

**Event and Decision: Ontology and Politics in Badiou, Deleuze, and Whitehead**  
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***Complicities: Folding the Event in Whitehead and Deleuze***

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1. “Two believers cannot observe one another without laughing.”  
 - Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*<sup>i</sup>

In the context of his very 1960's meditation on “repetition for itself” Deleuze initiates an iterative music of concepts--*repetition, event, fold*-- that will return unpredictably, recurrently, perhaps eternally, in his thinking. It is here that the concept of “the event” bursts into his writing: as first of all a “symbol adequate to the totality of time,” able “to throw time out of joint, to make the sun explode, to throw oneself into the volcano, to kill God or the father.”<sup>ii</sup> As soon as he has introduced the notion of event, he turns briefly, quite graciously, to Kierkegaard and Peguy. He credits both the Protestant and the Catholic, as such, with opposing a radical concept of repetition to that of mere habit and memory, as well as with denouncing the simplicity of time circles or Platonic reminiscences. “No one appealed to repetition as the category of the future more than these two.”<sup>iii</sup> They almost arrived at the concept of repetition he means to unleash in which “we produce something new only on condition that we repeat--once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis.” But they fall short of his full triune concept, in which the third repetition is “repetition of the future as eternal return.”<sup>iv</sup> They have thus failed to anticipate Nietzsche and so “the absolute new itself,” which is in turn “nothing but repetition: the third repetition.” Its “decentered circle of difference” draws into itself “the dead god and the dissolved self.”<sup>v</sup> These Christian repeaters were “not ready to pay the necessary price.” For they “entrusted this supreme repetition, repetition as a category of the future, to faith.”

Deleuze makes no dismissive gesture here. He recognizes “an adventure of faith, according to which one is always the clown of one’s own faith, the comedian of one’s ideal.” But he is not honoring the Kierkegaardian irony, *parodia sacra*, or the laughter of Job’s whirlwind. This laugh is at the expense of the faithful. For how could the repetition that faith “takes for its object--a repetition which, paradoxically, takes place *once and for all*--not be comical?”<sup>vi</sup> This is a brilliant bit of ridicule. It is presumably the repetition of the single Event of Jesus Christ (not a name which he repeats) that he has in mind, that once-for-all event of a salvation that locks in the future it had just opened in hope. The future as advent was henceforth the future of the Christological past. If this singular event makes possible the eschatological *Heilsgeschichte*, its own repetition as belief repeats not radical novelty but the repetition of an exclusive, eternally accomplished, *novum*. For it is the rediscovery once and for all of “God and the self in a common resurrection” that cracks Deleuze up.

Confessedly often laughing when I see another “believer,” I suspect Deleuze is onto something vital to the work of any theology of and in process. So that the theologians among us (who may already be chuckling at the eternal return of the cliché of faith as belief) will not laugh at each other too much while surrounded by earnest philosophers, I will not in this paper pursue that peculiar vitality. Nor will I reread the patrimony of the death of God theologies that flows from the same eventive 1960’s. And to avoid the most embarrassing sort of laughter, I won’t even touch the sex of this God, of His Death and of the present symposium. We may however need to ask why Whitehead’s indubitable theism does not render him clownish. Is it because it entails no Christocentric assertions of any singular event? Indeed his theism has supported a now almost venerable tradition of Christian deconstruction of the Christian once-for-all, not only of Christ, but of the creation and the eschaton: the origin, climax and closure of salvation history. Indeed it is to Whitehead, without excision of his deity, that Deleuze turns in order to

articulate the concept of *event* more fully. But what is of most interest to me here is that Deleuze makes that turn as an explication of the concept of *the fold*.

I suggest that it is the notion of the fold that may keep an honest Deleuzian from freezing into an oppositional atheism. This suggestion entails no argument for “belief in God,” whatever that means. It is however a meditation on the meaning of repetition in Deleuze as “contracted contemplation,” as it will be unfolded in his dual readings of the fold, as a folding into and enfolding of the world. Reading the key pages of *Difference and Repetition* rather closely, I will at least hint at both its political and its ecological explication, or what Latour calls political ecology. If the event of the fold and the fold of the event do take place within a time that unfolds infinitely, that infinity cannot be simply identified with “God.” Nor can the name of God be successfully expunged from the repetitions that explicate and complicate the language and therefore the conceptual compossibility of event and of fold--the event-fold.

## 2

The event conjures a world of fireworks, the fold explicates an origami universe. The event intensifies novelty in explosion, orgasm, revolution; the fold, precisely translated as prehension, suggests connectivity, drapes, waves, intertwinings. Eros and agape?<sup>vii</sup> Yet--in significant distinction, say, from Badiou, where event seems to explode in sublime freedom from any thought of mutual enfoldment, prehension, relationality--the Deleuzian event takes place in close proximity to the figure of fold.

Repetition, event and fold, appear in *Difference and Repetition* in a conjunction two decades later that bifurcates into two very different book length explications of the concept of the fold itself, written contiguously, *Foucault* and *The Fold*. In the latter it is the introduction of Whitehead as the *diadoche* (succeeding the Stoics and Leibniz, as event-thinkers) that enables

Deleuze to think event and fold together. Yet the relation of the two concepts remains still perplexingly elusive--a “perplication”, the “state of Problems-Ideas with their multiplicities and coexistent varieties”?<sup>viii</sup> I keep wondering, in and beyond his work, how to relate the two ideas. They seem to pull in opposing directions, with divergent, almost incommensurable, moods and motifs.

In the passage referred to above, the fold first appears--just sentences before the appearance of the event. It appears discretely (not yet as what he will call a ‘conceptual persona’ later, as event already is) as a conception of time. “Time itself unfolds (that is, apparently ceases to be a circle) instead of things unfolding within it (following the overly simple circular figure).”<sup>ix</sup> As the book could be read at one level as a single apologia for Nietzsche’s eternal return, he is most concerned to free an ordinal concept of time from that of a repetition of the same--which would be not repetition but redundancy. (Fortunately it exceeds my grasp as a risible theologian to wonder if by “eternal return of the same” Nietzsche, guided on that score by a dubious cosmology and a promising ethic, might after all have meant, well, eternal return of the same.) Deleuze calls--as would Derrida decades later in *Specters of Marx* --on Hamlet declaring “time is out of joint.”

Whitehead (without to be sure the avant garde Deleuzian mood of “demented time or time outside the curve that gave it a god”) had also pulled the joint, *cardo*, out of the cardinal order measuring time as “the continuity of becoming.”<sup>x</sup> In his eventive--“atomic”-- “becoming of continuity,” time itself, like space, unfolds--in the relations between actual entities. That relationality remains understated in Deleuze. Yet the Deleuzian triple repetition seems to echo Whitehead’s claim “that *experience* involves a *becoming*, that *becoming* means that *something becomes*, and that *what becomes* involves *repetition* transformed into *novel immediacy*.”<sup>xi</sup> Not accidentally both Whitehead and Deleuze launch their notions of repetition by way of in depth rereadings of Hume.<sup>xii</sup> Both twist repetition toward a more dramatic novelty than Hume, and at least in Whitehead’s case, toward a

radical relationality. But also for Deleuze the fold, merely hinted at in *Difference and Repetition*, is not the joint; and may suggest the overlapping of events, if not their internal relatedness (which would smack for him too much of Hegel?)

Deleuze inserts at this moment, upon the very threshold of the concept of the event, a “caesura,” thus redistributing time *unequally* before and after it: “as a result of which beginning and end no longer coincided.” This caesura breaks the circle of any symmetry of the tenses and marks the precise point in his text where the “event” breaks in: “The caesura, of whatever kind, must be determined in the image of a unique and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole.”<sup>xiii</sup> Hence the explosiveness cited above! The event bursts out of the careful analysis of the fold, or contraction, of the whole past in the present as an active synthesis, together with the “ever-increasing coexistence of levels of the past within passive synthesis.” This sounds a lot like the complex contrast of a concrescence--with patri-theocidal explosives added. I cannot help but wonder if the explosive force of the event-concept in Deleuze depends upon God and His Death. For does the event as momentous, interrupting and enfolding time’s totality --*adequatio*-- not mimic a long tradition of explosive Christian eschatology? The Event--of Creation or of Incarnation--was always said to break the circles of pagan temporality, reordering their fragments around itself. This gives (us) Christian comedians no cause to smirk. For the Deleuzian event already anticipates any such measurements of atheism by its theistic antecedents; indeed it reverses them, pointing at the “Antichrist given once and for all within grace.”<sup>xiv</sup> The mutual enfolding of atheism and theism, Antichrist and Christ, may however yet offer some dark graces in both directions of the future within its present.

At any rate to think the shift from the once-for-all to the novel immediacy, or to difference as the absolutely new itself, *within* repetition, is no mean achievement. Deleuze more than Whitehead seems to be mirroring, parodying and so inadvertently capturing the intensity of the Christian *novum*. Whitehead more than Deleuze enfolds and decenters its transcendence. Both

are repeating the drama of an eventiveness that in each event repeats all of time. Both thereby rupture the structure of a linear *Heilsgeschichte*, as it circles back upon the Origin of an always-already foreseen and guaranteed final triumph. For the repetition of history in the present is not a triumph but a *contraction*--elemental, vegetable, animal, if also not, even in Deleuze, without its divine element. The unfolding of the time of events implies--*implicatio*-- the enfolding of time in the event.

3

When the notion of the fold comes into its Deleuzian own two decades later, as a neo-Baroque translation of Whitehead's prehension, there occurs a telling textual repetition. Explicating the event as "the objectification of one prehension and the subjectification of another," Deleuze then notes that in the subjective form "the datum is folded in the subject." Marking the link to the book as a whole, it is the first of three characteristics, which I suggest correspond to his earlier "three repetitions."<sup>xv</sup> Followed by subjective aim "placing the past in a present portending the future," and then by self-enjoyment--all in language enjoyable to a Whiteheadian--there follows a polyphonic account of the prehensive satisfaction: "This is a biblical--and, too, a neo-Platonic--notion that English empiricism carried to its highest degree (notably with Samuel Butler). The plant sings of the glory of God, and while being filled all the more with itself it contemplates and intensely contracts the elements whence it proceeds. It feels in this prehension the *self-enjoyment* of its own becoming."

The musical Deleuze, enjoying the plant singing its praise in a Whiteheadian key, joins a chorus of biblical, neoplatonic, empiricist Leibnizians--all asking after the conditions for the subjective production of novelty from the objective world. From p 79 of *The Fold* I note (with superstitious kabbalism) that on p 79 of *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze had swung from the same citation of Samuel Butler to Samuel Beckett, in order to claim, less pleasurably, that "In all its component fatigues, in all its

mediocre auto-satisfactions, in all its derisory presumptions, in its misery and its poverty, the dissolved self still sings the glory of God--that is, of that which it contemplates, contracts and possesses.” So here is the contraction of time as the dead god and the habitual self, dissolved under the pressure of modernist derision, nonetheless joining a cosmic--or at any rate chaosmic--chorus. For here too Deleuze had paraphrased Butler: “What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity, and this contraction is both a contemplation and the auto-satisfaction of that contemplation. By its existence alone, the lily of the field sings the glory of the heavens, the goddesses and gods--in other words, the elements that it contemplates in contracting.”<sup>xvi</sup> Deleuze here seems to resist at once the exhaustion and the explosion, enfolding in the present of *Difference and Repetition* a future reading of prehensions and self-enjoyments that may have been lurking in the past of his writing all along. “What organism,” he continues happily, “is not made of elements and cases of repetition, of contemplated and contracted water, nitrogen, carbon, chlorides, and sulphates, thereby intertwining all the habits of which it is composed?”

If it is “through contemplation that we contract,” if “we are contemplations,” “we” include all creatures. The Deleuzian relationality seems to surface mainly in relations or rhizomes, within the nonhuman, the “subpersonal,” hence the molecular--kin to Leibniz’s closed monads and Whitehead’s open organisms. The proportion of human to nonhuman does remind one of Whitehead, even if the anti-humanism does not. It is in this chaosmological sense of contemplation as contraction that Deleuze shows how “difference inhabits repetition.”<sup>xvii</sup> The living present synthesizes the differences of the repeated world in a new difference: “difference lies between two repetitions.” And vice versa. Deleuze will continue to insist here, for a while, upon the radical redistribution of contemplation and its selfhood: “there is a self wherever a furtive contemplation has been established, whenever a contracting machine capable of drawing a difference from repetition functions somewhere.”<sup>xviii</sup>

Odd, indeed almost impossible, within the terms of a dawning constructivism, this pan-experiential or indeed pan-contemplative nonanthropocentrism even takes the risk of a whimsical but nonetheless forceful animism: “We speak of our ‘self’ only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says ‘me’. These contemplative souls must be assigned even to the rat in the labyrinth and to each muscle of the rat.”<sup>xix</sup> So the later returns to Whitehead may be eternal ones, releasing a harmonic joy that exceeds or heals the modernist exhaustion: “fatigue marks the point at which the soul can no longer contract what it contemplates, the moment at which contemplation and contraction come apart. We are made up of fatigues as much as of contemplations.”<sup>xx</sup> The loop from Butler to Beckett and forward to Butler again contracts the dissolved self, precisely in its exhaustion, with a self freed from the modern subject to the renewal of a chaosmic contemplation. If the biblical psalmists are permitted to join this choir, before and beyond the violent fatigues of Christian triumphalism, we (process theologians) may sing along with the thousands of little witnesses.

4 “How far can we unfold the line without falling into a breathless void...?”

- Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*<sup>xxi</sup>

If the event takes place as the enfolding or contracting of the world, an elemental contemplation pervades that world. I would not unify these contemplations in a divine subject. But the God that as Roland Faber has noted Deleuze approves in Whitehead (“He becomes Process”) remains I suspect happy to participate anonymously as a subpersonal relation between relations, as chaosmic process of processes and polyphony of polyphonies.<sup>xxii</sup> Or as Luke Higgins argues for the rhizomatic formation of a Deleuzian-Whiteheadian ecopneumatology, as “spirit dust.”<sup>xxiii</sup> In my own theological work, the Deleuzian translation of fold as prehension permits me to enfold within the open ended process of a *creatio ex profundis* an earlier figure

virtually absent from both Deleuze and Whitehead, (one who would represent more accurately than Leibniz the primary source of the infinitization of the event). Nicholas of Cusa had in the 15<sup>th</sup> century explicated as a negative theology the *explicatio* of the infinite in the finite and the *complicatio* of the finite all in the infinite One: as precisely the contraction of the negative infinity of the divine into the contingent infinity of the world. He had argued for a panentheism, often difficult to distinguish from pantheism, manifest in the way all creatures are part of all other creatures--mediated not directly by a divine logos but by the contracted universe itself. "The universe is in things only in a contracted way, and every actually existing thing contracts all things so that they are actually that which it is."<sup>xxiv</sup> His rhythmic concept of the unfolding/enfolded universe beats barely recognized, like dark waves, against the shore of our two twentieth century world-folders.

But if one might say that a contemporary tendency drives toward events without folds, it would be just as true that a mysticism of folds might fold down the event. The former, the event that bursts within the void rather than among folds, might characterize a certain Deleuzianism, even apparent in Caputo's recent *Weakness of God*, and I presume Badiou. The latter might flow from for instance a Cusanism abandoned to its neoplatonic condition. So a Cusan supplement to process theology (to which a couple of us here are with secret laughter drawn) will keep faith with the compossibility of the event and the fold.<sup>xxv</sup> The caesura of the new, of a difference not given as the single eternal difference--foreknown and willed by God or any other returningly eternal Self-same--opens radical indeterminacy amidst the determining folds of a prehended world. That indeterminacy is marked in Cusa as negative theology, the *docta ignorantia* that knowingly unknowns. Faith rather than belief allows affirmation of the positive contractions of the world. Of course Judith Butler may be right, that Deleuze lacks the work of the negative.<sup>xxvi</sup> (Not that her negativity extends beyond its promising interhuman relationality into any cosmological, ecological or theological contemplation; and not that negative theology ever in the Deleuzian sense pays the necessary price.)

Would the risk of an apophatic panentheism, then, or a mysticism of folds be that of too *much* transcendence or too *little*? Or does the question itself betray a certain a/theistic fatigue, laughable in the face of the subtle thinkers of the fold? For though Deleuze will remain as closed to transcendence as to its God, nonetheless he will say, commenting on Foucault, that “the Outside” is always folding into the inside and vice versa.<sup>xxvii</sup> In what linguistic situations does the Outside meaningfully translate into transcendence? Perhaps in Whitehead’s ironic and climactic antiphon: “It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God.”<sup>xxviii</sup> But here I have only pointed toward the difference that Deleuze might make for Whiteheadian theology, as a theological movement that comprises the past of a conceptual fold of divinity contracted as a possible future of the present Deleuzian Event.

5. “...the world is asking something of philosophy.”

- Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought*<sup>xxix</sup>

Admittedly this essay’s repetitions take place within the currents of a theology of becoming. It imagines a still becoming future, in which there is at least some planetary chance that a multidimensional and transdisciplinary relationalism will shift the political ecology of global capitalism: of what the Deleuzians Hardt and Negri call *Empire*. There is no doubting the complicity of all participants in a discussion such as the present one in the infinitely expansive Eurocentric self-multiplication of culture. But as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak nicely shows, complicity, as the state of being ‘folded together,’ also suggests a liberation of progressive politics from its self-righteous and self-deluding purities. It gives us the chance to attend with vigilance both to our part in the diffusion of global power and to what she offers as the “dream of an animist liberation theology,” of a “planet” resistant to the controllable “globe.” Of course the strategy of complicity breaks down before the theological movements of actual liberation theologies. “Indeed it is my conviction that the internationality of ecological justice in that impossible,

undivided world of which one must dream, in view of the impossibility of which one must work, obsessively, cannot be reached by invoking any of the so-called great religions of the world because the history of their greatness is too deeply imbricated in the narrative of the ebb and flow of power.”<sup>xxx</sup> She will just as firmly as any Deleuzian insist upon a transcendent purity vis a vis those so-called religions. Nonetheless her planetarity embraces a “globe-girdling” complexity in which we cannot participate in innocence, because it is always already enfolded in the complicities of power, economic and political as well as religious.

Complexity casts complicity as its political shadow. Perhaps, to force Deleuze and Spivak into conspiracy here, the trope of the planetary reaches into a molecular vibrancy--tinged with animism in both thinkers-- that challenges the molar organization of globalization. The regeneration of the human through a new capacity to think our elemental interdependencies, indeed to join the contemplative ecology of the genesis collective, will need greater philosophical guidance than has yet come forth. Badiou gives as one reason for philosophy “that the world we live in is a vulnerable, precarious world.”<sup>xxxi</sup> Deleuzian thinking (and this may also be true of whatever comes of Badiou) will either fold in on its arcane mental pleasures, or risk explicating its political implications in the vulgarity of living contexts. In the US situation at least, theology will either collude in that guidance or contribute by default to the farcical repetitions of a capitalized fundamentalist indifference to most of the planet and most of its species. Without enhanced conspiracies of philosophy and theology in the popular as well as the scholastic media, we support by default the crudest forms of salvation historical time line, with the apocalyptic Event at the explosive end of a line ever circling back on its once-for-all resurrection of the believers.

6. “That which is laughable may simply be *the unknowable*.”  
- Georges Bataille, “Un-knowing: Laughter and Tears”<sup>xxxii</sup>

At this moment I can only offer as questions for discussion a set of four rather narrow contractions, underintegrated, pleats of a possible politics of the event, indeed of the event-fold.

A. The other major locus of Deleuze's reflections on the fold belongs to his affectionate relationship with Foucault. While Deleuze is not fabricating the Foucaultian theme of 'foldings,' nonetheless as far as I can tell no one but Deleuze characterizes Foucault as a philosopher of the fold. What is of special interest here is that he finds in the fold Foucault's way of negotiating his own crisis after writing *The History of Sexuality* and so of moving beyond the folds of *pouvoir/savoir*. He does not leave them behind but according to Deleuze opens them into the "Outside"-- as that which is then enfolded as a subject.<sup>xxxiii</sup> There is no prior subject (for Foucault, Deleuze--or Whitehead) but rather there is *folding as subjectification*. I wonder, given the philosophy of time I have shown to be the source of Deleuze's fold metaphor, about the relation of this Foucaultian fold of Deleuze to Badiou's sense of time as subjectivization.<sup>xxxiv</sup> And in Badiou's anti-theology of "faithful connection" is there any hint of constitutive relationalism, of mutual enfolding in an ecology of interconnection? If time for him is the "subjective and decisive intervention," or the event, what field of repetition, what rhythm of interation, might render this decision faithful, responsible, rather than a mere shot in the void, an explosive *creatio ex nihilo* ripping free of the fabric of folds?

B. The "folding of the line" for Deleuze, rendering Foucault, becomes a reflection on how an event enfolds the Outside in and as *subject*. This outside signifies the world, material, pressing, real (in its actualities and its virtualities). Deleuze may have an inner Whitehead, an enfolded Whitehead, affecting his reading of Foucault so that it draws forth this material world. Of course that actual universe is represented in Foucault's wider play of forces, beyond the sheerly derogatory sense of power.<sup>xxxv</sup> The politics of the push

with or through Foucault to a prehended world becomes acute in a late dialogue with Antonio Negri. Deleuze argues that contemporary society is moving beyond the “disciplinary societies” with their varieties of confinement brilliantly analyzed by Foucault, toward “control societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> Noting that Foucault saw this coming, Deleuze reflects on a new kind of event. This would be the sort of “events that can’t be explained by the situations that give rise to them or into which they lead. They appear for a moment, and it’s that moment that matters, it’s the chance we must seize. Or we can simply talk about the brain: the brain’s precisely this boundary of a continuous two-way movement between an Inside and Outside, this membrane between them.” It is noteworthy that in this movement beyond Foucault’s theory of disciplinary constraints, Deleuze could be read as anticipating Spivak’s critique of them both. She finds Foucault’s micronarratives and “the ferocious motif of ‘deterritorialization’ in Deleuze and Guattari” to “foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism.”<sup>xxxvii</sup> Deleuze concludes poignantly that “what we most lack is a belief in the world, we’ve quite lost the world, it’s been taken from us.” Belief after all--as a constitutive faith?

This world-cry marks a distinctiveness of Deleuze on the poststructuralist scene, with his animated material chaosmos, his thousands of ensouled contemplating witnesses, his risky avowal of the Whiteheadian superject as the event of prehensive enfolding and objective unfolding. “A people is always a new wave, a new fold in the social fabric; any creative work is a new way of folding adapted to new materials.”<sup>xxxviii</sup> Or as he says in conversation with the communist political philosopher Negri, soon to return to prison in Rome: “If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume.”<sup>xxxix</sup> To engender new space-times would be to unfold time, in its prehensive eventiveness: but with a newness that escapes

control, and so invests the cosmology of the event-fold with an activist intentionality.

C. This belief in the world “is what you call *pietas*,” Deleuze says to Negri. With Michael Hardt, Negri would write *Empire* in time for the explosive event of the new millennium, in time indeed to assist in the interpretation of the impact and use of 9/11. This is not the context for an engagement of their attempt to put the Deleuzian event to work as a constituent biopolitics, answering the Foucaultian biopower. I note that in their rhizomatic dyad they provide a vivid precipitation of a Deleuzian politics. They do not draw upon the Whiteheadian resource. But they do find themselves (-as self declared communist atheists) irresistibly drawn to a certain theological vocabulary of time as *kairos*, of the arising transnational and motley “multitude,” or the “new humanity”; and of “politics as love.” No wonder the neoliberal critic John J. Reilly called *Empire* “a postmodern plot to overthrow the city of God.” The mimicry of Christian themes might be the mockery of the antichrist. And at the same time the overthrow of a certain city of God might be the prerequisite of its realization--its detriumphalization. “[T]ime is split between a present that is already dead and a future that is already living—and the yawning abyss between them is becoming enormous. In time, an event will thrust us like an arrow into that living future. This will be the real political act of love.”<sup>xl</sup> That abyss, the caesura, between tenses, awaits the event-or what is theologically called “*kairos*.” As Negri writes elsewhere: “*Kairos* is the modality of time through which being opens itself, attracted by the void at the limit of time, and it thus decides to fill that void.”<sup>xli</sup> There may be a significant convergence with Badiou at this point, as A Calcagno offers a kairological interpretation of the politics of his event.<sup>xlii</sup>

In their next book *Multitude*, the politics of love declared at the end of *Empire* begins to repeat its possibility with a more cadenced hope. And to make this possibility of an emergent multitude more vivid, they let its biblical antecedent show: “There is really nothing necessarily metaphysical about the

Christian and Judaic love of God: both God's love of humanity and humanity's love of God are expressed and incarnated in the common material political project of the multitude."<sup>xliii</sup>

I am wondering if the logic of the fold does not always already implicate becoming in this desentimentalized, transpersonalized, politicized love--a love out of joint but not out of touch. For is not love one name, irreducible to desire, of the enjoyment of our constituent relationality?<sup>xliv</sup>

Such complicities with the western theological heritage comprise neither conversions nor continuations. But might love and *kairos*, as examples, perform a Deleuzian fold, a doubling that is at once the site of repetition and of novelty, in the realm of politics? Indeed a doubling not just of a theologized past in the present dreaming a new politics--but a double repetition: for while *love* captures the affirmative relation of the *fold*, *kairos* signifies the affirmative time of the *event*.

D. So in the end I am wondering if the tension between the figures of event and of fold becomes creative, becomes event-fold, enfolds and unfolds the event, only in the recognition of the constituent relationality. Or to put the question differently: is it in the deep crease, the caesura between the unequal past and future, that the event suffers and enjoys its own enfoldment of the world? Does that pause not--beyond and through Deleuze-- admit of an apophatic infinitude? Would its negative theology, granted that it turns even upon the benign affirmations of process theology, animate the fold, the membrane, between the secularism of European high theory and the multiplying sacralities of a possible multitude?

And sometimes that becoming-subject, caught off guard, in the sudden surprise of the unknown, breaks open as laughter. Hence Bataille develops what we could call an apophatics of laughter. In his contemplative proposition from 1953, coining the term "atheology": "God is an effect of un-knowing. He can nevertheless be known as an effect of un-knowing- like laughter, like the sacred."<sup>xlv</sup> There would be no sinister last laugh, nor any final drying of the tears--no terminal return of a once-for-all. But a last question: would a

laughter of the future in the present --embarrassed at our complicities,  
delighting in our complexities-- express the Deleuzian third repetition?

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<sup>i</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968/1994), 95.

<sup>ii</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, 89.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>vii</sup> Elsewhere, describing Foucault, he distinguishes between passion and love, favoring the former for its subpersonal intensities, whereas love presumes persons, subjects. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990/1995), 116. The event expresses the passionate; the fold may however carry the traces of a love never fully required in the Deleuzian repetition.

<sup>viii</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, 280.

<sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>x</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition, ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1929/1978), 35, 202. See 202 and discussion of cardinal numbers.

<sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.*, 137. Emphasis original to text.

<sup>xii</sup> Whitehead is already honorifically signified late and crucially in *Difference and Repetition*, but with no exposition. Deleuze, *Difference*, 284f.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>xv</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988/1993), 76ff.

<sup>xvi</sup> Deleuze, *Difference*, 75.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>xix</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>xxi</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 113.

<sup>xxii</sup> Deleuze, *Fold*, 81; see Roland Faber p16 “wash your brain, dada, dada, gulp some rain”: “Programmatic Dysfunction in the Chaosmos of Deleuze and Whitehead”. Delivered Leuven, May 2005 and as far as I know now yet published. Cf also Faber’s groundbreaking contribution to the Deleuze-Whitehead contrast in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and*

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*Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, ed. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Luke Higgins, "Toward a Deleuze-Guattarian Micropneumatology of Spirit-Dust," in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, ed. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

<sup>xxiv</sup> Nicholas of Cusa, "De docta ignorantia 1440," in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. H. Lawrence Bond (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), 140.

<sup>xxv</sup> Roland Faber, *Gott als Poet der Welt: Anliegen und Perspektiven der Prozesstheologie* Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt 2003 p 248; see also "Docta Ignorantia: Darkness on the Face *pne choshekh*," in Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France*, with a new preface (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 205-17.

<sup>xxvii</sup> "However, Foucault speeds up the emergence of one strange final figure: if the outside, farther away than any external world, is also closer than any internal world, is this not a sign that thought affects itself, by revealing the outside to be its unthought element?...To thin is to fold, to double the outside with a coextensive inside." Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986/1988), 118.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Whitehead, *Process*, 348.

<sup>xxix</sup> Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 39.

<sup>xxx</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 382f.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Badiou, *Infinite*, 41.

<sup>xxxii</sup> "In other words, the unknown nature of the laughable would be not accidental, but essential. We would laugh, not for some reason which, due to lack of information, or of sufficient penetration, we shall never manage to know, but because the unknown makes us laugh." Georges Bataille; Annette Michelson, "Un-knowing: Laughter and Tears," *October*, 36, Georges Bataille: Writings on Laughter, Sacrifice, Nietzsche, Un-knowing. (Spring, 1986) : 90. Emphasis original to text.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> "The most general formula of the relation to oneself is the affect of self by self, or folded force." He is interpreting--imaginatively--Foucault's late return to the Greeks as well as to Christian confession, in which the body and its pleasures, or for the Christians the flesh and its desires, is to be enfolded. That is the first of four folds, the second being the relation between forces folded by law, the third the fold of knowledge, or truth, the fourth 'the fold of the outside itself, the ultimate fold.' Deleuze, *Foucault*, 104. But as the Outside gives rise to forces, the first three folds are enfolded in the fourth. Kin

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to the Levinassian exteriority, this Outside emits an odd signal of transcendence within a scheme that repudiates transcendence.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2005), 392ff.

<sup>xxxv</sup> What Spivak calls the “homey verbiness” of *pouvoir* as ‘can-do’, as empowerment, in his *pouvoir savoir*.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 174.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> “Sometimes it seems as if the very brilliance of Foucault’s analysis of the centuries of European imperialism produces a miniature version of that heterogeneous phenomenon: management of space--but by doctors; development of administrations--but in asylums; considerations of the periphery--but in terms of the insane prisoners, and children. The clinic, the asylum, the prison, the university--all seem to be screen-allegories that foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism.” She worries about the ‘sanctioned ignorance’ in the silence of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari (by contrast with Derrida) about ethnocentrism. Spivak, *Critique*, 279.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 158.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>xl</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 358.

<sup>xli</sup> Antonio Negri, *Time for Revolution* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 152.

<sup>xlii</sup> “In Badiou’s thought, the emphasis certainly is on seizing the moment insofar as the subject subjectivates herself temporarily through interventions that yield events.” And then “Given the singularity of each event and given the generality of the multiplicity of the situation, it would be difficult to give an exact account of the favourable conditions that make the kairological explicitly strategic.” Antonio Calcagno, *Badiou and Derrida: Politics, Events and their Time* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 100f.

<sup>xliii</sup> “We need to recover today this material and political sense of love, a love as strong as death. This does not mean you cannot love your spouse, your mother, and your child. It only means that your love does not end there, that love serves as the basis for our political projects in common and the construction of a new society. Without this love, we are nothing.” Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 351-352.

<sup>xliv</sup> See my article, “The Love Supplement: Christianity and Empire,” in Catherine Keller, *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

<sup>xlv</sup> Bataille, “Un-Knowing,” 99.