... the nameless dead bodies, the bodiless names of the dead...

I would like to begin this lecture by sharing a story I read last year in one of Colombia’s newspapers. In the north-west part of the country there is a small town called Puerto Berrío. It is located in a region that has suffered, over the last decades, some of the cruelest and most violent consequences of the civil war that has taken place in Colombia for more than 50 years. This town is also a harbor: it was built on the shores of the Magdalena River, one of our biggest rivers, which runs through the country from south to north, all the way up to the Atlantic Ocean. The story in the paper began as follows: in Puerto Berrío, lifeless bodies are frequently dragged out by water streams onto the shore of the Magdalena River. No one claims to know where these corpses come from, yet anyone who sees them go by undoubtedly does: they are one of the many visible sides of the violent reality that still dwells in and runs through the Colombian territory (provided that the state of being a nameless corpse floating in a river may be properly named “visibility”). And just as anything else that becomes visible, surprising us at times yet eventually turning into part of our daily experience, people in Puerto Berrío have also gotten used to these corpses after picking up 350 “remains” (this is the official term) in the last three years, as reported by the district attorney’s office. The nameless dead are part of the everyday lives of children and fishermen in the area who have gotten used to seeing them, picking them up, and tying them to the shore right before notifying the authorities.
This scene –I can describe it, but I don’t think I could ever fully imagine it... it seems impossible to consider these corpses actually being a part of my reality, even though ever since I read the article they float along imaginary streams in my mind-, [this scene, I was saying] is not, nonetheless, unique, it is not even exceptional. We don’t know how many dead bodies have floated in who knows how many rivers; out of the 51,000 missing people that have been reported as a result of the Colombian armed conflict, we don’t know how many bodies have ended up on the shore of an unknown town, where no one ever knew their names. However, one day in Puerto Berrío – where most of the inhabitants treasure the memory of the disembodied names of missing relatives that they also imagine, in the best-case scenario, been dragged down other streaming rivers (or maybe by the same one, yet further along the way)– someone decided to adopt a corpse, to give it the name of a missing person, and to cry for him or for her: somebody decided to adopt these bodies and mourn them.

It is said that people adopt these bodies because they believe their “animas” are miraculous, others do it hoping that someone else will also mourn their missing relatives, wherever they may be. Despite the fact that those who adopt these bodies expect some kind of reward for their actions, this gesture is quite eloquent as it speaks about something beyond itself; because it is impossible to be rewarded for anyone’s death, and because regardless of how many bodies have been adopted, no one will ever stop counting and mourning, one by one, the dozens of names belonging to murdered or missing people that are listed on the scrolls hanging on the entrance of Puerto Berrío’s cemetery. Crying for another and mourning her just as she deserves to be mourned are deeds that cannot be truly motivated only on account of a reward. This gesture also expresses the need to bring back a singular memory that time was threatening to turn into fiction, as well as the impulse to embody the names, even if this only takes place in the cemetery, that merely live within the testimony of those who remember them. However, since what remains cannot only be the memory of an
absence, this gesture is mainly speaking to us about the difficult (impossible?) task of closing a wound, leaving a mark, and moving forward.

Thus, Puerto Berrío’s adopted dead don’t only stand for part of Colombia’s history of violence (a history, one must insist, that is also responsible for listening to these fragmented memories, although not much can be done with them from the perspective of institutional or official history). Moreover, they aren’t only representing the shape memory takes when it doesn’t find other ways to show itself, to be known and listened to. What I find in the center of this irreparable wound which is none other than the violent reality of my country, what I find in this encounter between these nameless dead bodies and these bodiless names that are cried for, buried and remembered in the threshold between memory and oblivion, is the story of a road leading towards the possibility of making amends with a present that would otherwise be impossible to face (maybe it is impossible, maybe it always will be). Rescuing these dead bodies from the river and mourning them is also a way to avoid been carried away by other currents: it is a choice to keep on living in the name of those who are no longer present.

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Speaking about forgiveness might thus be to tell this story. Or, on the other hand and as I have sought to suggest by deciding to begin this final lecture by sharing the story of the castaway bodies in Puerto Berrío, going over this story might already be driving our thought streams towards the gates of forgiveness. And by forgiveness I want to mean an experience other than the one we usually have in mind when thinking about this notion; in this case I am thinking about a kind of forgiveness that is carried out in order to face an irreparable reality, and not about an experience involving a face to face relationship between two people, between victim and victimizer (for example). As Wladimir Jankelevitch would say in his famous book on the subject (a book that captivated me since he was speaking from an experience whose core is not entirely
distant from those of certain experiences of violence in Colombia), forgiveness is to be understood as that which takes place when “the limit of human possibilities coincides with the superhuman, with the inhuman possibilities” (Jankelévitch 1999, 10). Thus, the issue here regards the relationship between the facts, the present that results from them, and the fractures that overrun a reality that can no longer be undertaken without setting the “inhuman”, impossible, possibility at stake.

It is also probably necessary to make clear from the start that neither am I referring to forgiveness in the sense of what we usually understand as “political,” that is to say, the institutional: it is not forgiveness understood as an apology pronounced “in the name” of a State for the visible and veiled crimes that are still condemned to remain anonymous; nor is it the forgiveness that is “received” “in the name” of victims only to compensate for a justice process that promises to recognize their dead: that is, that promises to name them, find their bodies, and reconstruct a history to remember. Nonetheless, I don’t mean to criticize these processes (at least that is not my intention right now, although there are indeed questions that I would also like to direct at the transitional justice process in Colombia): besides being problematic, these processes are also indispensable, and any objection regarding them could be considered an “indecent objection”, as Derrida states in one of his essays on forgiveness. The reconstruction of the “official” version of the facts by means of judicial truth, material and symbolic reparation of victims, punishment (necessarily negotiated) for the committed crimes: these actions belong to a political process that, in spite of its flaws, recognizes and makes visible the victims as well as the facts.

But I don’t mean to speak about this kind of forgiveness nor about this notion of the political. Beyond the different types of recognition (official or social) and the reflections they arouse on a certain way of understanding forgiveness, as well as on a certain way of understanding the political, within the conceptual framework that concerns relations of mutuality, reciprocity and “intersubjectivity” –as it is commonly designated by philosophy–, I would like to suggest the possibility of approaching both
notions (forgiveness as well as the political) from another perspective in order to broaden our gaze or, better yet, to redirect it towards other demands. Thus, taking us towards those places (experiences and ways in which reality is carried out) where reciprocity is no longer possible, where mutuality is affected by an irreconcilable wound, where what is at stake is no longer what is visible, but precisely what can never become visible. Consequently, for the moment my goal is to drive this problem to other crossroads. Instead of asking how to think about forgiveness in political terms (and, therefore, in terms of “politics of forgiveness”), I would rather ask how to reconsider forgiveness in the boundaries of, or beyond, the political. These boundaries also have to do with what we have been talking about for the past two days in relation to rethinking community. I mean, its impossibility as well as its urgency. Maybe this way forgiveness will clear new ways to approach the political itself, when understood in its most literal meaning: as a place where we meet with one another, where we (dis)appear before each other, and where our being-in-common could never be reduced to just a “common being”. Accompanying these thoughts on forgiveness, I would also like to clear the way for a thought of the ethico-political (and, with it, of politics as well) re-modulated by what necessarily remains in its boundaries: grounded on forgiveness, the issue at stake is to conceive the possibility of building “community” precisely where it has always been wounded by death. A community, then, that –as we have seen for the past two days going over Hegel’s texts– can only be possible on the ground of these wounds.

Once again, with Hegel’s help, I would like to suggest that forgiveness might be the only thing left there. Just where everything common has disappeared, where the possibility of a common world has been erased (or, the possibility of a world, of a trust in the world –as Jean Améry describes in the narration of his experience in two concentration camps (cf. Améry 2001, 90)), where this has been destroyed, forgiveness does seem to be the only possibility pointing to an impossible, although urgent, reconstruction of the present (as it gratuitously renounces, leaves behind and
generously and inexplicably offers to close incurable wounds): since, according to Hegel (as we will see), it is only forgiveness that gives us a chance to remember the past without worsening the pain or having to experience it again (and, especially, without getting caught again, as in the case of the law's sovereignty, in the cycles of revenge) and, at the same time, allows us to face a present that won't lead to the normalization of violence. Thus, forgiveness is an interruption that opens up the possibility to move forward without having to break the bonds that necessarily bind us to what has happened.

Because one cannot actually talk entirely on behalf of oneself, and because the very same possibility of talking has always been grounded –consciously or unconsciously– on what has been said by others (or because it’s easier to express one's thoughts through the words and voice of another, as it often happens to me), today I want to speak on behalf of Hegel again: just as he has been helpful, so far, to explain in detail the questions on law, community, and fracture, he is also extremely lucid when it comes to thinking about the relationship between politics, history, and forgiveness in the terms that have been set beforehand; that is to say, a relation that concerns a certain experience of community, and of building and rebuilding community by means of the possibilities that open up by a particular way of understanding forgiveness. Some of his reflections, as we are about to see, introduce forgiveness precisely as the one and only way to rethink the possibility of “community” (a community –if we recall his reading of Antigone in the Phenomenology– that also begins with the story of a dead body that could not be buried). Therefore, this reflection on forgiveness will actually allow us to address the alternative paths Hegel proposes as a way out of the questions and problems that we have been talking about for the last couple of days.

Consequently, I will refer once more to some of his reflections, especially in relation to what he has to say on forgiveness in The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate, but also in the light of some passages from the Phenomenology of Spirit (although I will not have the time to develop in enough detail the figures that surround the moments of
confession and forgiveness in the *Phenomenology*, that is, the dialectics between the judging and the acting consciousness –but we can talk a little bit more about this during the discussion). Nonetheless, before I do, I would also like to state that from now on I am going to speak on behalf of another’s voice in order to suggest a connection between these thoughts and the difficult question regarding the relationship between forgiveness and the political (the political, I insist, understood as a question on building contemporary possibilities for rethinking community) in a context that demands we reflect on both aspects with utmost urgency. In this sense I know I’m stepping away from traditional discussions on the matter in order to search for possible answers to a task that is yet to come (to us): the task of reconstructing a community marked by a violent reality that will never be completely remedied by processes of transitional justice, nor by the execution of legal mechanisms resulting in national amends.

... deciding to forgive: between forgiving another and forgiving the facts...

The issue of forgiveness in Hegel’s work captivated my interest immediately as I started to understand the close connection it has, in some of his writings, with rather suggestive considerations on our being in common. Since then I have attempted to approach these ideas from different angles.¹ Although I will not have the time to approach all these angles in the course of this paper, let me stop for a moment and recall a couple of elements that may also be helpful today. On the first hand, it is important to ask what it is that makes the issue of forgiveness profoundly attractive at the end of the *Spirit* chapter in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. As I have suggested somewhere else, it probably has to do with the fact that it doesn’t appear there as a way to give definite closure to the discussion on community, neither to resolve all internal contradictions and differences nor all experiences of violence that have

marked ethical life since its beginning. Contrary to the traditional interpretations and findings on the matter, forgiveness appears there as an experience that firstly remembers and recognizes the open wounds these past experiences have engraved in the heart of the community. In this sense I would also like to salvage and point out two important aspects I wish to discuss today as well:

on the one hand, in this part of the Phenomenology (and I am talking about the figure entitled “The beautiful soul, evil and its forgiveness”) forgiveness is the only deed capable of recognizing these wounds; its fulfillment is actually a way to remember them and not to erase, close or resolve them;

on the other hand, forgiveness also acknowledges the fact that these wounds will forever remain opened; that is to say, that any kind of reconciliation will never provide definite closure neither to what has happened nor to the wounds and fractures that the community’s reality and life brings along with it.

Thus, for Hegel forgiveness –at least this is what I have tried to suggest in other occasions and what I would also like to insist on today– acknowledges that a definitive closure of the wounds is impossible, and, therefore, that a final reconciliation is neither the appropriate nor the (logically or conceptually) necessary movement belonging to life in common. Consequently, although political reparations, for instance, are necessary and make up an important part of the process of closing and healing wounds caused by violence, they are not necessarily the only possible outcome: forgiveness –Hegel knew this since The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate– exceeds legal justice, reciprocity and any ‘logic of reparation’, any economy of ‘equating’ and cancelling the wrongdoing. He seems to introduce this issue in order to show that open wounds can only be closed by an infinite gift, or, in Hegel’s own words, by an infinite “renunciation” of oneself (the word that Hegel uses in this case is not Vergebung –literally, for-giveness– but Verzeihung, which includes the idea if Verzichtung, renunciation). That is to say, by a radical asymmetry, by an experience...
that opens up, interrupts and sets the present free in an unnecessary (and non demandable) act of contingency *that decides to take on the impossible*, *in other words, to bear the irreparable*.

In this sense, according to Hegel himself, forgiveness doesn’t only concern mutual confrontation. However, I don’t mean to state that such a reading would not be successful. On the contrary, one can also understand forgiveness’s movement (as I myself have done before) as an experience of *mutual* asymmetry following a reading Hegel suggests in his *Phenomenology*. Thus, this reading is a possible interpretation of the well known confrontation between the judging conscience (the *beautiful* soul) and the acting one, in which forgiveness takes the shape of an asymmetric experience between two consciences: one that, while acting (as is also Antigone’s case, as we saw yesterday), inevitably wounds shared reality, and another that, from a very similar perspective to the one of sovereign law, decides to judge the action as an evil one. On the way, however, the beautiful conscience discovers the only thing that may heal it: to interrupt the chain of judgment accepting the other’s confession through the act of forgiveness. The elements I have been pointing out can be clearly made out in this reading: the fact that forgiveness cannot be understood as a definite resolution but rather as the only way to take on the paradox regarding any reflection on community, I mean, the impossible possibility, unattainable yet always necessary, of healing a wound, of restoring the being-in-common.

Nonetheless, what seems most interesting about the movement of confession and forgiveness presented in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* is precisely the fact that it can be read differently, beyond mutual relationships, when understood as the experience of a decision –a decision defined by every aspect of contingency, of what can never be requested because it can’t even be anticipated, in other words, a decision that breaks through with all its unpredictability’s might–: for the time being I would describe it as the decision to “forgive” reality. In this case no one is particularly forgiven, there isn’t a defined *who* to forgive. This is the reason why in this particular part of the
Phenomenology Hegel doesn’t refer to an apologizing conscience (he speaks of confession, but in this case the experience of confession is not really related to a plea for forgiveness) nor to one that forgives it; forgiveness just happens, it occurs, there is forgiveness, what Hegel calls “the reconciling yes” (PS §671, 599).

I think that talking about the who who is forgiven, of whom I’m precisely trying to step away from today, sometimes complicates the matter on forgiveness when it comes to contexts or situations that should be considered “unforgivable” (therefore, situations that may be very closely linked to the one I mentioned at the beginning of my speech). In these cases questions are usually directed at issues such as if forgiveness may be granted when it has not been or cannot be requested, or, for example, if forgiveness can only be given in regard to what is “punishable,” as suggested by Arendt and Agamben, among others (in opposition to some more radical stances that are similar to the one I’m hoping to introduce, such as Jankelevitch’s first thoughts, taken up again by Derrida, supporting the idea that forgiveness only exists unconditionally: forgiving the unforgivable). However, insisting on the fact that Hegel’s reading actually lacks a who, allows me to step back from all these stances for the time being. What most interests me right now is to think about how forgiveness, when no longer conceived as a relation of mutuality, turns into a certain kind of attitude towards reality, towards its facts. In this sense Hegel insists on the idea that another’s wounding deed is simply a “chance” for forgiveness, and its fulfillment depends on “the manner of receiving and reacting against the other’s deed” (SC 233, GC 284 [346]). Thus, forgiveness is not aimed at oblivion, it is rather an experience that decides to face the present in another way: interrupting the course of time and the wounds carried along with it in order to take on the irreparable and bear the (asymmetric and disproportionate) consequences of this decision eternally. The issue at stake here concerns a process that cannot be completed: as Rebecca Comay cleverly suggests, Hegel keeps the German participle (das versöhnende Ja, the reconciling
yes...) in order to denote this experience’s quality of being forever incomplete (Comay 2011, 136).

I believe that only if this quality is taken under account can one understand how forgiveness answers back, at the same time, to two demands that would otherwise be contradictory; two demands Hegel has thought about, in view of their paradoxical distinctive, since his first works on community: the demand for memory, on the one hand, and, on the other, the urgency for reconciliation (which sometimes seems to contradict the latter). In other words, one would have to understand forgiveness as a meeting point where the restoring relationship between the past and what is yet to come takes place. The issue at stake is one of the most difficult tensions concerning, for instance, transitional justice situations:

    how to answer, firstly, to the victim’s ethic demand, to the duty that cannot be postponed: historic memory; to the insistence of making the facts visible even though this means deepening the wounds time has been subtly erasing (not healing, of course).

    how to insist, at the same time, on the need or urgency to build a new community hand in hand with a process committed to the present and the future, grounded on guarantees of non-repetition.

Thus, what is at stake here is a difficult balance between two demands that sometimes need to be “negotiated” politically; answering back to one of them might seem to imply the other one’s loss. However, Hegel’s thoughts on forgiveness seem to lead this issue in another direction.

Hegel approaches the matter again using terms he takes from the language of tragedy. Thus, as we have seen, since his early writings and particularly in The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate, Hegel stages the ghost of Shakespeare’s Macbeth in order to refer to the one-sidedness of a spirit that cannot free itself from repeating its crime
because it has been overtaken by the immutability of the law, and hence, by the impossibility to forgive. Consequently, Macbeth represents the *horror* of a tragedy condemned to the forsaken possibility of redemption: “the great tragedy of the Jewish people –Hegel writes– is no Greek tragedy; it can rouse neither terror [Furcht] nor pity [Mitleiden] [...] it can arouse horror [Abscheu] alone” (SC 203-4, GC 260 [296]).

As we have seen, this ghost takes up, however, another form through the figure of the Erinyes that pursue Orestes in Aeschylus’s *Eumenides*, and yet another one which is introduced by Polynices’s absent ghost that demands being buried (the latter is the brother Antigone must bury, time and again, against city law). The issue at hand reveals that the ghost figure remembers and claims the unresolved, that reality itself has not yet been reconciled or that the dead must reinstate their names in the living world because communities can’t live up to themselves until they have remembered and restored the names of those who have passed away (this is what Hegel’s reading of *Antigone* points out).

The *Phenomenology*’s ‘Spirit’ chapter’ begins precisely in this direction, stating that what remembers and claims opened and unresolved wounds is no longer Macbeth’s ghost but rather Antigone’s deed. This tragic character’s deed shows us an open wound that will remain as such along the ways that must be travelled by a community marked by death in order to bear witness of a crime that makes the being-in-common’s restoration impossible. That’s what Hegel considers to be community’s history: the history of its impossibility, well, the deed that originates it, bringing it into existence (Antigone’s crime as a demand, as well, for unresolved justice) is precisely the deed that rifts it, wounding it to death. As we were already seeing yesterday, Hegel thus steps away from the idea (one he considers naïve) of a given community that we are born into or awaits us. And the question on forgiveness, that puts an end to a history that began with Antigone’s tragic deed, will be discussed in order to acknowledge –and not to erase- his stance. Community must always be restored, but
this particular restoration must never be naively thought about in terms of a definitive reconciliation.

After going over the community’s experiences only to deepen the wounds that gave way to the story in the first place, a ghost (from the past that calls upon the ethical demand for memory, the ghost of the “unforgettable,” as Benjamin would say) reappears at the end of the ‘Spirit chapter.’ Even though Hegel doesn’t call this ghostly appearance by its name (he does frequently call it “the beautiful soul”), tragic Lady Macbeth may be conceived as one of its literary incarnations, particularly regarding the image in which she is incapable of seeing anything rather than blood in her hands.2 “What has been done cannot be undone” says Shakespeare through Lady Macbeth. Hegel has repeated this verse on many occasions, probably because it clearly insists on the fact that what has happened can never be left behind no matter how coercively history demands for everything to continue. Nonetheless, in order to introduce the paradox that reflections on forgiveness bring about, Hegel evokes the voice of someone claiming the contrary: “If there is no way to make an action undone, if its reality is eternal, then no reconciliation is possible, not even through suffering punishment” (SC 227, GC 278 [339]). “And yet –Hegel goes on- the man cannot bear this disquiet; from the terrifying reality of evil and the immutability of the law he can fly to grace alone” (SC 227, GC 278 [339]). Further on Hegel clarifies that this grace is none other than the infinite gift of forgiveness: forgiveness is a granted gift that, as any gift –if it’s really worthy of such a name- doesn’t expect, demand, or answer back to any logic of retribution. It exceeds all demands and can’t be requested, it just happens, it happens as an offering that will never be anticipated.

On this behalf Hegel insists that beyond “insurmountable oppositions and absolutely real events” (SC 230, GC 281 [342]) –that is, as we were seeing on Tuesday from the

2 And again, this relation to Lady Macbeth has also been suggested by Comay (cf. 2011, 129) and tracked back explicitly to the Spirit of Christianity and its Fate, as I intend to do here, by Andrew Cutrofello in his review of Comay’s book.
law's perspective, beyond whoever knows only to face the event's irreversibility through oblivion- “life can heal its wounds again” (SC 230, GC 281 [342]). Someone can respond to “the feeling of a life disrupted” (SC 30, GC 281 [342]), Hegel goes on, either through “battle” and “courage” or through “submissive grief” (SC 233, GC 284 [346]). And here we are again, wondering, as we were doing during the first days, if the law’s violence can be interrupted instead of being trapped either by its active reproduction, or passively by the confirmation of its dominance.

In the first case, Hegel writes, just as it is with the case of ‘battle’ and ‘courage,’ one clings to one’s violated right and defends it. However, in this case the action is a never-ending opposition to reality (SC 234, GC 284 [346]): “the man of courage”, Hegel says, “engages with the sphere of right and might”, rather than seeking to interrupt their deficiencies. Therefore, he does nothing but enter the cycle of violence: in order to legitimate his own right, he also legitimates (instead of making inoperative) the power of the law: “both are right, both are at war, and this gives both the right to self-defense” (SC 234, GC 285 [347]).

In the second case, that is, in the case of whoever decides to react by way of a ‘grieving submission,’ instead of struggling for right, one clings to its loss, fails to oppose it, and from then on struggles only with grief. In both cases, however, they end up renouncing “their own mastery of actuality, they renounce might, and let something alien pass sentence on them” (SC 234, GC 2285 [347]). The law’s universality and immutability is not only confirmed but reinforced, and nothing manages to make it inoperative, to radically interrupt it and break bonds with its infinite might and presence.

However, Hegel insists, there is still a third possibility. There is an attitude, a decision, a third way that manages to maintain something from both attitudes leaving behind any of their harmful or threatening characteristics (harmful to whoever suffers the attitudes themselves): “the life in the former [courage] remains though opposition
falls away, while the loss of right in the latter [submissive grief] remains, but the grief disappears. There thus arises a transcendence [Aufhebung] of right without suffering, a living free elevation above the loss of right and above struggle” (SC 234-35, GC 285 [347-48]). Throughout these excerpts Hegel seems to suggest that whoever forgives succeeds at assuming reality’s irreparability (instead of opposing it and demanding from it what could never be restored), preserving at the same time the loss and the memory of this absence. She reconciles with the past without appealing to oblivion; thus, while loss is preserved, she is able to welcome both remaining life and life to come.

This outlook might be helpful to understand Hegel’s somewhat strict statement made at the end of his ‘Spirit Chapter’ in the Phenomenology: [this passage is considerably controversial regarding traditional thought on forgiveness] “The wounds of the Spirit heal and leave no scars behind; it is not the deed which is imperishable” (PS §669: 596). One must keep in mind what has been said previously in order to grasp these words, particularly the fact that for Hegel memory is imperative; the perspective Lady Macbeth’s bloody hands represent –as they claim that what has been done cannot be undone—, must be preserved in the wound healing movement. “It is not the deed which is imperishable”, writes Hegel, but Spirit is, and therefore, as it will be clearer at the end of the Absolute Knowing chapter, the memory [Erinnerung] of its deeds (its “begriffne Geschichte”: its “conceptually grasped history” (§808: 719)).3 And although it might sound rather “Hegelian” on my part, at this point I would like to draw your attention on the use of the double negative: Hegel doesn’t say the deed perishes by means of forgiveness, he only says that it can’t be imperishable, that it can’t be read to be eternal, constant, unchanging and untouched by the experience “the reconciling yes” carries out. In this sense, forgiveness turns what has happened into memories; it

3 For a very enlightening work about memory and its relation to Absolute Spirit in Hegel’s philosophy see Angelica Nuzzo’s papers on the subject, especially Nuzzo 2008. I also have to thank Rocío Zambrana for pointing this out to me in her recent lecture “El legado de Hegel” (Bogotá, November 2011, Universidad Javeriana).
historicizes the irreparable: “The deed remains at most as a soulless carcass lying in the charnel-house of actualities [because they must be deposited someplace, they can't just disappear], in memories” (SC 232, GC 283 [345]). Thus, precisely because forgiveness is not necessary but rather contingent and unpredictable, it opens up the present ticking its way in time; it inaugurates what is yet to come in order for time to start over.

However, time remains irreversible as well: forgiveness doesn’t reduce the extent of the crime that has unleashed it (as a matter of fact, as it has been pointed out beforehand, forgiveness would never take place without this wound’s conservation) nor the responsibility of she who committed it. Even though what has happened remains—“what is done cannot be undone”—, it doesn’t confront me as it does confront those who radically and “bravely” oppose its actuality or those who, on the contrary, are still under its dominium (unlike the blood in Lady Macbeth’s hands, what has happened is no longer present). The action or event turns into memory and, in this sense, instead of interfering with the future, the past’s possibilities are opened up and interpreted in many new ways by what has yet to come. In other words, I am no longer a prisoner of any particular action: I stand in a place where it is possible to reinvent the world and start over. However, according to Hegel, one cannot reinvent the world on one’s own, this is always done in the company of others: therefore, there is a task regarding community, there is something like the being-in-common that opens up precisely through forgiveness’s opening act.

Consequently, the issue at stake does not concern politics of forgiveness but rather, as I have hoped to suggest previously, a notion of the (political) community that the act of forgiveness makes possible and readjusts. In this case forgiveness is not an “instrument” for social reintegration (a “legal” suspension of legality on account of the future); instead, it confronts the present with its most exorbitant demand (cf. Comay 2011, 140). However, even though it confronts the present, it doesn’t settle anything: for what turns out from this action, we have been over this, is an infinite task.
Thus, in this case forgiveness can be understood within the boundaries of the political, forcing them to become thresholds to a more cautious and ethical comprehension of the being-in-common that all politics should at least seek to guarantee. All politics, like Colombia’s, belonging to a history that cannot be but marked by the wounds of a past, even of a present, that are still claiming to be listened to. A politics of memory capable of keeping its balance next to the tension created between memories and reconciliation. In this sense, I would now like to suggest, firstly, that this particular reconciliation doesn’t take place nor is inspired by the institutional. Secondly, reconciliation isn’t something that happens between victim and victimizer, it must rather be understood as a decision to assume reality and to close, by means of concrete actions (such as the one taking place in Puerto Berrío: burying someone else’s dead in name of those who will no longer return), the impossible mourning of those who are gone in order for the living to have the chance to live on. The work of memory started by Antigone’s claim to bury her brother at the beginning of “community’s history,” is now answered with a notion of forgiveness that can only be considered the work of mourning, the work of memory, as well as that which interrupts the ‘work’ of community and the notion of community as ‘work,’ in order to introduce another possibility for its event.

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Forgiveness definition is - the act of forgiving. How to use forgiveness in a sentence. Examples of forgiveness in a sentence. She treats us with kindness and forgiveness. They asked her forgiveness for failing to invite her to the party. Recent Examples on the Web Since taking office, Biden has granted some loan forgiveness to defrauded borrowers who attended for-profit colleges by reversing a controversial Trump-era policy. Defining forgiveness is a complicated task. Several variations of a psychological definition of forgiveness have focused on different components of the forgiveness response. The victim’s motivations toward the offender are the center of McCullough’s model (see McCullough, 2008; McCullough & Witvliet, 2000). Forgiveness in motivational terms entails the victim giving up negative motivations, such as revenge and avoidance, and adopting positive motivations (e.g., benevolence) toward the offender. Forgiveness could be of enormous benefit to humanity as an antidote to our predisposition toward revenge and avoidance but it also affects our own wellness. If forgiveness is divine, does one need to be a saint? Forgiveness is the stuff of everyday heroes, the ultimate measure of internal peace. It can be a form of emotional aikido, where we disarm our perceived opponent with patience and calm and exact the grandest form of revenge by declaring peace, if only internal. To err is human, to forgive divine. Forgiveness is the choice that a person makes to forgive another person for an offense or something that is illegal or immoral. Forgiveness is intentional and voluntary. When someone forgives someone else, they let go of negative emotions, for example vengefulness. They wish their offender well. Forgiveness is a mental or spiritual process. It means no longer feeling angry at another person, or at yourself. Bible Verses About Forgiveness - Read Scriptures that offer biblical guidance on forgiveness and how important it is to forgive others as we have been forgiven by the blood of Christ. With the grace and mercy shown to us, we are always able to start new with God. When we repent, we are given full forgiveness of our sins because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In light of our new beginning, God commands that in return, we forgive others and extend grace as we have been shown grace.