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Abstract

This paper offers a further exploration of 'flat ontology', an account of the world that takes the immanence of localized, material process to be fundamentally different from and ontologically *prior* to transcendent, structured, and formal treatments of space. Our previous work in this area aimed at developing the concept of the site – via *site ontology* – as an 'event-space' that describes the differential contours and pressures of aggregating and dispersing bodies. This paper's contribution lies in considering how politics and political potentials are specified by such event-spaces. In geography and other fields, politics has nearly always been thought to proceed *from* and to exist *for* subjects, regardless of how they get theorized. Here we explore how the site might initiate politics that neither presuppose nor undergird individual subject positionalities or mass identitarian categories. We argue that subjectivity – widely understood to be *the* motive force in organizing politics – is often 'suspended' where bodies encounter or get enlisted in the unanticipated connections and relations that site ontology describes. Thus, our account understands the site as *autonomous* with respect to the subject in two crucial ways. The site is: (1) *organizationally autonomous*: its rules emerge from its specific, localized relations and this material immanence makes the site the legislator of its own assembly; and (2) *politically autonomous*: that is, not conditioned by the political schemata of subjectivity per se, even though sites diversely and differently enlist and reshuffle bodies that often attend to, direct, participate in, and inhabit subjective politics.

Keywords

materialism, politics, site ontology, subjects

I Introduction

Recent challenges to contemporary spatial theory have emerged in part through a growing interest in flat ontology, a theoretical position that contests the privileged, transcendent abstraction of structural, hierarchical, and formal treatments of 'being' in explanations of social and spatial life

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(DeLanda, 2002, 2006; Deleuze, 1994; Escobar, 2008; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Latour, 1993; Marston et al., 2005; Schatzki, 2002; Simondon, 1989; Spinoza, 2000). Thinkers working within the purview of flat ontology stress the situated, immanent nature of being (or ‘becoming’) – often characterized by generative, material processes of self-organization and self-differentiation – against the supposed timelessness and ubiquity of idealistic essentialism (Deleuze, 1994). Along these lines, our work has suggested that site ontology not only offers spatialities stripped of transcendence – whether formulated through a vertical scalar imaginary or a horizontal vision of unfettered flows – but also excites and amplifies the potentialities open to lateral politics. For example, we offered that the site actualizes and grounds an otherwise vertical and displaceable politics of globalization, explicitly challenging numerous exculpatory moves by capitalists seeking to discharge responsibility for their decisions onto someone else and to somewhere other (Marston et al., 2007; see also Gibson-Graham, 2002). And we held that ‘flowsterism’, a second transcendent spatiality, too often overlooks the congealments, blockages, and boundary effects that constitute real limits to Freidman-esque (2005) optimism over globalization’s transformative potential (Marston et al., 2005). These conclusions, however, offer only a snapshot of the political implications of our critique of scales and flows (also networks; see Jones et al., 2011); they neither constitute an analysis of the politics that site ontology introduces nor determine whether this might be considered a *political* ontology.¹

In this paper we lay out the contours of where such an analysis should begin. As we argue in the second section, by convention it would have to first reconsider the status of the subject who acts politically. That ambit, in geography as elsewhere, highlights two central issues: (1) how, within essentialist theories of ‘The Subject’, we should coordinate the political potentials of gender, class, race, sexuality, and other axes of identity; and (2) how, within anti-essentialist

theories that dissolve the foundational subject, we might marshal anything resembling a grounded, collective politics. Both of these questions, we emphasize, rely upon theories of subject formation that pre-emptively seize upon and condition ‘the political’; consequently, formulating and understanding political action, relation, and so on are subjected to constraint by a prior decision about the subject who will occupy a given political orientation. Politics, in other words, appear unthinkable without first having established the purview of a subject who is either the agent or the ground of the political act.

But what if we were to work against convention and theorize politics in the absence of a subject altogether? What if we were to pose problems of social and political life from an anti-liberalist position, such that our perspectives on ‘human life and political reality [do] not put the human being or its conscious political activity at the centre of that reality’ (Due, 2007: 19)? What would politics look like if theorized in ways that does not presuppose class or gender positionalities, or categories such as citizen, voter, resistance fighter, corporate fatcat, dis-identified anarchist, left-wing academic, and the rest? What happens when we consider the political event, not as a legal, moral, or self-consciously reflexive concept grounded in the experience of the subject, but as something immanent to the inevitable variability of difference that is the site?

In the third section of this paper we attempt to address these questions. We argue on behalf of a politics of the site that is materially intertwined with – but often unrecognized within – the politics of subjects. This view stands in contrast to more conventional theorizations that grant political subjectivities a metaphysical priority and fixity that is transcendental to the entanglements of bodies in material situations. How might we proceed to examine a site’s extra-subjective and nonsubjective politics? Are we capable of thinking a site’s arrangement outside of the viewpoint of the subject and the

theoretical, methodological and disciplinary perspectives it engenders?

We propose in the fourth section that this inquiry can best be answered through consideration of certain material (counter-)movements that not only constitute the event-space of the site, but simultaneously 'suspend' the subject. While not foreclosing the constitutional and practical importance of circulating subjectivities, it suggests that, however empirically and epistemologically privileged the position of the subject may be, it is ontologically insufficient for discerning a site's multiple-yet-specific politicalities. Taking account of the suspended subject, critically and methodologically, does not negate the work of individuals or their subjectivities; rather, in acknowledging them, this account *looks beyond* so as to ask *what else* is happening in a site. It is in the context of just such a *something else*, and the attendant politicalities to which it gives rise, that we assert a certain autonomy of the site from the subject.

We explore this broadened political horizon by considering a political action connected with the recovered factory movement in Argentina. The example serves as an illustration that, while they often inhabit the excesses and lacunae created by logics of subjectivity (Butler, 1990: 182–183; Dewsbury, 2000), site-based politics are fundamentally expressed through the compositions and variations of a site's dense materialities: in the affective bodily arrangements of its human and non-human participants; in the charismatic chaos of its unexpected eruptions and routine redundancies; in the complex of arrivals and departures that both connect sites to one another and continually reshape their boundaries; and in the recruiting of human bodies into political moments unanticipatable from the perspective of their subjectivities alone. Though we will elaborate a political ontology of the site irreducible to the prescriptions of subjectivity, we deliberately stop short of contending that subjects never engage with sites: *however theorized, all subjects stand in*

a relationship of immanence to both sites and to the political potentials (politicalities) they embed.

II Politics and subjects

Of poststructuralism's many exposés, none has had more force than its denunciation of the essentialist subject. Indeed, it is fair to say that poststructuralism made the subject – or better, subjectification – the *object of* politics, trading an Enlightenment category (the 'sovereign subject') that was still being defended after two world wars for an 'always already' *political* subject and a corresponding *subjective* politics (Althusser, 1971: 175–176). By the close of the 20th century, cultural-materialist critics such as Harvey (1996) had long since reworked the Althusserian (1969) tendencies of structuralism to expose the flaccidity of Enlightenment politics. The celebration of the subject as the source of identity and the reservoir of individualism, critics famously contended, often masked and naturalized more fundamental and widespread politics of social difference of capitalist exploitation. Still, another established body of thinkers questioned the possibility of naming *any* politics that is not first predicated on a subject (Habermas, 1984). Many – including Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Foucault (2005) and Butler (1990) – responded that abstract subject-constructs more often tended to limit politicalities than enrich political life, broaden inclusion, or diversify participation. As Butler cautioned:

The foundationalist reasoning of identity politics tends to assume that an identity must first be in place in order for political interests to be elaborated and, subsequently, political action to be taken. My argument is that there need not be a 'doer behind the deed', but that *the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed.* (Butler, 1990: 181, our emphasis; see also Scott, 1991)

But even here, Spivak, in her deconstruction of doings-based 'subject-effects', managed to find hidden assumptions concerning the structured/

ing relations between subjects and politics: 'The much-publicized critique of the sovereign subject', she would observe, 'actually inaugurates the Subject' (Spivak, 1988: 272).

Today, these frictions continue to ripple through social theory's most strained fault lines. On one side, politics are viewed as the underlying force that feeds the construction of subjectivity, making the subject the residual outcome of distributed political acts. On the other, politics are thought to flow from one or another germinal subject, who remains the progenitor, agent, or center of political events and their relations.² As Butler and Spivak both reveal, these struggles over anteriority and posteriority tend to leave the subjectivity-politicality relationship spinning in chicken-and-egg circularities. And yet, while subjects and politics dance this dance, social theorists continue to worry the dividing line between subjects and politics into an impassable metaphysical rift. For us, however, this relation looks more like a suture than a gap. No matter their supposed distance from one another, no matter whether subjectivity is anterior or posterior to politics: in the final tally, each is always fundamentally (and often exclusively) tied to the other. There are no politics without subjects, no subjects without politics. Our concern here will be with what we think is a very different politics – that of the site – which can only be addressed after first disentangling the political from its perpetual binding to the subject. Accordingly, we begin by tracing some of the limitations to thinking *only* a subjectively grounded politics.

The political processes that subjectivity initiates tend to be characterized by an injunctive procedure: subjectivity, as a determinate abstraction, prescribes the politics that are specific to it. From such a starting point, subjectivity becomes transcendental to politics and anterior to political relations. The force of this relationship is evident, for example, in the concept of citizenship, which *names* the politics over which it reigns. Of course, it was

poststructuralist identity theory's primary contribution to challenge such positionalities on the grounds that they are thoroughly constructed and fundamentally representational (e.g. Kobayashi and Peake, 1994; Natter and Jones, 1997). While we generally agree, we recognize that in destabilizing identities we can also risk overlooking the fact that individuals often have identities foisted on them in ways that entrain all sorts of political effects. It is precisely this reality that plays out, for example, in the 'imposition' of identification papers, forced migration, meandering political borders, sudden changes in work, as well as the precariousness of its availability, conditions, sociospatial divisions, and so on. No less significant is the general tendency of people to take up the mantle of subjectivity, believe in it (or at least perform it), and engage the world as though the subject constituted a firm ground from which to launch political decisions: voting, serving your country, licensing your pets, reporting unattended baggage (Anderson, 2005, 2006; Saldanha, 2007). Very little is 'surprising' in the politics that arise from these relations: they encompass processes, practices and *outcomes* (rather than *events*) that – depending upon the theory – follow sometimes 'intuitive', sometimes analytic logics, but always move outward from the subject-agent to its effects.

However, for Althusser (1971) or Badiou (2001, 2005), to invoke a specific subjectivity – by way of, for example, the collection of hailings, codes, or decisions that simultaneously individualize and collectivize the 'state subject' – is to introduce and isolate a set of political contexts and practical directives. Here, subjects do not pre-exist their interpellations, new fidelities, and various other engagements, but rather erupt from and become oriented by a complicated field of politicized relations. This pervasive, continuous process concerns not only the ideological investments of the typologies of personhood, but also the very creation of the materiality of personhood from immaterialities.

Bodies find themselves confronted with subjectivities from all sides at all times, feel their effects and become subject to their codings. Here, subjectivization can only be an 'always already' political process of continuous enlistment and complicity. Accordingly, Foucault (1977) will envision the very event of subjectivization as a process of learning and negotiating signs and practices. Being a subject comes to mean that one gets entangled with catalogues of words, things and acts, becoming a master of their domains and an index of their various permutations. For Agamben, turning to the phenomenon of the camp reveals the direst expression of this process:

Instead of deducing the definition of the camp from the events that took place there, we will ask: What is a camp, what is its juridico-political structure, that such events could take place there? This will lead us to regard the camp . . . as the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living. (Agamben, 1998: 166)

That matrix not only engenders political subjectivity that is neither *of* nor *for* the institution, but rather demarcates its outside, its exception. Reduced to the form of 'bare life', the nonsubject sits simultaneously inside and outside the structure that legitimates the very existence of the camp.

Yet, as Butler (1990, 1993) has suggested, the 'reality' of such negotiations is even messier than we have described it, for subjectivity is a clunky, anexact³ enactment. Its performance invariably comes off looking a bit wrong, like a bad reproduction or an imperfect realization of an ideal subject type. If this *abnormality* is indeed the normal state of affairs for subjecthood, then we should feel prompted, from an ontological perspective, to ask: what exactly is *it* that *does* materialize when we fail to faithfully manifest our subject-imaginaries? This 'something-else' that we discover in the difference between an ideal and its materialized actuality has been likened by Deleuze (1990b) – in

contrast to the 'subject-effect' – to an 'a-subjective' effect. For him, a-subjective effects proliferate in the world, making our tendency to perform subjecthood *in manifold 'wrong' ways* immanently normal from the perspective of our materiality. More than a challenge to the tyranny of similitude, we find in this perspective a willingness to attend to the uncertain noise that erupts with difference and singularity: it is an obscure, uncompromising remainder that imposes itself when all the orders and similarities have been enumerated, logged, and filed away (Anderson, 2007; Harrison, 2002; Paterson, 2004; Wylie, 2005). This noisy remainder, we suggest, is the first sign of a rupture in the threads that tightly bind politics to subjects. For, when the excesses erupting from botched performativity begin to produce material effects in the world, we become skeptical that politics is merely the domain of subjectivity, and that a subject must function as the agent-author of political action. Thus, we do not reject the subject or its important political work, but ask only *what else* is at work that the scope of our subject-imaginary is unable to recognize. Does this or that instance of materiality, in its actualization, point the way toward conceptualizing, mediating and understanding politics free of the gravity of the subject altogether?

Currently, the most exciting efforts to answer these questions are appearing within explorations of the non-human in humanities- and social science-based studies of animality (Wolfe, 2003, 2010), microbes (Helmreich, 2009; Hird, 2009), biological and molecular life (Braun, 2007; Rose, 2001), and objects (Bryant, forthcoming). These areas share a desire to extend the political to forms of the non-human in ways that might enable them to distend the rupture between politics and subjectivity. Turning to the world of the very small, for example, Rose declares that selfhood 'has become intrinsically somatic', and proceeds to unseat the subject by resituating constitutive political power within the body's cellular composition (Rose, 2001: 18). Such political projects, however,

share the danger that haunted Feuerbach's Hegelian critique of religion: the temptation to anthropomorphize. The work of one of Deleuze's favorite thinkers, the animal ethologist von Uexküll (2010), provides a striking example. In his effort to depict the diverse affective and perceptive *Umwelts* (lifeworlds) of animals and insects, Uexküll's representational Kantianism ultimately overpowers his treatment of the sensory (and pseudo-cognitive) experiences of non-humans. As a consequence, he projects a form of subject-thinking – the *for-me* that orients the world of the Kantian political subject (Kant, 1996; Woodward, 2010) – onto the *Umwelts* of birds, bees, and paramecia. Reflecting upon the current literature seeking political possibilities in the non-human – and citing in particular its attention to life as processes, fragments, and becomings – Braun and Whatmore observe that many such inquiries ultimately fail to think politics outside of the contexts of the human. They note:

Even approaches that emphasize preindividual or transindividual fields that precede the individual tend to imagine these in anthropocentric terms. The effect has been to cast anything non-human out of the political fold or to relegate it to the status of resources or tools, entering political theory only to the extent that it has *instrumental* value but not in terms of its *constitutive* powers. (Braun and Whatmore, 2010: xv)

Mindful of Braun and Whatmore's complaint, we ask in what ways we might discern and speak about politics that, while not necessarily eluding the human, move beyond the usual anthropocentric framings (see also Harrison, 2002, 2007; Rose, 2010). After all, events that *will come to be* understood as having been decisively political frequently unfold without notice or confusedly, to all appearances an unstable, disconnected series of aggregating aberrations whose collective merits will only be acknowledged in retrospect. Not only does it remain unclear what is happening while such events

emerge, but, as they do, we often find ourselves looking in the wrong direction, entirely distracted by our presuppositions-turned-expectations concerning the processes and outcomes of politics. This transcendental distraction, that mode of expectation that draws the focus away from emerging struggles within situated materialities, is the work of little idealisms that creep into thought to fore-structure the workings of the political.

There are several contemporary efforts to describe such a political moment, this unnameable event, this unexpected *something-else*, this large and strange divergence (Badiou, 2001, 2005; Deleuze, 1990b; Shukaitis and Graeber, 2007; Sitrin, 2006). Against the reflex to anthropomorphize political materiality, we begin here by developing an ontology – 'site ontology' – for a politics not tethered to the agency of subjects, one that can account for the fact that even direct participants leave scratching their heads and fumbling to make sense of this messy reality. Contrary to subject-centered approaches that proceed by naming the politics proper to them, the situated political orientations that we pursue open up unpredictably amid complex relations that bear differently and obliquely upon one another. This is not to say that subjects are not at work on the ground, amid and even a part of such processes; it is simply that we can no more suppose them to be the sole agents of those political transformations than we can assert that they represent the totality of what exists in the situation. To the contrary, this something else brought about in the event is potentially 'autonomous' with respect to the situation's participating subject-agents. Such excesses, as we explain below, characterize the extra- or a-subjective clusters of orientations – the 'noise' – that make up the site. Ontologically 'full', self-organizing, and 'subject-independent' sites are where *something* occurs: a strange route of disjunctive trajectories and wardrobe changes, it makes its own potentiality a tool of material politics.

III Situated politics, autonomous spaces

As we have explained elsewhere, a site exists by virtue of its specific hangings together, its variations and its congealments (Jones et al., 2007; Marston et al., 2005; Woodward et al., 2010; see also Schatzki, 2002). Yet, while these processes signal a tendency toward convergence on the part of loosely defined bodies, these need neither 'touch' nor abut one another in any extensive sense. Here the site distinguishes itself from much of the family of spatio-identitarian concepts (Jones et al., 2011). The site is not a fixed space in the sense of a setting, context, or place *for* action, nor is the term deployed to invoke an older binary of 'within' and 'beyond' (or 'intrinsic to' versus 'relative to') spaces, as in 'site and situation'. Such spatialities are the disciplinary and fetishized sister concepts to subject-thinking: they manifest a number of lingering Cartesian extensive spaces that grid materiality or reflect Kantian spatial structures arranged by the control center of transcendental thought (Woodward, 2010).

Decades of theorizing in spatial ontology have, however, found these spatialities much easier to critique than to excise. Unlike such pre-emptive determinations, situated bodies neither 'enter into' nor characterize a site as a prefabricated, pre-existent 'thing'. The site and the stuff of its composition are expressed in movements of force that repeat (as hardenings and blockages) and vary (through rupture and collapse) as they mark the situatedness of its composition and the 'proximity' of its components. In short, sites are:

immanent (self-organizing) event-spaces dynamically composed of bodies, doings and sayings. Sites are differentiated and differentiating, unfolding *singularities* that are not only dynamic, but also 'hang together' through the congealments and blockages of force relations. The 'actuality' of any site is always poised for compositional variation – subject to reorganizations and disorganizations – as its

inexhaustible 'virtuality' or potential continually rearticulates itself. (Jones et al., 2007: 265; emphasis added)

The *work* of the site – those forces that enable the coming together of these bodies – engenders 'grounded' situations that generate a localized relation through resonant, unfolding doings and sayings. This processual bricolage is a matter of dynamic, continuous change, the consistency of which appears as a relative coherence – a pattern – that arises amid its varying conditions. Sites tend to be unexceptional congealments of routines or repetitions that are neither conservative nor radical or progressive; nor are they directed by desires for maintenance or transformation, but instead tend variously toward both. Their connections and borders are anexact and their components are non-necessary; and it is this contingency that gives rise to the potential for something new or unexpected to erupt. There is, however, nothing inherently special about such transformative moments, as the tendencies to cohere and diverge spring, literally, from the self-same source.

Elsewhere we describe a Deleuze who 'affirms an immanent ontology that requires ... no transcendental organizing principle or category beyond the swarms of material articulation' (Woodward et al., 2010: 273). The problem – one recognized by Schatzki (2002) among others – is that, despite Deleuze's claims to the contrary, this immanent potentiality that materiality articulates – often characterized as 'virtual', after Bergson – at times comes dangerously close to being interpreted as a category distinct from the actual. Against such treatments, we read the virtual and the actual as *dyadic*, where the former relates to the latter much like a mode of thinking that is proper to matter. We will call this organizational relation *matter-processing*. First, we know that thinking is a kind (or, many kinds) of process. Materialist accounts of thought that reject the mind-body distinction often replace it with a continuum in which thought is immersed

and continuously readjusts itself to its complex, situated orientations (while, at the same time, obviously being subject to its own material limits; on the notion of cognitive ‘plasticity’, see Churchland, 1979, 1989; Malabou, 2008).⁴ Such readjustments are localized solutions to rising material ‘problems’ unique to their situation. Second, just as thinking is a kind of process, so too we can describe matter’s selection and actualization of potentialities as *processing*. Matter’s being immersed within changing articulations of its own materiality, its being in motion and exerting and reacting to material forces – the affectivity not of people, but of *matter itself* – is an *immanent and autonomous* (that is, ‘self-legislating’) condition through which situated solutions get formulated for localized problems. Matter-processing is matter differentiating itself from itself and, insofar as these differentiations involve relations of stabilization before and/or after such changes, they constitute sites. This is most clear to us where matter reaches tipping points, bifurcates and exhibits dramatic changes, but it also regularly makes minor adjustments, and in both ways, matter *moves* by feeling its way around its own situation as this or that specific aggregate: a collapsing building, a braiding river and rolling dice, to be sure, but also the pile of apples whose forces and affects are relatively stably distributed.

Let us be clear, by placing ‘processing’ in proximity to ‘thought’, we are not attaching anthropomorphic or anthropocentric senses of self-reflexivity to matter. Instead, matter-processing means that the localized ‘problems’ that materiality in motion constantly creates for itself ask for solutions that are worked out as situated specificities. In this light, processing becomes a negotiation of the complex, emerging, and changing relations of an aggregating body. *Aggregating*, in the sense of bodies drawing into motion together described by Spinoza (2000); *negotiating*, as in the moving among any number of other forces and bodies such that each is potentially drawn into both affective and affected relations. The site is characterized by

aggregation and negotiation because matter seldom simply dissolves or disperses: it maintains itself in ways that are beyond and often prior to any given subject who attempts to reorganize it. Indeed, even such a subject is part of its organization, but rather than acting as author, it dissolves (or is *in-volved*) as participant (Deleuze, 1992; Rose, 2002; Wylie, 2006). When a site begins aggregating and negotiating, when it moves itself relative to itself – in short, when it begins *doing* something – this is matter-processing. These are the moments in which we must struggle to discern, if we can, instances of self-organization and auto-affectation that carry on regardless of the place or ‘role’ of the subject: the instances of emergence in which strange event-spaces become *autonomous* – from the subject – sites.⁵

Having attributed to matter a mode of processing that bears directly on the actualization of differences and variations in materiality, it might be objected that we have struck down one thought-materiality relation – the subject-thinkers from the second section, who remain forever incapable of realizing their ideal subjectivities – only to replace it with another obscure ‘doer’ – matter-processing. What remains to be gained from differentiating subject-thinking from matter-processing if one mode is effectively barred and supplanted by another that, on the face of it, seems an even less likely candidate? What difference can the notion of ‘processing’ make in this seemingly inelegant subject-matter distinction? The answer is found in the relative constraint imposed by subject-thinking’s heavily reflexive immersion in representationalism – that is, its translation of materiality into abstracted blocks of what can be recorded and transported into other contexts and ‘similar’ situations – and because of this, the relatively narrow band of experience that it disproportionately overvalues with regard to nominating *what counts* – *fundamentally* – in materiality through the naming of things (Harman, 2002, 2005). Here we have in mind

more classic examples such as geography's tendency to privilege visual experience in research (Jones, 1995), as well as the *analytic* celebration of *apparent* likeness and similitude (often gauged by an amplified and anthropocentric ocularism) that are easily translated into conceptual, testable data to be utilized as a stable ground for multiplying experiments and analyzing results. That is, thought proceeding according to the logic of the subject-agent is problematically predicated upon assumptions that the world presents itself relatively transparently to perceptual knowledge, or unmediated 'observation' (Churchland, 1979: 1–6). Too often, these are the dull shears with which subject-thinking reductively prunes a productively wild and unwieldy materiality.

Matter-processing counters transcendent reductions with immanent incorporation. Bearing no relation to the centralized power of teleological agency, it is predisposed neither toward production or privileging of representation nor toward the hailing and projection of categorical objects and subjects. It is not – as it was for Hegel – subject to the lofty ascent of human thought (logic) over nature (Grant, 2008; Hegel, 1997), but rather only immersed in maneuvers of material adjustment, be those the reflexive retraction of a hand from a hot stove, the opening and closing of flower petals, the aggressive fear response of a dog, the widening of a pothole. Matter-processing does not so much have an idea of itself as it *makes an impression upon itself* through continuous adjustments and auto-affective reorientations to, of, and in its own materiality. As something immanent and self-organizing, matter expresses itself *through* itself, it uses itself as the medium and material for differentiating itself from itself (Deleuze, 1990a; Simondon, 1989; Spinoza, 2000). This singularizing process of differentiation, with its movements of aggregation and negotiation, gives the site its *productive autonomy*, which remains at work regardless of whatever subjects may happen to pass through it, attend to it or

completely ignore it: its emergent singularity is far greater than the unity granted by the understanding of a subject-thinker (Kant, 1996; Woodward, 2010). For these reasons, the material processing of the site 'matters' as much to the partial bodies and bits of assemblage as it does to relatively closed and stable bodies – humans, microorganisms, pots and pans, what have you – all of which are made *contextually proximal* by virtue of their being drawn up in a relation of impermanent consistency, working together with or without the help of a subject.

Here we arrive at two reorientations initiated by the site that have considerable implications for formulating the politics of the subject: (1) matter-processing suggests continuous, contingent, and often curious singularities – so described because the forces of selection and aggregation are immanent to the 'parts' that make it up and thus are not transparent to logics founded in transcendent categorization or subjection; and, following from this, (2) the moving, forceful orientations that emerge within a site reshuffle these parts as members of *its* aggregation, rather than as collections of distinct subjects, objects, discontinuous elements, or dimensions. Within this situation, the entrenched positions of subject mastery are washed under by material processes, reincorporated in the infinite tendencies and orientations toward and against specific aggregations. While these are in continuous negotiation relative to each other, still more dissonances and resonances arise in the borderlands of their relations, constantly reasserting the possibility of non-linear interruptions, collapses and reconfigurations.⁶

IV Suspending the subject

But how might we grasp matter-processing, or a site's moments of aggregation and negotiation? And, by the same token, is it possible to gain a sense of a political transformation without

subjecting it to naming in advance? In short, how might we discern the nonsubjective and unnamable, yet completely material, processes of the site? One way surely is to refuse the checklist of identity categories that so often dictates methodology in the study of politics. Such a roll call approach – e.g. ‘Swindon-born, labour-leaning, straight middle-aged white male speaks . . . thus’ (Woodward et al., 2010: 275) – only forces material excesses into the predefined limits of subjectivity. Substantial attention has been devoted recently to delinking politics from the subject. We find, however, that this is often predicated on the terms of subjects and subjection.

Consider, for example, Bosteels’s recent discussion of Alberto Moreiras’s notion of ‘infrapolitics’, which ‘fundamentally seeks to delink the thinking of the political from all affiliations with the metaphysical, politico-theological, or more properly onto-politico-theological tradition of the subject as militant, partisan, even messianic figure’ (Bosteels, 2011: 110). In the place of this, Moreiras sees the possibility of a ‘nonsubject’ that struggles against the political commitments of the subject, as Bosteels explains:

The question of the nonsubject is not a search for an alternative – marginal, minoritarian or counterhegemonic – subject but an attempt to unravel the very logic of all subject-based politics from the point of view of the enigmatic remainder that it necessarily produces and excludes at the same time. (Bosteels, 2011: 113)

Invoking Badiou’s notion of the ‘event of truth’ and the idea of subjectivizing political fidelity that attaches to it, Moreiras asks: ‘How does an event of truth relate to that which it leaves behind? If the political is based on the event, what happens with what is not tied to the event, with the neutral, with the nonsubject?’ (Moreiras, quoted in Bosteels, 2011: 113). For Moreiras, the nonsubject is that which resists Badiouian ‘conviction, certainty, love’ and

‘struggles in fidelity against fidelity’, it is ‘that which the subject must constantly subtract in a kind of self-foundation’ (Moreiras, quoted in Bosteels, 2011: 113). The impulse to locate a politicality for the nonsubject is attractive, but we note that, in doing so, infrapolitics still seeks to found its expanded politics at the point of struggle between a subject and its remainder. The subject and its politics still hold the field, as Bosteels notes, merely constituting an ‘excluded other that is inherent in the subject’s self-identity’ (Moreiras, quoted in Bosteels, 2011: 113). The nonsubject remains locked within the individual and negatively contextualized against and conditioned by an otherwise all-encompassing subjectivization.

We find similar difficulties even in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, who, in endeavoring to describe presubjective fields, often do so in terms that keep the subject intact and, as it were, in the driver’s seat. In teaching us, for example, ‘How to *make yourself* a body without organs’ they remind us that ‘by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating them, *one invents* a specific, unforeseen, autonomous becoming’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 106, our italics). Small wonder that they are so often treated to narrow, emancipatory readings when their material is pitched in such a way that it moves from the subject to the nonsubjective by way of the focused actions of the subject-agent.

Better, we believe, to follow a mode of analysis that works from the ‘suspension’ of subjectivity. Suspension has multiple meanings in both everyday use and disciplines like music, chemistry and topology, so we need to be clear: *suspending in this context means the production of a ‘conditional withholding’*, an interruption of what ‘subjects’ a situation to overcoding by certain ‘somethings else’ expressed in a site’s material processes.⁷ Subject suspension allows us glimpses of the effects of a site’s drawing-together, the immanent enlistment of whatever bodies produce singularities. Such suspensions,

when they strike us, delay the givenness of subjectivity as a frame of reference for a site, so that we might better inquire into its entangled happenings. In the process of enlisting bodies, the site operates as a suspensive force; 'external' to subjects – as opposed to bodies – the politics of the site tend to arise at the situated interstices of individuals, things, events, and so on. Whereas Moreiras's nonsubject only wins out against subjectivization through a lingering recalcitrance within the individual, in site ontology suspension comes from the outside, at the point of the individual's incorporation into an aggregate, the site.

This is no small feat: subjectivities are constantly at work *in* and *upon* sites, extending themselves, offering themselves up as the authors of any number of events, recommending the way forward, canvassing for converts and new members. Subjectivity is the solipsistic cartographer, the drunken salesman, the squeaky wheel distracting us from other potential relations, or even from the possible impossibility of relation altogether. Overcoding the site is thus a peculiar capacity by which subjectivity reflects the world back upon itself; and it is precisely this procedure that, when it is somehow forced into or held in abeyance, enables us to recognize the political potential that inheres in varying, situated formations. We are *not* suggesting that subjectivity can be vanquished from the scene, nor are we replaying a Kantian game that invites thought to reflect back on itself. The effects of subjectivity continue to get expressed in countless ways in a site's composition, but these do not exhaust the forces of the material world. It is the sudden coming-together of these forces in the emergence of the site that suspends the subject. This same process constitutes the political operation of the site.

The 'somethings else' that lay outside of subjectivity, even the somethings else that are unnameable and often at the edge of an encounter with every botched performance, when not

folded into typologies or dismissed as an error term, hold the potential for provoking their own numerous alternative political orientations. If the site is the emergent product of its own immanent self-organization – that is, if its emergence is *autonomous* with respect to the subject – then the one thing we really *cannot* expect is that its components will be consistently the same or even that they will all be discernible or identifiable. Conditions such as 'namability' depend precisely on forms of being that becoming proscribes. The transformations that compose a site – on the other hand – depend upon the movings in-and-out of a multiplicity of things characterized by a general tendency to change and differentiate. These transformations become interesting and invite reconsideration of the political when they shuffle in deviating relations and possibilities. But, without cultivating subject-suspended orientations, we risk blurring recognition and authorship by overlooking the forces of unfolding matter and taking their strange articulations as merely the result of the hard work of human hands and dead materiality. Both slippages can cause us to miss how the site is composed, as aggregations of matter-processing rather than the authorship of subject-thinking. Where the comings-together and negotiations of autonomous materialities resolve themselves into unexpected thoughts, orientations, and possibilities, we *glimpse* the political force of the site.

To highlight these distinctions – and to illustrate how they might live like shadows in the borderlands of the subject – we now briefly consider the celebrated interview from *Horizontalism* (Sitrin, 2006) between Marina Sitrin and Candido González, a printer in Chilavert, a recovered factory in Argentina.⁸ With respect to the present discussion, it highlights both the political potential behind subject-suspended encounters with the site and the vicarious, confusing routes by which these sometimes unfold. In particular we call attention to González's palpable effort to negotiate and cognize the situation *as it unfolded*

and the clear sense of surprise and confusion that repeatedly reintroduces itself, despite his obvious awareness of and participation in practices of direct action and collective solidarity. After his account of the assault by police on the occupied factory, we close with a discussion of how the site offers up its own counter-intelligence.

The decision to take the factory was a very difficult step for us to take. Most of us here in the print shop have been working together for forty years. We've always more or less shared in union struggles, like the ones over wage issues, and generally we've won. We always ended up doing pretty well. So taking over the business, the factory, was really powerful. It was a huge decision that included all the *compañeros*. At first, we didn't know what to do, but when we realized that they were going to come and take the machines, well, then we had to make a decision. The time for thinking had ended and we took over the workplace. That step was reflexive, instinctive. You know that if they take the machines from you, you'll end up on the street. It's a reflex – you don't think about cooperatives, you don't think about anything. Defending your source of work is reflexive.

In Chilavert, you could pick up your foot, and someone from a movement would come out from under it. They were everywhere. It is amazing, the support we got from everyone. People that didn't even know us were there, on the front lines, being clubbed. Everyone fought to be on the front line. It's really emotional [eyes tearing]. Today, it's a little calmer. Now we talk about the day-to-day running of the print shop. But when you struggle for something ... it's your obligation to fight for what you want, and that moves you. People you don't even know – who you've never seen before in your life – are fighting for you. [Starts to cry].

No look, I can't explain it to you ... When they came to evict us for real, they came with eight assault vehicles, eight patrol cars, everything in eights because they knew there were eight of us. They brought two ambulances and police with dogs. The repression was intense for just eight workers. They started with the assault vehicles, the ambulances, everything with the determination that they

were going to remove us. We had already predicted all of this, and had advised the Pompeya neighborhood assembly, which is around the corner, who mobilized, and the IMPA [a recuperated metal shop] assembly, who defended the factory by standing in front of it, linking arms to make a chain ... I never expected so many people. There were an impressive number of people [approximately 300; see Lavaca Collective, 2007: 127]. There were members of the Parque Centenario and Parque Avellaneda neighborhood assemblies, everyone from *assembleistas*, and people from other recuperated factories.

We were still inside the factory, following the negotiations going on outside. In the meantime, a man from one neighborhood assembly parked his truck out front, and people from IMPA brought another one, so the door was blocked and the police couldn't push it in. Barricades were made out of wood and tires, and women were putting paper into the tires, threatening to light them. I was inside and the cops were outside making threats. There was some pressure on the police because the media was there, airing it live. There was also the paper that was put under the barricades, like in the tires. There were so many people out front to defend us, not just from assemblies and recuperated factories, but also neighbors who had never been involved before – people who changed after the nineteenth and twentieth. A group came out of the retirement home, which is across the street from the factory, and they made their way up to the front line. Eventually the commander decided to back off. (González, 2006: 69–70)

A subject-centered treatment of this account might stratify it – as González sometimes attempts to do – within an ordered system of social relations, beginning perhaps with the existence of private property and then moving to specific forms of exploitation in capitalist social relations that delimit the political field in terms of class politics. It might go on, further, to ask what other social relations were present in the factory (e.g. age, gender), and how those intersecting axes of difference came together to mount a defense. For example, it might ask about the division of labor on the factory floor,

and the extent to which those conditions influenced worker solidarity and, hence, the decision to take over the factory. It might inquire as to other factors influencing solidarity, including the extent to which workers socialized outside of the workplace, shared social reproductive activities (e.g. childcare), or lived in the same neighborhood. Conventionally, all of these subject-centered (class, gender, age, neighborliness) relations could be uncovered by asking González and his co-workers to reflect on the positionalities present before the action and how they came together at that critical juncture.

But there is in this story a political cartography that exceeds subject-thinking, for at various times González finds it difficult to capture the events into words or established analytic categories. He expresses surprise at how the situation unfolded, reporting that he and his *campañeros* often did not know what to do, and offers up precognitive descriptors – ‘reflexive’, ‘instinctive’ – that weave with the affective fabric of the site. And although González and his *campañeros* had advised members of a nearby neighborhood assembly and a recuperated metal factory of the possibility of an assault by the police, it is not long into his narrative when the familiar logics of state repression and working-class solidarity lose traction and we are confronted with gestures to an unnamable something else: ‘Look, I can’t explain it to you’, he says. A transformational force with a surplus of meanings and affects beyond those captured in the assembled identities and relations is expressed in the reorientation of the participants *toward the situation*, producing unpredictable actions by union members, neighbors, women, and the elderly. If this begins by relatively predictable (strategic) aggregations – the police arrive with ‘eight assault vehicles, eight patrol cars, everything in eights because they knew there were eight of us’ – other politicalities increasingly suggest themselves as the site begins to suspend subjectivities and orient

bodies toward a situated aggregate: strangers arm the barricades, women threaten to set fires, even the residents of a nearby retirement home find their way to the factory’s defense. The dimensions of the site pull together and multiply like strange attractors – a factory to defend, police with clubs, dogs, and armed vehicles, the disciplining presence of media cameras, and a swarm of bodies fighting ‘to be on the front line’ – in the midst of which we find a González who is much less an organizer or narrator of the event than an intermittently disoriented collaborator in the comings-together of the situation.⁹

Making the situated suspension of the subject a topic for consideration in research means coming to terms with the notion that the subject is not per se the author or source of a site’s politics, but can be instead a complex scattering of vague, localized articulations. Consider the *something else* within González’s story, that moment of political success that left its participants as surprised as its observers. We might say that, in such instances, while the politics of subjectivity and subjection are anchored in ‘perspective’, the aggregating components of the site engender an immanent politics of multiple *orientations*. That is, processing the mobilization of components and the eruption of political possibilities in material aggregates is not a matter of cobbling a representative object-idea from our positions as thinker-researchers. Instead, processing the workings of a site is immersive and participatory: we *collaborate* with the sortings and aggregations, the movings here and there that in turn render us multiply-oriented toward their situation. Accordingly, two key aspects to researching the site must be, first, a certain wariness of our inevitable participation in the coming-together and, second, an openness to its suspension of subjects. This is a relationship that, we think, means cultivating an attitude that remains attentive to the subtle maneuvers, the continuous self-adjustments, of the consistencies and collapses of matter-processing (Woodward et al., 2010). It is one

that is opposed to policing – even at the risk of bad faith – the boundaries of identity in the face of chaos. While we acknowledge that the researcher-perspective and the fields of solvability it imposes are real inevitabilities, developing situated strategies for their suspension (their conditional withholding) helps engender multiply oriented counter-readings.

V Conclusion

In this paper we have set out some of the groundwork for considering the autonomous processes that are immanent to the site and that operate whether subjects are entrained in its negotiations-aggregations or completely ignorant of them. Our aim has been to specify the material, self-organizing *conditions* through which situated politics emerge, in contrast to those by which a subject of whatever sort might act as their cause, their agent, their center, or their limit. By this, we do not pretend to negate the power of subjects and subjectivity but seek rather to explain the situated, material suspension of their effects so that we might better understand the complexity of political unfoldings. And so, our paper describes a two-sided understanding of *politics*, those at work. On one side is *subject-thinking*. Here, bodies, their doings and sayings, and the social relations they bear, are sorted and catalogued according to a unifying logic of the subject. Such politics, which might cohere, for example, around the orientations of gender or class or race, impose solutions upon prefigured formulations of social strata. If the first side maps politics according to an axiomatic of the subject, the second, emphasized here without negating the first, follows *problematic politics*, those of *matter-processing*. Different from subject-thinking without being opposed to it, matter-processing describes aggregative, dynamic relations; it collects and struggles to cohere and, when it does, we are caught unaware, surprised and moved by the way that different bodies come together to

produce something that was not predictable in advance. In this second way, the politics of autonomous space expands our understanding of emerging material processes, directs us to their extra-subjective political potentials, and opens doors to mobilizing and participating with them.

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Notes

1. By moving on to the politics of site ontology, we do not mean to sidestep the question of the politics of scale per se, but on this issue there has already been a great deal of discussion – so much so that Trevor Barnes has referred to responses to Marston et al. (2005) as the ‘debate that never seems to end’ (Barnes, 2008: 655). Undoubtedly there is a lot more to say, but here we will be brief. First, we continue to acknowledge the valuable work done on the social production and construction of scale (Marston, 2000; Sheppard and McMaster, 2004; Smith, 1984), research that has focused on ‘differences in powers and capacities, opportunities and constraints, among nested spaces’ (Leitner and Miller, 2007: 119). Second, we note that in the period since our paper’s publication, theoretical commentators on scale have tended to fall broadly in three camps: (a) those who continue to affirm scale as an ontological category, sometimes on its own and sometimes in combination with

other concepts such as networks (Chapura, 2009; Jessop et al., 2008; Jones, 2009; Leitner and Miller, 2007; Leitner et al., 2008; MacKinnon, 2011; Manson, 2008; Neumann, 2009; Rangan and Kull, 2009); (b) those who reject claims regarding scale's ontological status as a level at which structural processes operate, but see value in assessing its epistemological coordinates and the discursive-practical work these enable (Kaiser and Nikiforova, 2008; Legg, 2009; Moore, 2008); and (c) those who, while sometimes acknowledging the value of position (b), are supportive of or are developing ontological alternatives to scalar approaches (Ansell, 2009; Escobar, 2007; Hiller, 2008; Isin, 2007; McFarlane, 2009; Pain, 2009; Shaw, 2010). For the record, even cursory readings of our original paper and our rejoinder (Jones et al., 2007) will show that we never ruled out – and in fact we called for – work of the sort in camp (b). In this paper, however, our aim is with (c), wherein we respond to the call by Escobar (2007) to articulate immanent ontological and political accounts that are resistant to the logics of transcendent theorizing.

2. We are not asserting any material reality to these distinctions. It seems to us that, more analytic than actual, such a distinction represents two points on a spectrum between which a variety of contemporary political theories are distributed. Still, those who attempt to mask, ignore, or exploit social differences, for example, have found inroads to doing so by valorizing one side of the debate while disparaging the other.
3. The term is Husserl's, and is commented upon by Derrida (1989: 122; 2001: 203–204), who distinguishes the *anexact* science of phenomenology from the exact science of mathematics. Whereas phenomena corresponding to exact forms are of a fixed or repeatable order, and inexact ones a measurable deviation from them resulting from simple variation, *anexact* ones fail to 'fit'; they are qualitatively and quantitatively at odds, the result of complex relations that multiply difference, even while being topologically consistent with those forms (hence the phrase '*anexact yet rigorous*', Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).
4. A fully developed picture of the relationship between site ontology and cognition is beyond the scope of the current paper. Here we offer some brief gestures to a few thinkers who inform our own notion that thought is a kind of matter-processing. Debates surrounding the relationship between thought and materiality have a long and fractious history that encompasses the

mind-body problem, the internalism-externalism distinction, and a broad spectrum of neuroscience and thought experiments concerning the relations between thinking and brain states. Site ontology invites us to split the difference between internalism and externalism. With regard to the stakes surrounding materialist accounts of cognition, we direct the reader to the Churchlands' eliminative materialism – an internalist position that holds that cognition is reducible to neurobiological processes (P.M. Churchland, 1979, 1989, 2007; P.S. Churchland, 1986). While we see no need to require that cognitive processes be supplemental or excessive to their physiological processes, we do not find that this entails a restricted mapping exclusively to the physiology of the brain. We may eventually learn, as the Churchlands contend, that thought and brain states (such as belief) are reducible to neural networks (i.e. internal), but still, the material constitution of such networks must depend upon environmentally contingent and continuously unfolding (i.e. external) processes. In this regard, we call attention to those externalist thinkers who acknowledge the roles that bodies, perception, sensation, and environments play in the development, maintenance, and transformation of neural matter. In particular, we find the thinkers who emphasize the constitutive roles of enactment (Stewart et al., 2010) and embodiment (Noë, 2004; Varela et al., 1991) to be especially insightful, particularly where they recognize the possibility of material continuities between the insides and outsides of bodies. Finally, we find that the matter-processing of thought, conceived as an inside-outside continuum, invites a certain reconsideration of Clark and Chalmer's (1998) '*extended mind*' thesis. While on the surface it seems to disagree with many of the positions above – especially the Churchlands' eliminativism – we find the possibility that the material world offers certain affordances for thought (though Clark might not describe it in those terms) to be an appealing one. We do not accept the argument for the extended mind in its entirety, but we feel that the above pairing of internalism and externalism invites a non-ideal treatment of '*mind*' (read: cognition) that is constantly working with outsides – often in pre-reflexive ways. One implication of this is that mind might '*map*' onto something more than neural pathways without being excessive: that is, it arises with complexity of all sorts of material processes that enlist the body and with which the brain

collaborates. Thus, examples of sites that enlist material cognitive processes might include not only the address book that ‘recalls’ addresses (Clark and Chalmers, 1998) or the cell phone that ‘remembers’ phone numbers (Chalmers, 2008), but also the dynamic work of partial knowledges between interdisciplinary researchers, the pre-reflexive and repetitive encounters that unfold between workers on a line, and so on. However, we are not arguing for a correlation between thought and the site (or thought and politics). Rather, these examples merely reference the materiality of cognition that plays out between the *work* of the brain and the material processes of its outsides.

5. Our thesis regarding the autonomy of space shares some characteristics with the autonomous spaces movement, but differs from it insofar as the latter concerns political subjects as the agents and occupants of that space. Recently, The Autonomous Geographies Project (Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010; Chatterton, 2005, 2006; Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006) has explored a variety of autonomous spaces, including several UK community centers and squats. These spaces create a crucial distance from exploitative and oppressive power structures, and thus help to enable the exploration of other ways of political being. That is, they are ‘autonomous (or ‘self-legislating’) spaces’ because they provide a space for individuals and collectives to organize their lives, loves, and struggles in ways that they self- or collectively determine. Marcuse was inclined to refer to these, and spaces connected to social forums, as ‘open spaces’ crucial to ‘the revolutionary tradition, namely, the ‘councils’ (‘soviets’, *Räte*) as organizations of self-determination, self-government (or rather, preparation for self-government) in local popular assemblies’ (Marcuse, 1972: 44). Consider, for example, Vanelander’s (2007) account of Okupa Queer, a squatting project: ‘[t]he idea was to have a safe space for queers who wanted to live together in a squat free from homophobia and machismo’. Subject-based autonomy, however, does not imply freedom from conflict or uneven power relations. Okupa Queer’s project spaces, Vanelander explains, were in fact subject to dynamic power relations and differences throughout; there was, for example, considerable contestation over what constituted, encompassed, or was implied by the term ‘queer’. The *production* of autonomous spaces such as community centers and squats thus promotes the autonomy of the people who will occupy them (these are spaces *for* the subject). This differs substantially from our notion of site-based politics that are autonomous *from* the subject. Yet they are certainly not mutually exclusive. As much as the individuals occupying them are struck by questions concerning the ‘place’ of identity in the localized community, the materialities of such a site also throw up a series of complexities that, while running sometimes in tandem, ask a very different set of questions. Readers may also recognize certain resonances between the political autonomy of site ontology and Bey’s (2003) notion of ‘ontological anarchy’. Bey explains, ‘The TAZ [temporary autonomous zone] must exist in geographical odorous tactile tasty physical space (ranging in size from, say, a double bed to a large city) – otherwise it’s no more than a blueprint or a dream’ (p. xi). The site is certainly capable of enlisting the sensuous experience of the individual, and even of organizing them in autonomous ways. There are, however, moments in which Bey hangs the existence of the TAZ upon a negative ontological relation to the State. That is, it exists only because it reacts against the State. For us, this ontological condition is fundamentally anthropocentric.
6. It stands to be emphasized that while the lively, aggregating forces of matter-processing might seem to weigh most heavily here, we are explicitly not espousing a vitalism, nor a system that operates through assembly only. As we note elsewhere (Jones et al., 2007; Marston et al., 2005), sites include processes of both aggregation and disaggregation. Moreover, even the processes of entropy and decay arise only as forms of aggregative and disaggregative work (respectively). Finally, it is worth noting that these processes of aggregation and disaggregation – of comings and goings, of congealments and dispersals – are very much the *how* behind spatial configurations of the site. But unlike, for example, Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which are but the two sides of a continuously spinning coin, aggregation *and* disaggregation may work upon a site simultaneously but in very different or disproportionate ways. Extensively rather than hierarchically thought, and processually immanent rather than transcendently fixed, the ‘neighborhood’ that is the site bears only an ex post resemblance to traditional a priori spatial concepts, whether based on scalar and or network imaginaries (Jones et al., 2011).
7. The move to ‘suspend’ is a critical reversal of Husserl’s phenomenological reduction – that is, the *epochē*, or

bracketing, of the object world – a method that holds a central place in his eidetic phenomenology (Husserl, 1983, 1999). Husserl concentrates upon bracketing *out* the world so as to inquire into the conditions of pure phenomena. By contrast, our use of ‘suspension’ here is a practice aimed at turning toward precisely the noise that Husserl excludes, and thus to reinterrogate the site’s fields of solvability. For Husserl, it is the subject-agent who performs the reduction, cutting out or discounting certain kinds of transcendent thought in order to isolate the pure thought arising from immanent phenomena. Consequently, *epochē* involves a suspension of judgment, but it is difficult to view this – despite Husserl’s insistence upon an immersion in immanent modes of thought – as anything less than understanding’s transcendence of itself. For us, suspension suggests not simply the interruption of the subject as a structuring principle of the understanding, but something more complex, where the subject, if not still present to itself, nevertheless continues to lurk residually *somewhere*, and is in this sense *suspended*. One implication of this is that a theory of subjectivity, according to site ontology, is not a theory of presence *per se*. That is, subjectivity is not something that is either there or not there. (The subject does not exist as such, and certainly does not exist prior to experience.) We might echo Deleuze, who says of the Humean subject with admirable simplicity: ‘the subject, being the effect of the principles [of association and passion] within the mind, is but the mind being *activated*’ (Deleuze, 1991: 112). As a material process, cognition is part of the same process as that upon which it reflects. Thus, we do not propose a transcendental suspension à la Husserl, but a material suspension: it is not a transcendent maneuver from ‘inside’ but a material interruption of the ‘habit’ of subject consciousness (Deleuze, 1991; Ravaissón, 2008) that, while perhaps appearing to arrive from outside, in fact explodes inside/outside. The mind is part of broader material continua, after all.

8. While we limit our analysis here to the politics of the site, some of our other works provide examples to both methodological and empirical dimensions of site ontology (see Marston et al., 2007; Shaw et al., 2010; Woodward, 2011; Woodward and Lea, 2010; Woodward et al., 2010).
9. In the ensuing years, Argentina’s 2001 revolution has been subject to a spectrum of fascinating treatments, many of which call upon very different events in

developing their analyses. On the one hand, the work of North and Huber (2004) presents a subject-centered reading of events, to which North (2007) adds a later reading framed in terms of the scales of the events and their repercussions. On the other hand, Dinerstein’s (2001, 2002, 2003) treatments have tended to display post-Zapatismo enthusiasm and to draw heavily upon poststructuralist readings of Spinoza. Though he also steps into Deleuzian theoretical territory, Camacho (2009) echoes North and Huber’s challenges to overenthusiastic representations of emergent, novel political organization in *asambleas barriales* (neighborhood assemblies), noting that these were frequently ‘infiltrated’ by ‘traditional parties’. We agree with Camacho’s suggestion that these relations make it difficult to conjure a uniform, political ‘other’, such as Hardt and Negri’s ‘multitude’, out of the Argentine situation because such representations appear to invoke a collective subject by privileging identification in manifold movement. See also Blackwell (2002); Bystrom (2009); Chatterton (2005).

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