Viveiros de Castro terms Amerindian perspectivism, the category of personhood is not restricted to humans.[8] The 'basic presupposition' of perspectivism is 'that nonhuman beings are persons' (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 82). While the animals and non-human entities to which this form of personhood is attributed differs across the groups that may be considered as engaging in perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 57), what is shared between them is the absence of a universal distinction between persons and non-persons, and the intersection of human and non-human perspectives (Lima 1999, 127). This distribution of personhood across species means that, according to Viveiros de Castro, '[w]hat these persons see and thus are as persons constitutes the very philosophical problem posed by and for indigenous thought' of a perspectivist form (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 56).

Perspective is pivotal here for two reasons. First, it is only from the perspective of humans that animals appear as such. Animal species perceive themselves to be persons

and do not see 'us' as human persons in the way that we do. Hence, the designation of this system of thought as perspectivism; its main goal is not to classify and limit a possible set of relations and identities within a single discursive system, but rather to attempt to think through a multiplicity of possible perspectives. Second, a shared set of cultural references is differentiated among these perspectives. For example, 'what we call blood is beer for a jaguar, what we take for a pool of mud, tapirs experience as a grand ceremonial house, and so on' (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 62). What is central here is not a question of differing representations, but rather differing perspectives rooted in the nature of the body of each individual species. Thus, while Viveiros de Castro and others oft make reference to the shared possession of a 'soul' or 'spirit' by both human and non-human persons in perspectivism, this is a less a Christian or Platonic category and more the point of view produced by different embodiments of personhood (Pedersen and Willerslev 2012).

Before moving to how Viveiros de Castro expands perspectivism into a kinship system, it is important to pause and consider the limitations of this *general* formulation of perspectivism. Viveiros de Castro has been criticized for separating perspectivism from the particularities of ethnographic context (Rival 2013, 95–7; Turner 2009, 17–9), and the ontological turn has been criticized more broadly for abstracting from indigenous ontologies, reifying individual lives as a set of ontological givens and separating academic from indigenous concerns (Aspers 2015; Graeber 2015; Todd 2016; Vigh and Sausdal 2014). These criticisms echo earlier challenges to anthropological representation. Key here is Vine Deloria, Jr's attribution of self-interested, university career oriented aims to anthropologists studying indigenous populations in North America, and the placing of the latter in a 'conceptual prison' not of their own making (Deloria 1973, 93). Anthropologists descend upon indigenous groups in order to confirm their own biases and create abstract knowledge, rather than tackle the political and economic questions facing their subjects (Deloria 1973, 98). Anthropology, for Deloria, is utterly incapable of turning its gaze back upon itself and constituting a critique of modernity.

This claim has been moderated by others who, responding to the polemic character of Deloria's writing, claim that it is perhaps more productive to emphasize the *lack* of such a critique rather than its *impossibility* (Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997, 14). Nevertheless, it is pertinent to consider two consequences of the claims of both Deloria and the critics of the ontological turn for Viveiros de Castro's account of perspectivism, in order to frame the limits of our use of his account of potential affinity. First, Viveiros de Castro's ethnographic investigations are limited to the Amazonian context (Viveiros de Castro 1993, 2014, 50, 2017, 255). While he draws upon a wide range of ethnographic data to expand his work (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 198; Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 161), he oscillates between defining perspectivism as a specific Amazonian concept and a more general Amerindian category. Further, others have applied perspectivism beyond Viveiros de Castro's own ethnographic work, including studies elsewhere in the Amazon (Fortis 2010; Kohn 2007; Vilaça 2005), Africa (Ignatov 2017) and Northern and Inner Asia (Stépanoff 2009; Holbraad and Willerslev 2007; Pedersen and Willerslev 2012). For Deloria and the critics of the ontological turn, Viveiros de Castro's conceptual conflation of the terms Amazonian and Amerindian, and this expansion of

perspectivism, conflicts with ethnographic evidence (Bessire and Bond 2014, 444; Turner 2009, 17) and the autonomy of indigenous peoples.

Second, Deloria's application of his general critique of anthropology to the specificities of animism deepens this claim. In his words:

> Anthropologists, summarizing what they find in the Indian tradition, always call us animists, and that view is accepted by a great many people in the field of religion. We are put in a cultural evolutionary framework, and then we are supposed to move from animism to some great abstract conception of one god. The problem with that type of analysis is that it is not an article of faith in any Indian religion that everything has spirit. What happens in the different Indian religions is that people live so intimately with environment that they are in relationship to the spirits that live in particular places. (Deloria 1999, 224)

This critique is pertinent because of the proximity between animism and Viveiros de Castro's concept of perspectivism, his association of perspectivism with a broad conception of personhood often expressed through the notions of soul and spirit, and the generalizing character that this is imbued with. However, this second criticism gives us pause to think about the aims and scope of the category of perspectivism in response to Deloria's claim. On the one hand, with respect to the first half of the above passage, it would be incorrect to claim that the versions of animism and perspectivism given by the authors of the ontological turn are part of a social evolutionary chain. The authors of the ontological turn actively criticize the social evolutionary approach which creates a temporal hierarchy between ontologies (Turner 2018, 3–5). On the other, Viveiros de Castro's understanding of soul or spirit as the embodied capacity for a point of view or perspective with which it possible enter into relations (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro 2017, 70–1) is close to what Deloria presents as characteristic of Indian thought. From this perspective, it would appear that Viveiros de Castro is not far from Deloria's own position.

Despite these two points, Deloria's claim that there is a lacuna between lived experience and anthropological writing still stands in the case of the ontological turn. There is not space here to fully address these issues with respect to the validity of the ontological turn for anthropology more broadly, but several points should be highlighted for our purpose of pluralizing the ontologies used to understand politics. First, for the ontological turn, the disjunction between lived experience and the accounts given of ontologies is accepted as a primary theoretical premise. While, as its critics might suggest, it to some extent reifies the distinction between 'naturalism' and other ontologies, it does this in order to challenge the basis of that very distinction. For Matei Candea, this means to:

> challenge our own ontological assumptions and in so doing, to take theirs seriously–which means leaving them in a state of possibility, without reducing them to false or true statements in our own terms. (Candea 2012, 120)

While the threat of abstraction and reification looms, this position 'takes seriously' the claims of others by attempting to be vigilant towards, and openly challenging, the lines drawn between positions 'we do and do not take seriously' (Candea 2012, 120). Second,

and as a result, the account of kinship that follows must be seen as a theoretical and conceptual construction that Viveiros de Castro creates in order to take perspectivist thought as a serious challenge to other ontological categories, even if this involves a degree of reification. While it is an academic enterprise, the authors of the ontological turn seek to alter anthropology's conceptual apparatus in such a way that aligns it more clearly with other conceptions of what can be considered as political (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 295; Candea 2011). It is this strategic position that is adopted here for the purposes of thinking about political ontology and how it curtails the possibility of thinking other forms of the political.

With these limitations established, what are the attributes of a system of kinship oriented around this potentiality for expressing a point of view that operates according to vastly different lines to antagonism? The novel claim here is not that kinship is political (e.g. Asch 2005; Sahlins 2008), but that, according with the consideration of the ontological turn given above, this particular form of kinship provides the basis for a decentring of the ontology of antagonism. According to Viveiros de Castro, what orients the kinship systems that he associates with Amerindian perspectivism is 'potential' or 'virtual' affinity. This displaces the centrality of consanguinity, familial relations of descent, over contingent 'affinal' relations that take place on the margins of the group, privileging the establishment of alliances with affines that are not consanguinely related. Within an understanding of kinship that is based in consanguineal descent, the internal relations between mothers, sisters, fathers and brothers are more important than contingent relationships established through exchange with the outside: 'In this view, the outside comprises pure negativity, an absence of relation' (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 105). While essentialist versions of kinship have long been criticized and deconstructed, rejecting the familial unit as a primary biological given and attributing consanguinity a socially constructed character, what Viveiros de Castro claims is that the constructed consanguineal unit is still privileged over similarly constructed affinal relations (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 160–62). Contrastingly, within this kinship structure, consanguineal relations are taken as constructed, but the category of potential affinity, or the possibility for entering into relations with individuals that are not consanguines, is taken as the given upon which this construction takes place. In Viveiros de Castro's words, 'affinity is natural, consanguinity is constructed' (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 163).

This centrality of potential affinity, rather than consanguinity, means that within Amerindian perspectivism kinship is structured by a primary difference or alterity that is translated into relations. This is in opposition to the naturalist, consanguine positing of identity as primary. This distinction is demonstrated by Viveiros de Castro through the respective roles played by the terms 'brother' and 'brother-in-law' in these systems. Within Western understandings of kinship, what brings an undetermined 'other' into a determined relation is the unearthing of brotherhood as an underlying principle that grounds any possible relation within a single, uniting term such as 'the father, the nation, the church' (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 112). Relations are established by positing an identity that subsumes differences within it. Whether it is taken as constructed or given, there is a single term that is taken to cancel out alterity. Contrastingly, the organizing figure of perspectivist kinship is the brother-in-law. The significance of the '-in-law' suffix is that the difference between the other and its integration into a particular kinship

system is maintained rather than effaced. The emphasis on the brother-in-law means that '[c]onsanguinity must be fabricated deliberately; it has to be extracted from the virtual background of affinity through an intentional and constructed differentiation from universally given difference', a process which Viveiros de Castro claims is 'necessarily interminable' (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 112–3). Potential affinity leaves the unity of the group perpetually open due to this axis of virtual affinity, which is the continually present possibility for new, actual kinship relations. Crucially, what is important in this model of kinship is that 'encompassment does not produce or manifest any superior metaphysical unity' (Viveiros de Castro 2016, 116). Rather than placing consanguineal, identity-based relations as the primary goal, affinal kinship is organized along the potential for new relations with unidentified affines which maintain their alterity, rather than subsuming it within a general category of identification.

This category of potential affinity is incredibly broad precisely because of the wide potential for personhood within Amerindian perspectivism. This means that relations to other entities are also mediated by the potential for affinity, often considered as central to hunting and agriculture practices among perspectivism in the Amazon (Viveiros de Castro 1998, 3) and elsewhere (Willerslev 2004). As foregrounded above, at stake here is not the accuracy of the postulates that underpin this Amerindian ontology of kinship, nor of the perspectivist claim that non-humans possess the capacity for personhood articulated through different bodily natures. Instead, for potential affinity, the primary organizing principle of group identity is not a subsumption of difference under a single term, but the maintenance of this difference as the very basis of any potential identity. Incredibly broad ontological postulates regarding personhood within perspectivism lead to a kinship formation based on the non-identity of the group. Hence, we can distinguish the assumption of identity, established through a given or constructed hegemonic term, from the assumption of the wide-ranging potential for affinity as the organizing principle of all relations.

A comparative and recursive analysis of antagonism from the perspective of affinity

The benefit of this brief account of perspectivist affinity is not the derivation of alternate ontological principles, but a recursive comparison with antagonism in order to demonstrate the necessity of pluralism with regard to political ontology. Importantly, what must be noted as important is not the accuracy of the account of perspectivist kinship given by Viveiros de Castro, as, first, such an account is a theoretical construction created by the anthropologist that can only ever be a transformation of its subject, according to the postulates of structuralism. Second, here we are interested in the comparative and recursive benefits of such an account, insofar as it may exert an influence on Western political categories so that they might better incorporate other ontologies within the pluralist political project. Hence, other images of thought can induce a recursive consideration of our own ontological categories through the process of comparison.

Three key assumptions of antagonism can be reframed through this comparison, in order to demonstrate how, as political ontologies, both antagonism and affinity place limits on the constitution of the political. First, from the perspective of potential affinity,

the political ontology of antagonism tends towards a consanguineal model of identity. If antagonism is the primary moment of the political, then it is overarching identity that must be taken to be its organizing principle, precisely because antagonism represents the conflict between identities, however contingently they are articulated. While these identities are seen to be constructed rather than given, they tend towards the pole of consanguineal identification rather than affinal difference. Cultural or political identity is the ontological mediator within antagonism. By adopting perspectivism, one can attempt to think through an image of thought where culture takes on a different political meaning: that the overarching unification it represents is not the primary category of association but the potential for the inclusion of a new perspective within a group that does not reduce its alterity to a single term.

Second, perspectivism sheds new light on the role of hegemony in understanding this cultural and universal mediation of particularities. What antagonism assumes is that social relations cannot avoid fixing the symbolic expression of a set of signs under a single hegemonic narrative (the 'brother' relation of the church and the nation). Consequently, the only opposition to hegemony is more of the same: 'radical politics consists in a diversity of moves in a multiplicity of institutional terrains, so as to construct a different hegemony' (Mouffe 2013, xiv). Contrastingly, while hierarchical and sedimented relations are present when potential affinity is transformed into actual kinship ties, the perspectivist model does not assume hegemony over relations as its main goal precisely because it tries to think from the perspective of the other. The basic philosophical, and political, problem of perspectivism is not to subsume particular differences under a single hegemonic project but to express the possibility of a 'counter-natural, and cosmopolitical alliance' (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 164). Viveiros de Castro calls this counter-natural because in the system of perspectivist myth, the category of personhood is an open-ended series of possible transformations across species, which demands a cosmopolitical position precisely because there is potential for these worlds to form relations from their position of virtuality. Where hegemony seeks to articulate antagonism along the lines of a single narrative identity, potential affinity seeks to draw lines of connection between differences that do not reduce these perspectives to a single view.

These lines of connection lead to the third contrast between antagonism and potential affinity. Each is possessed of a different distribution between open and closed tendencies. On the one hand, Laclau and Mouffe stress the importance of the hegemonic stringing together of chains of equivalence, which is expressed in terms of a form of identity close to consanguineal identity. On the other, Viveiros de Castro emphasizes that the inclusion of alterity in a way which maintains the possibility for transformation is central to potential affinity (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 144). Antagonism leads to the fixing of a field of differences through the floating or empty signifier, whereas perspectivism aims to constantly transform this field through incorporating potential affines. Crucially, perspectivism's attempt to understand the possible worlds of others highlights the way in which the linguistic basis of antagonism reduces subjects to mere 'tabula rasae' or 'docile subjects' that do not possess worlds until the fixing of a system of signs (McNay 2014, 81). The structuralist interpretation of perspectivism assumes a preexisting world of meaning which constantly undergoes transformation, rather than a structure of meaning imposed upon lacking subjects.

Hence, while antagonism is articulated in a pluralist and radical democratic project, it is one that foregrounds universalistic identity over affinal otherness, hegemony over perspective, and closure over transformation. These three points of comparison are not intended to support the idea that antagonism should, or even could, be simply discarded as a form of political ontology and replaced by affinity. Instead, they are intended to demonstrate that the full meaning of a particular political ontology cannot be considered outside of a comparative methodology. In this case, antagonism cannot act as a fully fledged pluralist political philosophy precisely because it bars this possibility. By claiming that the realm of the political is defined by antagonism, Laclau and Mouffe export antagonism to the political in general, as a transhistorical ontology of the political (Balibar 2014, 187; Kioupkiolis 2011, 694). This tendency is exacerbated by arguments found in Laclau's understanding of populism, where 'the political operation par excellence is always going to be the construction of a "people"' (Laclau 2005, 153). A transhistorical form of politics is impossible, precisely because antagonism cannot account for alternative political ontologies (Mckean 2016) which may underpin understandings of how subjects relate to one another beyond discursive antagonism (Norval 2007, 86), such as the position suggested by perspectivist kinship. As such, criticisms of both Laclau and Mouffe's maintaining of liberal democratic forms of politics (Day 2005, 70–6; Wenman 2013, 216) can be seen to stem from this ontological limitation.

Equally, it must be acknowledged that potential affinity must not be taken to be a simple replacement for antagonism for two reasons. Politically, it cannot make space for the competition between identities that is central to antagonism and agonistic pluralism due to its neglect of the constantly shifting universality that this demands. Additionally, for the perspective of both critics of the ontological turn and anthropology more generally, it must be recognized that a fine line must be trodden between unwarranted abstraction from the lives of those studied by anthropologists and the alteration of anthropology's own concepts in the name of the political struggles of the 'other'. For Holbraad and Pederson, there is value to be found in successfully walking this line and getting one's house in order, so to speak, insofar as adjusting the representative limits of anthropology and ethnography is not a merely 'scholarly' act, but also a political one (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 196–97). The ontological turn is less interested in more accurate representations of singular ontological schemes, than in showing how recursive transformations of the conceptual categories held by anthropologists can be induced through comparison (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 292–93). The result, they claim, is that the recursive transformation that concepts like perspectivism and potential affinity can induce in our political categories is valuable for, and part of, a broader set of engagements with indigenous politics.

Thus, the theory of antagonism, and political ontology more generally, has been criticized for abstracting from the real conditions (McNay 2014) and norms (Cross 2017) of politics, and the ontological turn in anthropology falls prey to critiques of modern anthropology (Deloria 1973) and similar claims from contemporary anthropologists (Aspers 2015; Bessire and Bond 2014; Graeber 2015; Todd 2016; Vigh and Sausdal 2014). What are the consequences of responding to the problem of the closure of the political by antagonism by reference to an approach which could also be seen as abstracting from political conditions? The lesson for political theory to be taken from the

ontological turn in anthropology is that it acknowledges its shortcomings and invites the reconstruction of conceptual norms on the basis of the recursively induced by its comparison. On the one hand, this forces upon us the question of what kind of politics can account for the ontological diversity attested to by thinkers like Viveiros de Castro, while also taking the claims of indigenous thought seriously. This demands a serious consideration of how the use of ontological reasoning places limits on what can be considered as political, and how this can be undone by alternate ontological principles. On the other, political theory's contribution to the goals of the ontological turn in anthropology is the possibility of building upon these recursive analyses in order to broaden the ontological frames by which politics is understood. This could, in turn, lead to a more extensive engagement with politics in a way that remedies the critiques directed at abstraction in anthropology.

The recursive pay-off, therefore, of this comparison between antagonism and affinity is that not just that neither can act as a fully fledged pluralist political ontology because they cannot account for the political assumptions that the other makes. Further, it highlights a need for collaboration between anthropology and political theory in a way that mutually complements the shortcomings of each. That is, the closing off of the political from other ontological viewpoints by political ontology and the threat of a remove from politics that occurs in anthropological abstraction. Both of these claims demand that the alterity and plurality which both of these ontological turns valorize cannot be subsumed within a single ontological position. Instead, pluralist political theory might benefit from this democratization of the coordinates of thought itself, rather than seeking the final ontological ground of the political. This version of political ontology would necessitate adopting the comparative and recursive methodology generated from the rehabilitation of Lévi-Strauss by contemporary anthropology. If this approach is adopted, antagonism and perspectivism can be seen as two complementary but contrasting ontological positions that are apt for particular circumstances, groups and political problems. The renewed lesson of structuralism is that by democratizing the coordinates of the political, political ontology might do better to think from the perspective of those whose political struggles it is trying to support. By laying the foundations for this ontological pluralism structuralism doesn't necessarily have to lead to a single ontology. Rather than grounding pluralism in ontology, ontology itself should be pluralized to produce a more democratic understanding of political concepts. Without doing so, political theory risks turning the accidents of political history into abstract ontological predicates.

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Notes

1. This turn is far from homogenous, encompassing Deleuzian (Widder 2012), Lacanian (Stavrakakis 2007), Liberal (White 2000) and leftist (Strathausen 2009) political thought, and addressing themes ranging from the state (Hay 2014) to violence (Oksala 2012; White 2009).
2. While the argument below pertains mostly to the continental tradition, as Colin Hay notes, there has been a remarkable turn across the discipline of politics to 'a post-naturalist, post-positivist

approach to social and political analysis premised upon the acknowledgement of the dynamic interplay of structure and agency and material and ideational factors' (Hay 2011, 474).

3. Classic accounts can be found in, for example, the work of Judith Butler (1999: 49–53) and Jacques Derrida (2001).

4. For more general overviews of this turn from the perspective of anthropology, see the work of Holbraad and Pederson (2017), the collection edited by Pierre Charbonnier, Gildas Salmon and Peter Skafish (2017) and individual work of Charbonnier and Salmon (2014), Eduardo Kohn (2015) and Maniglier (2014).

5. This is closer to a call for nuance than a total rejection of the reading of Lévi-Strauss given by the likes of Derrida. Viveiros de Castro claims that there is a shift towards transformation in Lévi-Strauss's mature *Mythologiques* series (Viveiros de Castro 2014, 84, 197), whereas Descola and Maniglier argue that this tendency is present throughout his work and in tension with the more schematic aspects of his writing (Descola 2009; Maniglier 2016, 428).

6. For Latour's introduction of the theme of symmetricization, see his *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993).

7. According to Holbraad and Pederson, Descola's quasi-transcendental approach to classification places him *outside* of the ontological turn (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 62–5).

8. On the difference between Descola and Viveiros de Castro's respective classificatory and political understandings of animism, see the work of Latour (2009).

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