

**Novelty, B.W.O. and The Void  
A Political Decision:  
Instantiation @ Infinite Speed**

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Event and Decision: Ontology and Politics in Badiou, Deleuze, and Whitehead  
Student Panel - Paper**

## **The Beginning or The Always Already:**

If we are going to talk about politics we have to talk about people! We have to consider the effects of a Foucaultian schematic that never disappears or at least operates at such hyper speeds and at a depth and height that the multi-dimensions fade, you become soft in the Woody Allen sense of the word, and the world is no longer round but flat. By considering Whitehead's voice, by recognizing Whitehead's presence as a real one, it is my argument, my cry, that politics become understandable. You understand how important the behind the back approach is for a successful basketball career and you glimpse into the deep dark corridors of such a perspective. By setting up a Triad of thought, a rather unholy one, Badiou, Deleuze, and Whitehead I suggest that one can locate within their work a peculiar ontology that inherently relates to their conceptualization of the "event." I want to argue that this conception of the event, inextricably related to Whitehead's notion of Novelty, the potentiality of Deleuze and Guatarri's conceptualization of the body without organs (BWO), and Badiou's notion of the void can become political only when one realizes the necessary limit involved in thinking the political. This limit is fundamentally characterized in these three thinkers, broadly speaking, as infinite rupture of something that bursts and continually makes experience, both living and non-living, that which should always already inform the theory.

In this paper I plan to work anachronistically or at least anachronistically in the traditional sense of the word. I will work backwards and forwards, presenting my argument from multiple angles, in order to allow a web to appear that is not a web that synthesizes differences in order to show a particular sameness easily identified with and for a political agenda. I want to avoid identity politics! However, I do want to show that webs are needed; all is not chaos and pure void. Rather, chaos exists, but in an ambivalent way. Chaos, the word, the

term in and of itself, has a history and a multiplicity of appropriations. It is this multiplicity, a certain unlocatable rupture that has held the attention of philosophers since Plato. It is my goal to trace the concept of rupture in these three thinkers, showing where there is difference while not allowing such differences to hinder a politics that is positively sneaky, fearful and brave simultaneously. A politics that inaugurates action and passion similar to Agamben's appropriation of Benjamin's idea of the law... "One day humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use but to free them from it for good. What is found after the law is not a more proper and original use value that precedes the law, but a new use that is born only after it."<sup>1</sup>

In order to talk about this rebirth of the political or of a politics, I must first talk about Whitehead. Whitehead's schematic, what he calls, "Speculative Philosophy" in *Process and Reality* has been appropriated in a variety of ways, namely the most recognizable in the work of John B. Cobb Jr. as Process Theology. However, I do not plan to talk about theology and I want to articulate a Whitehead that is "purely" philosophical, in Whiteheadian terms. Thus, to accomplish such a task I will first attempt to articulate Whitehead's system that was never meant to be a system in the "fixed" and "stagnate" sense of the traditional use of a system, meaning Whitehead did not intend to create a Form from which experience could then be interpreted. According to Whitehead the system and experience go hand and hand. You cannot have one without the other and one is not defined only in relation to the other as in I define myself in

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<sup>1</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, translated by Kevin Attell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 64. To introduce Agamben into the mix, which entails an introduction of Carl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin as well, may seem irresponsible. However, if in the same way fiction is often used to paint a picture or create a visual, I wish to use Agamben's image (which is in a way Benjamin's) here of the law being discarded to paint an image that will return at the end of the paper. I do not intend to go into detail concerning the context out of which this argument arises and do not think such an explication is needed for the context of this paper.

relation to something outside of me. Rather, experience always already defines the theory, while the opposite is also true.

Juxtaposing experience with theory or theory with its traditional opposite praxis appears very dualistic. It appears to promote a certain thought process that operates in and through the use of binaries. Such thought processes would appear to contradict Whitehead's theory, because it is against these binaries that he was writing, namely against the work of Descartes, where the mind and body are separated. However, for Whitehead, it is not that one can discard binaries all together. Instead, to think and articulate certain concepts one must rely on binaries or take advantage of them, only to show that thought has arisen in such a way. Whitehead's goal, when one steps back, and judges his work as a whole was to trace the historical moments when thinking in binaries occurred, while attempting to also show how such thinking does not relate to the way in which the natural world operates. It is true that we experience moments of drunkenness and soberness, moments waking and moments sleeping, but these binaries are only meant to be a stepping-stone towards a more complete understanding of our experience that will always remain somewhat ambivalent.

Here it is important to underscore in more detail Whitehead's schematic as it relates to coherence. Whitehead defines coherence (and his whole philosophy of organism hinges on this definition) as that which "means that the fundamental ideas, in terms of which the scheme is developed, presuppose each other so that in isolation they are meaningless."<sup>2</sup> In Whitehead's opinion the philosophy of Descartes is the exact opposite of coherence. In Descartes, the body is not needed in order to define the mind. Rather, the two are separate and are able to exist separately. "There is, in Descartes' philosophy, no reason why there should not be a one-

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 3.

substance world, only corporeal, or a one-substance world, only mental. According to Descartes, a substantial individual ‘requires nothing but itself in order to exist.’”<sup>3</sup> The problem with substantialism is not that things are separate (i.e. mind and body). However, the problem is that the favoring of one above the other is disguised in the idea that the mind is definable outside of its relation to the body. The only way the mind receives definition in Descartes (and other substantial thinkers that follow his thought) is that placed below the mind in a position of abjection is the body.<sup>4</sup> Whitehead’s philosophy of organism seeks to overturn and complicate this way of thinking and it begins with an understanding of coherence. Following the initial quote from *Process and Reality* above Whitehead writes:

This requirement does not mean that they are definable in terms of each other; it means that what is indefinable in one such notion cannot be abstracted from its relevance to the other notions. It is the ideal of speculative philosophy that its fundamental notions shall not seem capable of abstraction from each other. In other words, it is presupposed that no entity can be conceived in complete abstraction from the system of the universe, and that it is the business of speculative philosophy to exhibit this truth. This character is coherence.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Reverberation of A Beginning**

Returning to Whitehead’s notion of coherence, it makes sense to move from Whitehead’s overarching philosophical scheme or system to an explication of what Whitehead means by becoming as opposed to being. This explication will briefly address Whitehead’s terminology

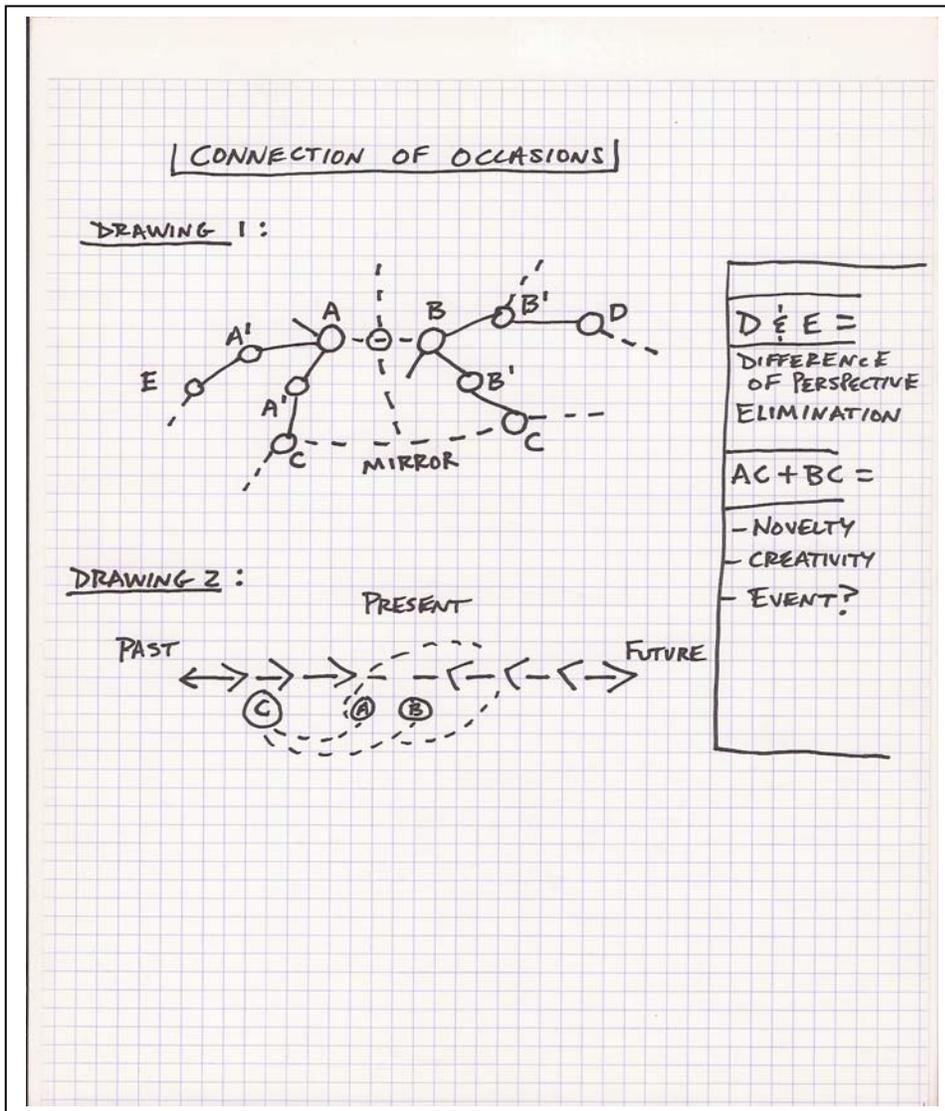
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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>4</sup> Obviously, here one could signal a multiplicity of authors who have taken up this subject, especially the arena of thought most often termed post-structuralism and/or post-modernism. I recognize the debate and the danger of using the terms post-structuralism and post-modernism and I also recognize the wealth of research that has been done concerning the abject, namely the work of Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler. However, the aim of this paper is not to venture down that road, at least not at this point. Hopefully the reader will be able to realize the problematization of such terms “modernism” verses “post-modernism” in my critique of substantialism via an explication of Whitehead’s thought followed later by an explication of the thought of two thinkers often referred to as “post-modern,” Badiou and Deleuze.

<sup>5</sup> Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 3.

(i.e. actual entities, prehensions, creativity and eternal objects). However, the focus will be placed upon Whitehead's notion of the past, present, and future found in his work *The Adventure of Ideas*. Undergirding Whitehead's discussion of the past, present, and future is an understanding of his more detailed terminology fleshed out in *Process and Reality*, so I will attempt to keep detailed analyses of such terms within the footnotes for the sake of clarity and coherence. A discussion of Whitehead's notion of the past, present, and future will also allow for a *bridge* into a more explicit discussion of the "event" as it relates to Whitehead as well as to Deleuze and Badiou.



An analysis concerning Whitehead's past, present, and future reveals the true aesthetic value of Whitehead's philosophy. In small glimpses, if one pauses long enough to consider the possibility of a schematic or theory in process, one grasps an immanence of traditional binaries, an immanence of theory and praxis that reeks of sulfur, if Capitalism is God.<sup>6</sup> Whitehead writes, "The future belongs to the essence of the present fact, and has no actuality other than the actuality of present fact. But its particular relationships to present fact are already realized in the nature of present fact."<sup>7</sup> Here Whitehead is setting up his theory concerning the immanence of contemporary occasions. In order to adequately describe this process I have included two drawings. Both inherently relate to Whitehead's Section IV within chapter 12 of *Adventure of Ideas*. The Third Paragraph is very important so I quote it directly here.

There is thus a certain indirect immanence of contemporary occasions in each other. For if A and B be contemporaries, and C be in the past of both of them, then A and B are each in a sense immanent in C, in the way in which the future can immanent in its past. But C is objectively immortal in both A and B. Thus, in this indirect sense, A is immanent in B, and B is immanent in A. But the objective immortality of A does not operate in B, nor does that of B operate in A. As individual complete actualities, A is shrouded from B, and B is shrouded from A. It is not wholly true that two contemporaries A and B enjoy a common past. In the first place, even if the occasions in the past of A be identical with the occasions in the past of B, yet A and B by reason of their difference of status, enjoy the past under a difference of perspective elimination. Thus the objective immortality of the past in A differs from the objective immortality of that same past in B. Thus two contemporary occasions, greatly remote from each other, are in effect derived from different pasts.<sup>8</sup>

In the drawing above you will see the exact representation of what Whitehead writes about quoted previously. In graph 1 you see a circular way to look at A and B as contemporaries, whereas in graph 2 you see a more linear approach. Both graphs represent the same thing from a different perspective. B1 is a past experience of B and A1 is a past experience of A. One can

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<sup>6</sup> In the film *Deconstructing Harry* by Woody Allen, he refers to his nemesis as the Devil and often mentions his presence by the smell of sulfur.

<sup>7</sup> Whitehead, *Adventure of Ideas*, 195.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

imagine, scientifically and somewhat evolutionary, that at some point there would arise a C that both A and B shared in common. However, there is the potential for the D and E along with a C, where D and E are past experiences that differ, D being B's and E being A's. Because of this difference, A and B are located in a different yet similar present. The future possibility of C, coming from different perspectives A and B, but being that which A and B share, becomes the reason for and explanation of Novelty and Creativity within Whitehead's philosophy, where the future possibilities are realized only in the present and have a connection still to the past. Hence, the "immanence of contemporary occasions."

The only way to completely understand this connection between the past, present, and future, and the immanence of these three is to speak about actual entities and prehensions. Whitehead writes, "the future is to the present as an object for a subject."<sup>9</sup> Actual occasions have happened in the past and are in existence. According to Whitehead and referring back to the graph these would be the A1s and B1s, Cs, Es, Ds, etc. These are each functioning in their own way "as objects for prehension in the present. This individual objective existence of the actual occasions of the past, each functioning in each present occasion, constitutes the causal relationship which is efficient causation."<sup>10</sup> This process does not occur in the future. There are no realized and actual occasions in existence in the future. However, the future occasions, that can be imagined, if this process continues, will be inherently reliant on the "essence of the present occasion."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, for Whitehead a multiplicitous becoming and/or process of differential experiences characterize the Universe. Whitehead writes, "The whole Universe is the advancing assemblage

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

of these processes. The Aristotelian doctrine, that all agency is confined to actuality, is accepted. So also, is the Platonic dictum that the very meaning of existence is 'to be a factor in agency', or in other words 'to make a difference'. Thus, 'to be something' is to be discoverable as a factor in the analysis of some actuality."<sup>12</sup> Echoing his words concerning the factor, fact, and entity in *The Concept of Nature* Whitehead shows the possibility of establishing a schematic that mirrors experience in such a way that the binary between Theory and Praxis and/or Form and Matter disappears by showing its unnatural and imposed existence.

However, such a conclusion must be realized. Once the possibility of the immanence of the past, present, and future is realized there becomes the "real" possibility of a nexus of actual occasions, in some form of unity. At this point in *Adventure of Ideas* Whitehead describes an important nexus, one that stands out among the others, as an "Event" among other things he also terms "Regions," "Societies," "Persons," "Enduring Objects," "Corporal Substances," "Living Organisms," etc, and etc. is important here, very important, because Whitehead leaves things open, in the a very strong sense that may have very strong and strenuous political consequences: "All is Event!" Or is it?

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 197. Here also, I should mention the attentiveness Whitehead pays to terminology, a fact I would not be aware of if it was not for Roland Faber and Elizabeth Kraus' work *The Metaphysics of Presence*. Faber on 10-25-07 hinted at the relation of Fact, Factor, and Entities drawing on page 13 of *The Concept of Nature*. Here Faber distinguishes that when one traces the etymology of all three of these words one finds Fact to mean, that which has transpired, what has happened. Factors are interrelated parts of the facts and the Greek meaning of entity is "being one." Thus, when Whitehead makes analogous, in *Adventure of Ideas-quoted in the text*, 'to be a factor in agency' with 'to make a difference,' he must be alluding to the immanence of the factor, fact, and entity via the proper explanation of the immanence of the past, present, and future. Not that these three triads are analogous, but that the process is similar, the schematic or theory, mirrors the experience found in reality.

## Folding Echoes

“All is event!” According to Deleuze, in *L'évènement, Whitehead*, Whitehead stands as the great successor to Leibniz, and offers a third cry of the event that serves as an illumination of a Leibniz yet un-covered.<sup>13</sup> While, Deleuze writes with a certain agenda in its relation to Leibniz that is very important and has its place I do not plan to focus on such connections, but only to mark and recognize that they exist. Rather, I intend to focus on Deleuze's explication of the event for Whitehead in his work *The Fold*, in order to provide a seg-way or stepping stone into addressing not only Deleuze's concept of the event, but also and in particular his and Guattari's concept of the BWO, that show a strong affinity with Whitehead's Speculative Philosophy. Thus, within this section I will only slightly mention or hint at other “post-modern” authors while providing for an introduction to the next section, which will focus on wrestling with Badiou's place or non-place within this unholy triad.

Deleuze spends a great deal of time in this short chapter explicating Whitehead's notion of the event, first by performing an analyses similar to the one I attempted in the previous section. What I would like to take up instead is Deleuze's terminology and the images his terminology evoke and how he wanders, very nomadically, between his own and Whitehead's.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *L'évènement, Whitehead*, 10/30/1987 (English translation done by a collaborative effort from students in the Whitehead and Deleuze course, taught by Roland Faber, Fall 2006),

<sup>14</sup> Obviously I recognize that Deleuze's use of language here shows affinity with Leibniz along with many other thinkers and not just Whitehead. Actually, when one performs a close reading of chapter five in *The Fold*, one is able to recognize, again I will say, an incoming of immanence from a place that is as old as it is new. It is this exact point, I continually try to stress in the footnotes and occasionally in the body of the text, that makes Whitehead's schematic as well as Deleuze's so productive in relation to politics. Instead of critiquing Substantialism with yet another form of the same, a theory emerges from these thinkers that actually exhibits and testifies to an undividable and inseparable rupture. It is this rupture, if pushed, one could trace back to

Deleuze writes, “Events are produced in a chaos, in a chaotic multiplicity, but only under the condition that a sort of screen intervenes.”<sup>15</sup> Deleuze goes back and forth between chaos and no chaos, attempting to distinguish and make apparent that Whitehead’s (and even his own, in my opinion) philosophy is not one that affirms some sort of dis-unified “mess” from which experience automatically and positively erupts. Instead, to understand the chaos, which does exist to a certain extent, one must understand it in relation to the immanence of an occasion. To do otherwise would be to leave it as an abstraction, which would commit the same fallacy of substantialism.

Echoing, Plato’s *Timaeus*, Deleuze writes about this “screen that makes something – something rather than nothing – emerge from it.”<sup>16</sup> Here it is important to point to Whitehead’s *Adventure of Ideas* where he addresses Plato in a number of sections, especially Plato’s use of the term *khora*. In relation to immanence(*AI*-pg 186-187) and cosmology(*AI*-ch8), hence in relation to the convergence of these two, the alternative to thinking and interpreting one’s existence and experience in relation to something external and transcendent, Whitehead chooses

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the work of Plato and seemingly Whitehead had this in mind all along, especially when one considers that he is quoted as saying “all philosophy is a footnote to Plato.”

<sup>15</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 76. It is also important here to signal Catherine Keller’s essay “Process and Chaosmos: the Whiteheadian Fold in The Discourse of Difference” in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, edited by Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (Albany: State University of New York, 2002). While Keller presents a sound argument and explication of Deleuze’s text, I will not present from the same angle as she. In my opinion, Keller writes as a staunch Whiteheadian, defensively yet somewhat open to post-structuralism. Still even in her wavering, Keller seemingly keeps her theological bearings, which in turn influence the negative and even sometimes apparent anger that Whitehead is not “properly” recognized. On this point, I do not disagree, but I am attempting to approach the text without “process theology” as complicated and broad as this term is, as a presupposition and/or starting point.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

to insert a third term: “personal unity.”<sup>17</sup> Here, there is a significant relation to the previous section, where I addressed the past, present, and future. The term khora in Plato, becomes a type, style, or different way and/or angle to imagine Creativity in Whitehead. The place where immanence endures and the “present” is in continual becoming, infinitely and eternally, “a locus which persists, and provides an emplacement for all the occasions of experience. That which happens in it is conditioned by the compulsion of its own past, and by the persuasion of its immanent ideals.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, one sees a strand within Whitehead’s thought that Deleuze explicates quite well: a move towards immanence not intended to explicitly attack transcendence, but rather to include the individual’s (meaning all things) experience in relation to all other experiences. Hence, Deleuze’s ease of appropriating Whitehead’s vocabulary for his project, that has in and of itself a very diverse set of interrelated terms.

In order to move beyond the larger picture, while staying within it, yet not avoiding or giving the appearance of avoiding a close reading allow me to pause and muse for a moment on one sentence from Deleuze’s chapter in *The Fold*. Deleuze writes, “It is a world of captures instead of closures.”<sup>19</sup> If all is event and this is the cry of Whitehead that Deleuze wishes to continue, then how does one reckon with what Whitehead writes in *The Concept of Nature*, namely that “it is impossible to recognize an event, because an event is essentially distinct from every other event.”<sup>20</sup> When one juxtaposes a world of captures instead of closures in relation to the event as unrecognizable it all seemingly makes sense. To recognize an event, to name it, would be contradictory to the internal nature of an event and Whitehead’s philosophy in general.

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<sup>17</sup> Whitehead, *Adventure of Ideas*, 187.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Deleuze, *The Fold*, 81.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred N. Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (New York: Cosimo, 2007, originally published in 1920), 143.

Once an event is recognized, it is no longer an event but an object, that will become a living and active prehension to be prehended by a future present, that is only future because of the possibility and impossibility of AC + BC (making reference to the drawing earlier). For Whitehead and Deleuze determining the actual site and description of an event is not what is at stake. On the contrary, what is at stake, in doing philosophy is avoiding the closure of the event, meaning its abstraction into some Platonic Form, where it becomes locked in such a way as to become universalized for all times and occasions. In relation to the political this begins to make sense. The problem is not with establishing a certain formulation or rubric from which one can make “rational” decisions. While this is necessary to a certain extent, what seems more crucial in relation to the political which is inherently a questions of ethics, is allowing politics to remain captured, second by second, each and every day, in a nomadic style, where one can hear and even envision a time when Benjamin will be resurrected to kick the law like a rusty and disused gardeners bucket.

And isn't this what Derrida writes about when he explicates the meaning of khora: “each tale is thus the *receptacle* of another. There is nothing but receptacles of narrative receptacles, or narrative receptacles of receptacles?”<sup>21</sup> Does this not point to differance, as that which allows for the incoming of something *new* from the future that is unknowable, yet it is always already older than a determinable old, in the Derridian sense of the word arche? Is Deleuze, in his later essay *Immanence: A Life*, pointing again to a similar reality? “This indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they may be one to another, but only between-times, between-moments; it doesn't just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees

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<sup>21</sup> Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, edited by Thomas Dutoit, translated by David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian Mcleod (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 117.

the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness.”<sup>22</sup> I will say it again...to talk about politics we must talk about people! In this sense doing ethics would be to offer a politics in becoming that mirrors the becoming of experience, the rather ambivalent becoming that ruptures indescribably as event.

In order for Deleuze to stand on his own, meaning the avoidance of a reduction of his thought to nothing but an echo of Whitehead I would like to address decision in the work of Deleuze, signaling and returning, continually, to the theses of the paper, namely that to think the event and ontology outside of a particular autonomous decision, would be to conflate or reduce the use of a certain dualistic thinking to exactly that...dualistic thinking. However, In Deleuze and Guattari’s essay “How to make yourself a body without organs?” one finds a call for decision and action, which stems from A-life. Deleuze and Guattari write, “It is not a notion or a concept but a practice, a set of practices.”<sup>23</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, these practices, however, are always already entangled within a set of societal structures. Hence, the body without organs, becomes a decision to refuse these structures, or a decision to realize they are just that, structures, that are imposed on reality. “The BWO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, translated by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 29.

<sup>23</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 149-150.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 151. Deleuze and Guattari are writing against psychoanalysis here. However, I want to signal the possibility for future research, namely that D and G are not trying to avoid or refute psychoanalysis all together, but they are interested in refuting the appropriation of psychoanalysis, meaning the possibility that the analyst becomes the “priest” or the one who has the answers not from A-life, but from a form that if miss-appropriated by universalizing the remedy, one forgets about the becoming nature of life.

What remains then is immanence, A-Life, or as Deleuze and Guattari would later term it, a plane of consistency or a plane of immanence. This immanence, a decision to make oneself a body without organs is inherently related to the event. “The event does not relate the lived to a transcendent subject = Self but, on the contrary is related to the immanent survey of a field without subject; the Other Person does not restore transcendence to an other self but returns every other self to the immanence of the field surveyed.”<sup>25</sup> This seems to be very similar to what Whitehead argues in *Adventure of Ideas*, when referring to *khora* or receptacle, as that which participates in no forms, but receives its form from its participation in the always-becoming mutual immanence of actualities.<sup>26</sup>

It is important here to illuminate exactly what D and G are attempting to describe via the use of the concept bodies without organs. They are not in any way attempting to fixate some imagined body that actually operates without organs. Their play is not completely futile. On the contrary D and G continually try to point to the BWO as that which opposes organization, not because one should choose to live in complete chaos. “The BWO is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism.”<sup>27</sup> D and G are not arguing for the instantiation of some complete abstract life with no connection to reality. On the contrary, they see the BWO as relating to the dismantling of the organism. “Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations measured with the craft of a surveyor.”<sup>28</sup> In this

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<sup>25</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 48.

<sup>26</sup> Whitehead, *Adventure of Ideas*, 134.

<sup>27</sup> D and G, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 158.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 160.

way, the BWO for D and G is inherently related to the event, by its inclusion of the very real experience of every occasion. It is not that the event remains in some metaphysical theory, necessarily opposed to natural existence. On the contrary, BWO serves as a means to connect theory and praxis, as a way to affirm the event as rupture, as a khoratic moment that just may slip outside of language in the sense that its being or non-being is uncontrollable. From this perspective, BWO becomes a way to affirm what Deleuze writes in the *Fold*, “It is a world of captures instead of closures.”<sup>29</sup> Hence, to make a BWO is to ontologically position oneself in an open relationship to the event, which entails a continuous “making” or “practice” that refuses to allow the captures and the small glimpses of becoming to remain forever closed and solidified into a particular universal.

### **Towards an “End”: Taking it and Giving It**

Badiou’s idea of the event, which inherently relies on his understanding of the void, at times, appears very dissimilar to Whitehead and Deleuze’s conceptualization. In theory, Badiou and Whitehead/Deleuze could be interpreted as being situated on opposite ends of a spectrum. And isn’t this what Badiou tries to make clear in his work *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*? Or, if I may employ the traditional tactic in basketball as well as philosophy, A Foucaultian move for sure, does Badiou know what he is saying? Is Badiou’s small book on Deleuze produced more out of a frustration that Deleuze want give it to Badiou in the same way Badiou gives it to Deleuze? Badiou writes in describing his and Deleuze’s correspondence, “a dispute and not a debate: for, in conformity with his aristocratic and systematic leanings, Deleuze felt only

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<sup>29</sup> Deleuze, *The Fold*, 81.

contempt for debates.”<sup>30</sup> Maybe Deleuze did not want to participate in the same way Zizek sees Bartleby operating as a place and life to take up in relation to politics. Maybe Deleuze felt misread and frustrated that Badiou was trying to be “right” in the Platonic sense of the term, even though Badiou claims to be doing the opposite. Maybe Badiou should read Whitehead! He does mention his name, but only in a derogatory manner, to criticize Deleuze of “*monotonous*” thought, which is the same throughout time, under different names. Could it be that at the heart of the debate or dispute, Badiou has misunderstood Deleuze and Whitehead’s schematic or is it that Badiou is trying to push for sameness and has difficulty admitting that his theory of the event is different from Deleuze’s conceptualization. Is Badiou fearful of being alone, of waking up to pick up the paper and see that set theory has been disproved? Maybe Badiou just wants someone to play with, to give it to him in Foucaultian terms.

All speculation aside, there is a fundamental difference between Badiou’s conceptualization of the event from Deleuze. To try and systematize these two thinkers into a similar conceptualization would be dishonest and would run the risk of doing exactly what Badiou critiques Deleuze of doing: reverting to sameness. However, for the sake of this paper, and politics, I only signal the difference, it is there. On the other hand, there are similarities, and in the sober moments of Badiou’s text one sees this clearly, especially Deleuze’s notion of “dissheltering” and Badiou’s concept of the void and the “event-site.” An “event-site” for Badiou is that which is “on the edge of the void.” Here Badiou means that which is almost withdrawn or unrecognizable because of its immanence to a norm. “In a situation (in a set), it is like a point of exile where *it is possible* that something, finally, might happen.”<sup>31</sup> What are the conditions

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<sup>30</sup> Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, translated by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 16,7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 84,5.

necessary for this “something” to happen? Can Badiou name these conditions and will they be conditions that are similar or dissimilar to the conditions of the void? If the conditions of the void are inherently related to this possibility of a future happening that would arise out of the void, then how is this completely different from Whitehead’s notion of creativity and/or novelty? How is this different from Derrida’s differance? There are I admit and continue to admit, for the sake of Foucaultian confession that there is a difference, so in order not to be pinned as arguing away difference. However, Badiou does follow by writing, explaining a similarity of his and Deleuze, that “Deleuze compared the expression “on the edge of the void” to the *intersection* between the territory (the space of actualization) and the process of deterritorialization (the overflowing of the territory by the event that is the real-virtual of all actualization), which is to say that it is the point at which what occurs can no longer be assigned to either the territory (the site) or the nonterritory, to either the inside or the outside.”<sup>32</sup> In order to allow Badiou the right to stand on his own terrain, it will help to consider in more detail his idea of the event and the void. I hope to show how these two concepts share an affinity with the idea of an unlocatable rupture, elucidated thus far, in the works and thought of Whitehead and Deleuze, that inherently rely and continue to draw from and upon the work of Plato.

Badiou in mediation two, found in *Being and Event*, elucidates the foundation from which he establishes his concept of the void. The point at which to connect the three thinkers considered in this paper may be an elucidation of Plato, or a going back to Plato in order to sort through what is Plato and what is Platonism. In *The Clamor of Being*, you have Badiou signaling this when he writes, “For, as far as I am concerned, and given my attempt to redress

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Platonism rather than overturn it, I am convinced principles do exist.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, when one returns to mediation two in *Being and Event*, it becomes apparent on a certain level what this fundamental principle means for Badiou. For Badiou, in relation to the void and being, it is his hypothesis that “the one is not turns out to be the one which *teaches us about the multiple*.”<sup>34</sup> For Badiou, drawing on Plato, the void is interrelated to ontology. “Plato thus formulates an essential ontological truth; that in absence of any being of the one, the multiple in-consists in the presentation of a multiple of multiples without any foundational stopping point.”<sup>35</sup> Here Badiou seems to be very close to Whitehead, especially Whitehead’s elucidation or re-interpretation of Plato’s *Timaeus* found in *Adventure of Ideas*. Adapting from Plato’s *Timaeus*, Whitehead writes, “we shall not be far wrong if we describe it as invisible, formless, and all-receptive. It is a locus which persists, and provides an emplacement for all the occasions of experience.”<sup>36</sup> Hence, everything is open and becoming in a kind of formlessness. With the reception of *khora* things are no longer thought from the top down as an act of deduction from the one true Form of the Good.

Badiou appears to interpret Plato on similar terms as Whitehead, especially in relation to his conceptualization of the void. “Therefore, what should be thought here is rather that ‘nothing’ is the name of the void: Plato’s statement should be transcribed in the following manner; if the one is not, what occurs in the place of the ‘many’ is the pure name of the void, insofar as it alone subsists *as being*.”<sup>37</sup> There is an obvious “more” that is left out in my explication of Badiou’s text, which Jon Roffe and Justin Clemens (to name only two), have more

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<sup>33</sup> Badiou, *The Clamor of Being*, 16,7.

<sup>34</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, 32.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>36</sup> Whitehead, *Adventure of Ideas.*, 187.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

eloquently described. However, for the focus of this paper, I wanted only to signal, as it relates to Whitehead and Deleuze, that Badiou's notion of the event (and he has several different notions or differentiations [revolutionary event and eventual site] to name one) is inherently and indivisible from an understanding of the void for Badiou. "The event interposes itself between the void and itself. It will be said to be an ultra-one (relative to the situation)."<sup>38</sup>

It is in and through this relative nature or indeterminable space that exists between the event and what is unlocatable, the void for Badiou, Novelty for Whitehead, and the possibility of making a BWO for D and G that one may be able to find a common ground that subsists only in difference. However, this sameness revolves around not the sameness of concepts, but rather the sameness and concern of the political. It is through such a concern, of and against things becoming blocked, becoming reduced to Being, that one is able to hear the cry of the event, that may not be sustainable as any locatable cry, meaning once the cry is universalized, made into a transcendent, and used as a rubric from which to create the political system of a life-time, one realizes life becomes dead. When decision, meaning a political praxis, can become inherently and inextricably related to the system or theory that supports, learns from, and informs the praxis, we may be closer to Plato, or to the thoughts that alluded the grasp of Plato. We may wake up to the realization that the Law is useless, in the Benjaminian sense of the word or that the Law is being and is in no way related to the becoming it wishes to guide.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 507.