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REVOLUTIONARY CATEGORIES

5

More than any other political term, *revolution* eschews conceptual grasp. Like many kindred entries in our political lexicon, it boasts an “impure” origin, spanning Christian theology and astronomy.¹ In keeping with its provenance, *revolution* semantically returns (indeed, rolls back) to the rotary movement of a return, of cyclicity or circularity. But, while its prehistory displays a steady trajectory backtracking to the recovery of a preceding state or position, its politicization empties the word of all determinate content and diverts it from any particular direction. Political revolutions can be past- or future-oriented, conservative or progressive, impelled top-down or bottom-up. Their theorization is admittedly still concerned with the issue of necessity, but it also opens unto the other modal categories of possibility and actuality: the possibility of a qualitatively different actuality (“another world is possible”) or the reactivation of an actuality deemed lost, buried under or perverted by subsequent historical developments. Heard in a political tonality, revolutions problematize spa-

1 I will not sum up here the history of the uses of “revolution”. For a useful overview, consult Artemy Magun, *Negative Revolution* (New York & London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 4–11 and Göran Therborn, “Forward: Roads to Modernity, Revolutionary and Other,” in *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World: Social Identities*, edited by John Foran, David Lane, and Andreja Zivkovic (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2007), p. xiv–xvii.

tial representations of temporality without, however, deciding whether time is a continually rotating wheel, an arrow flying on a predetermined arch from the past of misery to the future of freedom, or a jugged line full of ruptures, discontinuities, and contingent breaks. Nor does a uniquely political revolution prescribe a definite change of position to the *body politic* that undergoes it: lateral or vertical, turning around (front-to-back) or overturning (upside-down). As changeable as the change it promises, it dodges the logic of the concept and invites a meticulous categorial analysis.

Positionality

6

In *On Revolution*, Arendt writes: “Modern revolutions have little in common with the *mutatio rerum* of Roman history or the στάσις, the civil strife which disturbed the Greek *polis*.”² Yet, it is futile, to say the least, to try and understand revolution, even in modernity, by making its meaning aloof to *stasis*, which includes not only “civil strife” but the very thing strife “disturbs”. Lenin titled one of his books *The State and Revolution*,³ and we, too, must begin with this coupling that fleshes out the modern duality of *stasis*. On the one hand, there is the actual state with a manner of standing, a post, a position it defends as the entrenched status quo; on the other hand, there is a possible revolution, the thunderbird (the Russian *burevestnik*) of change, a different manner of standing, or another position altogether, which might not be standing. The two “hands” belong to the same creature, namely *stasis*, situating revolution at the core of the state. In what way? First, insofar as where we stand itself does not stand still but imperceptibly turns and dramatically overturns depending on the precarious balance of power, intensities of political affect, degree of discontent, etc. Second, to the extent that the spatiotemporal horizon of how it stands presupposes that it may stand differently than it does at the moment. Seeing that no status or state is homogeneous but, divided against itself (covering over these divisions in the task of ideology), oscillates between mutually contradictory positions, revolution sheds light on and deepens the cracks in

2 Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York & London: Penguin, 1990), p. 21.

3 V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, translated by Robert Service (London & New York: Penguin, 1992), p. 45.

the façade of established institutions, pushing a given state to a position incompatible with the status quo.

I am certainly mindful of the fierce debates around the scale and scope of a desirable revolution in the early Soviet context, with Stalin and Trotsky for the main antagonists. Should the workers' revolution be confined to one country, or should it be worldwide? Should it be followed by a period of normalization or should it become permanent? A prototype of the October Revolution, the French Revolution similarly espoused universal ideals, used as a justification for the Napoleonic conquests that purported to project them beyond the boundaries of the French polity. That said, a political state is but one instantiation of *stasis* at rest, embroiled with the revolutionary *stasis* of tumult. Revolutions that are not mere revolts set their sights on both micro- and macro-levels, the subjective world of psychological states and the objective state of the world, judged to be out of sorts, whether imperfect or unjust, whether too chaotic or structured in excessively rigid hierarchies. They aim to shake up and remold the historical shape of the human who will become a true *citoyen*, or an entirely new species of *Homo sovieticus*, even as they strive to overthrow the predominant framing and division of the world in terms of class or a mechanistic society where all differences are leveled, the *Gesellschaft* that was the target of the German Conservative Revolution following World War I.

In the interplay of state and revolution, then, *stasis* includes the senses of positing and de-posing (in Reiner Schürmann's vernacular, the *institution* and *destitution* of hegemonies). Besides the political positions running the horizontal gamut from left to right and vertical (hierarchical) power relations, state and revolution are the meta-positions, with respect to which these realities make sense or stop making sense. Revolution is the position of positional negation, adopted by the entire *body politic*. When it turns the relations of rule and authority upside-down, revolutionary upheaval dispenses power to the previously powerless. When it rotates front-to-back, it is moved by a desire to return to a romanticized past and is, essentially, a conservative revolution. Successive changes in position amount to movement, expressed in the mobilization of the population for the revolutionary cause and in the shifts of the *body politic* on the vertical and horizontal axes of power distribution, all the way to a dislocation of that system of coordinates as such. At the crest of their

utopianism, revolutions equate deposing the “old” regime with the total undoing of positionality, represented in a coherent synecdoche by the standing position. So, for example, once implemented, the revolutionary demand for radical equality results in the flatness of *body politic*, now assuming a horizontal, lying position, in the wake of the standing one. In Hegel’s interpretation of the French Revolution, this flatness or leveling down in “an actual upheaval of actuality [*die wirkliche Umwälzung der Wirklichkeit*]”⁴ connotes death, historically mediated by Robespierre’s Terror.

There is no deposing of something or someone that or who is not already posited or positioned with relative stability and durability. So long as a state (of mind, of the nation, or of the world) exists and is readily discernible, revolution remains possible. But if everything is in flux, which for Arendt is a telltale sign of totalitarianism that erases the experiential boundaries between a movement and a state,⁵ then there is nothing to turn around or upend, to revolt against and depose. Movement without rest, pertaining to the workings not only of totalitarianism but also of capitalism, exacerbates one aspect of *stasis* at the expense of the other, contriving the most stagnant state of affairs out of perpetual mutability. A permanent revolution, of the kind Trotsky imagined *via* Marx and Ryazanov, is not communist utopia but capitalist reality, undercutting its own condition of possibility.

8

Substance

But what exactly is revolutionized in revolutions? Regardless of the answer to this question, it is important to remember that in matters of revolution, as in those of the state, accidents precede substance: what is positioned or deposited is secondary vis-à-vis the *how* of positioning or deposing. I have already hinted at the *body politic* as the substance of revolutions, which is to say that their substance is the political subject in the making and, above all, the ontology of power relations. It is this subject that alters positions, deposes or is deposed,

4 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 356.

5 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, London, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1979), p. 412.

and, through all the twists, turns, and returns is transformed in its very subjectivity (hence, the priority of accidents over substance). Now, as we know, Aristotle distinguished between the first substance (*ousia*) that presents itself as an atomic and autistic *this*, τὸδε τι, and the second, where *as-what the thing is present or presents itself* is not a simple One but the many, πολλῶν, *this as that* (*Cat.*, 3b, 10–17). On this view, a revolution in political substance is the turning from the merely given, handed down way of being to a consciously chosen mode of existence. The hermeneutical step, interpreting the impenetrable *this* of the first substance as *that* (the *what* becoming *as-what*), is a revolution before revolution, rendering the subject's position explicit and deciding whether to accept or reject it. The second substance always eo ipso contains the subject as a point of access to *what is*.

According to its own discourse, what the revolution bends and deposes is the old “regime”, the hegemonic rule, guidance, direction or directedness lending the polity its form and calibrating its political-phenomenological intentionality. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, a sense of anomie reigns supreme, precisely because still glancing back at what it has deposed, revolution prohibits positionality in general. But, as soon as a new regime succeeds the old and a novel set of coordinates guaranteeing a meaningful orientation is in place, order is restored. This restoration is a source of disappointment to fervently committed revolutionaries who realize that, despite having been turned around or upside-down, the same thing – the political *what*, substance – remains, unscathed in its substantive identity. They then see perpetual change as a panacea to the stagnations of substance, which is why, like Trotsky's comrade Ryazanov, they proclaim: “Our motto must be the revolution *in Permanenz* (uninterrupted revolution),” which will not be “order’ in place of revolution, but revolution in place of order”.⁶

Although the intuition of revolutionaries such as Ryazanov is correct, their solution is nonviable, for reasons I have already outlined. The problem is not the stabilization of the “revolutionary” *regime per se* but the fact that what hasn't yet happened (or perhaps has happened innumerable times without cementing

6 Quoted in *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution: The Documentary Record*, edited by Richard B. Day and Daniel Gaido (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 450.

itself) is a revolution in power, in the categories of power rather than a simple rearrangement of its relations. Historically, when revolutionaries come to power, they repeat the worst violent excesses of their predecessors. It is not enough to give power to the previously powerless, rotating those who are *in* power, without turning around the meaning and practice of power itself. To do so in thinking one would need to explore its connections to mastery and dominance behind its experienced oppressiveness. One would also be well advised to consider how it is linked to energy through the concepts of potency, potentiality, or possibility, and how it is diverted toward actuality.⁷ And, once power is plugged into the modal category of possibility, one should not stop until it is illuminated by all the other categories and revolutionized in theory, if not in practice.

10

The political *what*, the substance wherein revolution sets itself to work is a *who*, the subject; the *as-what* is articulated in a *who*. With this overused, threadbare word – subject – I do not mean either a loose collection of utility-maximizing individuals, whose calculations of their best interest has brought them together, or nodes in a network of the micro-relations of power that, *per definitionem*, is not prone to being revolutionized. I contend, instead, that the revolutionary substance-as-subject recovers something of the ancient psychopolitics, with parts of the soul (*psukhê*) corresponding to aspects of the *polis*. The relevant portion of the psyche here is the Platonic *thymos*, which, as I write in *Pyropolitics*, “can bring our blood to boil at the sight of injustice, is much more than the political affect of anger, rage, or indignation. It is the site of an inflammation in the soul and a breeding ground for the highly mobile revolutionary sparks that can instantaneously jump from one soul to another.”⁸ No revolution can afford to sidestep *thymos*, animating the *body politic* and acting as a barometer for the intensities and qualitative transformations triggered by the revolutionary project. Positively formulated, every effective revolution is a return to and a turning around of the soul that tips the balance of psychic positionality (“mental state”).

7 I have begun such a consideration in my *Energy Dreams: Of Actuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), cf. Chapter 5, titled “Political Fantasies”.

8 Michael Marder, *Pyropolitics: When the World Is Ablaze* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Int’l, 2015), p. 46.

Quality/Quantity

In line with my categorial analysis, a useful distinction between revolts and revolutions is that the former attempt to adjust the standing, status, or current position of the *body politic*, whereas, uncompromising, the latter do not rest until the previous state or status is overturned or turned around in its entirety. Revolts are local reactions to pressing social, economic, or political circumstances; revolutions are products of a global vision of the common good. What is, then, responsible for the upending of *stasis* in its static determination? When does an intervention pass from a local adjustment of position to its overturning and overhaul?

Quantitatively, it is necessary to reach a critical mass of discontent and desire for radical change for a revolution to receive popular support. These aspirations must be gathered together, taken and held together, in a literal interpretation of Aristotle's "continuous quantity", *συνεχές* (*Cat.* 4b, 20–1). Nonetheless, 11 oppressed as it may be, the population is not (yet) a political subject; it belongs to the atomistic "first substance" of politics. Hence, as Kautsky, Lenin, and Castro among others have recognized, revolutionary change requires a catalyst, the vanguard, or a small group of revolutionaries capable of turning the situation around and passing from the impenetrable *this* of the first substance to the *this as that* of the second.

The gathering together of political affect can be accomplished on the condition that a part is subtracted from the whole it calls into being. That part is the vanguard, apropos of which Kautsky writes: "The vanguard of the proletariat today forms the strongest, the most far-sighted, most selfless, boldest stratum [...]. And the proletariat will, in and through struggle, take up into itself the unselfish and far-sighted elements of all classes [...]. It will place its vanguard at the head of civilization and make it capable of guiding the immense economic transformation that will finally, over the entire globe, put an end to all the misery arising out of subjection, exploitation, and ignorance."⁹ In Kautsky's revolutionary arithmetic, the "selflessness" of the proletarian vanguard is what

9 Karl Kautsky, *The Road to Power: Political Reflections on Growing into the Revolution* (Humanities Books, 1996), pp. 90–1.

allows this small part to step into the place of the whole, of the universal. The continuous quantity to be held together must, in other words, go through a mediation by discrete quantity – Aristotle’s *διωρισμένον* – that faces it with a mirror, facilitating its recognition as a political subject.

If revolutionary quantities measure the increasing intensities of political affect, engagement, and energy, then the quality this affect exhibits is the heating up of the *body politic*. The fire of revolution spreads by contagion, from the spark of the vanguard to population at large, as Castro confirms in the long tradition of a theologico-political “pyro-discourse”: “We are sure that only a handful of men can launch the struggle [...]; that revolutionary movement, group, following the rules that guerrillas have to follow, we are absolutely sure that is the spark that would start the fire.”¹⁰ Curiously, the source of this blaze, of flaming revolutionary desire, entails a kind of cold detachment, to which Kautsky has drawn our attention, of a selfless group that cuts the vanguard off from the *body politic*, initiating the universalization of its singularity and the subjectivization of political substance. The detachment in question was crucial to Castro’s revolutionary practice, as well: “as far as we are concerned, we base ourselves on mathematical calculations, on numbers of men, on the volume of fire, and on a fire that burns hotter than that of arms: the fire in the hearts and the fire of the valour of an entire people!”¹¹ “Mathematical calculations” of “numbers” and “the volume of fire” entangle the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the revolution, where recourse to quantitative operations bespeaks a quality (“coolness”) opposed to the one revolutionaries foster (“ardency”). Having nothing in common with the utilitarian computation of self-interest, this self-disinterested calculus is immersed tactically and directly in the political categories of radical change.

The movement involved in the dynamic aspects of *stasis* is not limited to physical dislocation, assuming another position or leaping to another place. Another Aristotelian type of movement is a change of state, metamorphosis, for which fire is a sure catalyst. Be it physical or political, metamorphosis is

10 Fidel Castro, *Selected Speeches of Fidel Castro* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1979), p. 17.

11 Castro, *Selected Speeches*, p. 107.

invariably qualitative. But the cohesiveness that fire promises, melting together diverse elements, ought to be understood quantitatively. Forging a revolutionary subject out of the dispersed masses of the oppressed is arriving in political practice at the Kantian category of “allness or totality”, *Allheit oder Totalität*, which is “plurality regarded as a unity [*Vielheit als Einheit betrachtet*]” (CPR B111). The word to be highlighted here is “regarded”, “observed” or “considered”: *betrachtet*. The plurality of the oppressed has always been objectively or substantively united by their very oppression; a revolution prompts the masses to turn around and redirects their regards to that unity, interpreting it for and as what it is. Instead of actively gathering the scattered plurality of emancipatory projects, expressions of discontent, experiences of suffering, and so forth, it behooves the revolutionary vanguard to show how they are, and have always been, gathered together before any conscious decision on the part of those who bear the brunt of the status quo.

As for Kant’s category of quality, its three ingredients (reality, negation, limitation) lend themselves to politicization through their correlation with the different senses of *stasis*. The reality of a status, or a state, is its positing and the position it occupies; revolution is the negation, deposing the status; and limitation is the adumbrated combination of statist and revolutionary tendencies that give a political unit its quality. The binding together of reality and its negation in limitation is not a matter of balancing contradictory impulses; in effect, the stronger the asserted reality of the state, the more avid the revolutionary desire to overthrow it. Those regimes, like democracy with its rotation of people in power, where the positing of the status quo is constitutively lax and admits of a circumscribed “revolt”, are in a better position to control their own total revolutionary negation than absolutist, autocratic, or tyrannical rule.

Modality

Articulated in modal categories, revolution is the possibility of overturning, overthrowing, or otherwise deposing the status quo. Far from abstract, the possibility of a change in position, of deposing state authorities and questioning the authority of the state, is engrained into the current position of the *body politic*: stabilization into one state signifies a real chance of future destabiliza-

tion and transition to another. Within the framework of a crudely deterministic historical materialism, the “real chance” of destabilization is understood as the historical necessity of actualizing revolutionary possibilities. The trouble with this thesis is not that it introduces “a contradiction between the revolutionary activity of the Marxist parties and their teaching on historical necessity, particularly the inevitable collapse of capitalism”;¹² it is, rather, the havoc such an interpretation wreaks in the category of modality.

Kantian schematism qualifies necessity as “the existence of an object at all times [*das Dasein eines Gegenstandes zu aller Zeit*]”; while actuality “is existence at a determinate time [*das Dasein in einer bestimmten Zeit*]” (CPR A145). The necessity of an actual, empirical event (revolution) is a contradiction in terms, in that the same object cannot exist at all times and at a determinate time only. Actuality cannot be subsumed under necessity without giving up on what makes it actual. Needless to say, historical materialism excoriates Kant’s transcendentalism, but the categories it adopts as its own grow incoherent outside their philosophical home-turf. On the one hand, necessity entails a modicum of idealization over and above the threshold of what materialism can tolerate. Kantian schematism, on the other hand, is a thinking of categories in time, mitigating the transcendental condition of pure understanding and warranting an approximation of the critique of reason to a dialectical or historical materialism. We might say, then, that “at all times,” revolution remains possible and is even necessary in this possibility, in the sense that it shadows the actuality of the state’s position. But the actualization or nonactualization (the existence or nonexistence) of a revolution cannot be deduced from this possibility, just as one cannot infer from the actual failure of a revolution (say, the October Revolution of 1917) that revolution as such has become unviable at the level of the possible.

With his theory of “overdetermined contradiction,” Louis Althusser takes historical materialism to its logical, totally materialist, and utterly de-transcendental extreme. If there is a necessity to the revolutionary event, it is unknowable, because “the Capital-Labour contradiction is never simple, but always specified by the historically concrete forms and circumstances in which it

12 Doug Lorimer, *Fundamentals of Historical Materialism: The Marxist View of History and Politics* (Sydney: Resistance Books, 1992), p. 32.

is exercised.”¹³ “I should like to suggest,” Althusser goes on, “that an ‘*overdetermined contradiction*’ may either be *overdetermined* in the direction of a *historical inhibition*, a real ‘block’ for the contradiction (for example, Wilhelmine Germany), or in the direction of *revolutionary rupture* (Russia in 1917), but in neither condition *is it ever found in the ‘pure’ state*.”¹⁴ Overdetermination is a slippery slope to causal indeterminacy that leaves no foundations for deciding on the necessity or contingency, possibility or impossibility, of revolution in a given historical situation. It is as likely that a revolution would irrupt into existence as that it would be “inhibited”, “blocked” and left in the Kantian modality of non-existence, *Nichtsein*.

The infinitely complex context of Capital-Labour, or, indeed, of any other contradiction, might make sense to someone eager to analyse the “circumstances in which it is exercised”, though not to those engaged in the exercise itself. The simplicity and “purity” of the contradiction, for which Althusser reprimands Hegel, is a *sine qua non* of revolutionary activity, focused on disinhibiting and unblocking the event and pushing for “rupture”. Inherent in intense political practice is a purity that is not transcendental and that gives birth to its own conditions of possibility (performativity), as well as its own *necessity*, as Lenin taught in his writings and, above all, in his revolutionary speeches. This, however, is not a classic case of divergence between theory and practice, between the contradictions rendered more complex in understanding and simplified in political combat. Revolutions are actualized and come into existence when revolutionaries create a revolutionary situation with all its modal determinations of necessity, possibility, etc., out of an overdetermined context. Knowing and doing, understanding and action, reciprocally shape each other on this *ur*-stage of political categories.

Yet, time and again, the actuality of a “successful” revolution bitterly disappoints the revolutionary subject. The pretext for this disappointment is twofold: 1) an actualized revolution ceases to be revolutionary, no longer turning, returning, or overturning anything; and 2) it fails to live up to the impossible

13 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, translated by Ben Brewster (London & New York: Verso, 2005), p. 106.

14 Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 106.

ideal (e.g., absolute justice or equality) that has animated it. If the Trotskyite permanent revolution redresses the slowdown and stoppage in the turnings of the event, it meddles with the revolutionary possibility itself, endeavouring to revive it in actuality with implacable necessity (Kant's existence "at all times"). In its turn, revolutionary Terror – first unleashed by Robespierre in France; then under Stalin in the Soviet Union – responds to the disappointment of post-revolutionary reality not measuring up to the ideal it was supposed to implement. The purges that ensue exacerbate the negative-qualitative dimension of the revolution by destroying its actuality so as to liberate its pure possibility, the desired ideality of the revolutionary object determined, according to Kant's definition, exactly according to its idea. In the spirit of this unfettered possibility, Robespierre decried what he called "corruption", or "the excess of human corruption [*l'excès de la corruption humaine*]", his preferred turn of phrase for the materiality of existence,¹⁵ and Stalin denounced the "defects" (*nedostatki*) in party work, which he blamed on "Trotskyite wreckers" and which had to be "liquidated".¹⁶

16

Space/Time

An authentic revolution revolutionizes space and time, that is to say, the phenomenological experience of spatiality and temporality in a *body politic* that lets go of its previous status or standing. Neither the deposing of the old status nor the new position fit on the grid of prerevolutionary political spatiality, much in the same way as the legitimacy and legitimation of the emergent regime has no legitimate bases on the terms of the one it supplants. Initially, the outbreak of a revolution signals such a drastic change in the space of politics that none of the familiar orientational markers apply and one no longer intuits with any degree of certainty where left and right are, what or who is above and below, what is ahead and what behind. Another difference from revolt comes through here, in the discussion of revolutionary spatiality: however popular, revolt signifies a massive shift to one of the sides of the political spectrum that

15 Maximilian Robespierre, *Textes choisis*, Vol. III (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1958), p. 60.

16 Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism* (New York: Workers Library, 1937), pp. 35–6.

does not upend that spectrum as such. On the contrary, a revolution is such a vigorous turning around in a place that it makes rotate and alters its surroundings beyond recognition.

With respect to the categories of space and time, revolution reveals the trans-transcendental (i.e., historical, phenomenological) conditions of transcendental aesthetics. A meaningful context for action, the revolutionary “world” broadens or narrows along with the scope of the revolution: national, international, transnational, global... The methods and signposts for subjective orientation within this context are similarly at the mercy of the revolutionary turn. The French Republican Calendar and the shift from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in the Soviet Russia of 1918 are the vivid illustrations for how political temporality leverages the established ways of keeping track of time. The dawn of a new age, era or epoch is felt more acutely when the revolutionary subject breaks with the previous formalization of time as a symptom of a deeper rupture in the political time-consciousness. In an instant, a revolution overhauls the way we string instants together, modifying the temporal horizon for experience.

In the course of a revolution, time is extracted from continuous quantity, upon which Aristotle insisted in his *Categories*, in that pre- and postrevolutionary temporalities cannot be held or had together (*suneché*). The temporalizing factor here is the revolution itself, or, better yet, revolutionary intermittences in the otherwise continuous change of political positions. Analogous to the vanguard interventions that, having split off from the whole and switched to discrete quantity, reframe the totality they have splintered from, revolutionary temporalization authorizes continuity exclusively across its hiatus. It draws out the power of the instant (surreptitiously connected to *stasis*) that punctuates the line of temporality consisting in an infinity of such instants and dilutes the conceptual contrast between being at a standstill and rapid movement. That is why a revolutionary break with the past is actually a re-turn, harking back to the intermittences veiled by the illusion of continuity.

At the same time, to concede that revolutions follow a certain rhythm with a periodicity of their own is to retrieve the word’s original astronomical meaning, to do with the regular rotations of celestial bodies. A revolutionary rhythm hinges on the buildup of pressure and irruption of contradictions that

cut across a *body politic*. Obviating the need to refer to “a new beginning”, the intermittences of political temporality are embedded in a circle, where what makes its comeback is not the normalcy associated with the status quo, but crisis, exception, revolution. In fact, what we are dealing with are two circles, one of them giving the impression of a pure cut or a break: a self-reproducing repetition of the dominant position that, like everything finite in Plato’s philosophy, is able to maintain itself only by deviating from and then reverting to its static stance; and a revolutionary circle woven of ruptures and radical shifts in position, of political time from the perspective of crises peppered with periods of apparent stability, the perspective of the interrupting recurrence, rather than of that which is interrupted. The dream of a permanent revolution, for its part, rebels against time in time, aspires to make the hiatus continuous, and proposes to turn the revolution into a novel status.